

St. Michael's
EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL



Position Statement Head of School Search St. Michael's Episcopal Day School

**Carmichael, California
Start Date: July 1, 2025**



Head of School Position Statement

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THE OPPORTUNITY

St. Michael's Episcopal Day School is—quite simply—a gem of an opportunity! The School has put in place a remarkable alignment of mission, program, and community support that most schools only dream of attaining. Enthusiasm for the School is palpable. It may be in part a reflection of 40+ years of aligned leadership, it may be in part because of the clarity of vision and unique program expectations that are appreciated and embraced by the entire community. Whatever the reason, there is a “special sauce” at St. Michael's: the School knows who it is and stays true to that vision.

Founded in 1963 and now serving 250 students in Preschool-Grade 8, St. Michael's Episcopal Day School (St. Michael's) is widely respected as one of the top elementary and middle schools in the area. The school began as a ministry of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, starting with a preschool that grew into an elementary school. A middle school program was added in the early 1980s and, in 1993, the School incorporated separately as a non-profit corporation.

Committed to Episcopal values and preparing young people to live lives of purpose and joy, the School steadfastly pursues a dual commitment to academic excellence and character education. Form follows function at St. Michael's, and this video of the School (made several years ago) shows the blending of purpose, program, and facilities with strong and dedicated leadership in the historical development of the School: https://youtu.be/juLpJJtklGO?si=flqcUTEm_9CxIxB

The School now seeks a new head of school for July 1, 2025 who can continue to balance inspiration, challenge, and support for the students of St. Michael's and take the School onto its next exciting chapter.



MISSION, CORE VALUES, AND EPISCOPAL IDENTITY

The mission of St. Michael's seeks to inspire students to “think critically, act responsibly, lead compassionately and innovate wisely.” The mission goes further to describe a program centered on development of the whole child and a curriculum both “traditional and integrated.”

Everybody associated with St. Michael's knows the core values of the School: compassion, diligence, integrity, respect, and responsibility. And the values are regularly used in the daily life of the School. One parent even remarked that she was mightily impressed by her kindergarten daughter's use of the word “diligence” (properly pronounced as well) to describe her willingness to do a project with patience and determination.

Childhood is treasured at St. Michael's, and students are treated with love and kindness, and they are also expected to adhere to the expectations that the core values represent. The commitment

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to character education reflects the School's combined emphasis on core values and the Episcopal identity of the School.

St. Michael's is Episcopalian in its heritage and spirit. All are welcome. Spiritual growth is an integral part of the implementation of the mission and is carried out through chapel services attended by all members of the community and featuring student-led services and the School chaplain. The School is committed to the spiritual, but not doctrinal, growth of its students. Chapel observances, service projects, and outreach all reinforce the message that the community is here to help one another, and everyone is included.

The relationship between the School and the Church is vital. The Bishop is the chair of the Board, the Rector sits as an ex officio member of the Board, and a member of the Church Vestry is a full voting member of the Board. The Church is delighted with the success of the School and looks forward to continued collaboration.

St. Michael's Episcopal Day School is accredited by the California Association of Independent Schools and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The School is also a member of the National Association of Episcopal Schools and the National Association of Independent Schools.

THE PROGRAM

Outstanding academic achievement is a prized outcome of the program at St. Michael's. There is a rigorous adherence to carefully selected academic standards so that the scope and sequence of student learning is intentionally crafted and logical. The program is delivered with noteworthy commitment to differentiation and the success of each student. Teachers in the lower school send home—weekly!—a description of classroom work with student work to document a student's progress. Also, teachers will implement up to three and sometimes four "workshop" groups in language arts and math to meet the needs of all students. This is one of the few schools that truly challenges the accelerated students and addresses just as effectively the needs of students who need any kind of supplemental support.

The combination of "traditional and integrated" suffuses the curriculum. One example is the study of Shakespeare in Grades 6-8 where students adapt and perform scenes from Shakespeare plays as part of their language arts studies. The current Grade 6 is presenting an adaptation of "Romeo and Juliet" as "The Restaurant Wars!" The rigorous Grade 7-8 course in grammar translates into students who are sophisticated masters of good writing and speaking practices.

Public speaking is also woven into the curriculum, beginning from the earliest years when kindergarten students memorize and present poems to the entire assembly of K-8 students. Wonderful opportunities to participate in performing arts reinforce the poise and confidence of St. Michael's students in front of peers and adults. As a result, students of all ages are both articulate and confident.

Students learn important academic skills that align with "responsibility," one of the core values at the school: how to be organized, how to manage their time, and the value of homework. At the same time,

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there is a joyful commitment to supporting the playful, creative side of students at St. Michael's and developing the "whole child."

The athletics program at St. Michael's is remarkable for a Preschool-Grade 8 school. Nearly 90% of all students in the School participate in some form of athletics, from "Little Dribblers" for the youngest basketball participants to volleyball, flag football, cross country, basketball, track, and golf for students, boys and girls, in Grades 5-8. The School's athletic facilities support the Parochial Athletic League, so St. Michael's feels like the hub of early athletic team experience for all students in the area. Additionally, robust creative and performing arts are integral to the program. Extensive field trips and other experiential experiences are an important part of the student experience. Service learning throughout the community is in place.

It is not an overstatement to write that St. Michael's students are described as highly desirable at the most competitive high schools in the area, also boarding schools nationally. SMEDS students are known for their maturity and poise, delightful imagination and skills, and their kindness and enthusiasm as well as their self-discipline and academic prowess.

You can learn more about the St. Michael's academic and extracurricular programs by visiting the School's website: <https://www.smeds.net/academics/>



LEADERSHIP

Father Jesse Vaughan served as the long-term head of school at St. Michael's from the early 80's until 2012. Under his direction, the School expanded its facilities and programming for older students. Serving alongside Father Vaughan for the preponderance of his time at St. Michael's was Mary Heise who was named to the headship of St. Michael's in 2012. Under Mary Heise's tenure, the School has continued to thrive, distinguishing itself for its impactful academic program, the commitment to the School's core values and character education, and the positive community experience.

The School has been fortunate to have a singularly aligned and steady leadership trajectory for over forty years. The next head of school for St. Michael's, whether a member of clergy or a lay person, will have the opportunity to build upon the strengths in place, appreciating the history, program, and ethos of the School and working in close partnership with the Board of Trustees to imagine and plan for the next chapter for the School.

THE COMMUNITY

Just as high as the expectations for students at St. Michael's is the enthusiasm for the School! The Parents Club at the School hosts about eight events per year and shows demonstrable care and support for the faculty and staff. They also support the Grandparents Club at the School. Parental appreciation for the School is impressive:

- "Our core values, wonderful teachers, focus on academic excellence and successful differentiation in the classroom set SMEDS apart."
- "It's very much a special place. SMEDS has a unique environment, where kids are able to feel safe, loved, and learn at the same time."

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- “Constant focus on the Core Values as a real part of St. Michael’s environment and an emphasis that students gain skills to ‘be’ those Core Values in the classroom, sports, cafeteria, playground and all off campus trips.”
- “The faculty is knowledgeable, professional, and dedicated to helping students learn. They also know how to have fun with each other and the students! Academic offerings are robust. The faculty is dedicated to learning new instructional techniques and delivering the most up-to-date academic programming. Students learn the value of organization.”
- “There are too many to list all of them, but we believe that SMEDS has a community of truly dedicated teachers and staff who care about the educational and emotional development of our children. The support that our children (and that we!) have received over the years

cannot be replicated anywhere else. It is a campus made up of remarkable people who have created an environment that is exciting for our kids.”

Faculty and staff are equally positive:

- “SMEDS unique qualities begin with the involvement of the community. Everyone from grandparents to the board of trustees are dedicated to the growth of St. Michael's Episcopal Day School. Our focus is on how to use our mission and core values to provide every child with equal and impactful education. What has always stood out to me as a member of the faculty is the differentiated instruction and the willingness of the staff to help each other.”
- “The faculty and staff are so dedicated to the School. You feel like a part of a family as an employee.”
- “Our commitment to educating the whole child, our emphasis on the mission and core values, and the close-knit community.”
- “The community and support at St. Michael's is unparalleled.”

Additionally, the School’s commitment to supporting the diversity of its community is well expressed in the St. Michael’s Diversity and Inclusion Statement: <https://www.smeds.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/St.-Michaels-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Statement-2018.pdf>

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FINANCES, FUNDRAISING, AND GOVERNANCE

Finances

The School's overall operating budget is \$5.2M, 63% of which supports faculty salaries and benefits, 37% non-personnel operating costs. Tuition revenue reflects strong and steady enrollment numbers—currently 250 students. Any surplus to the operating budget is earmarked for reserves. The School currently holds strong reserves that exceed the recommended 75% threshold for liquidity of the operating budget. The School awarded \$245K in tuition assistance in the 2022-23 school year.

The School manages a debt of \$2.3M from earlier facilities projects. St. Michael's owns and maintains existing real property as a basis for future expansion—several adjacent properties—and continues to invest its significant reserve of assets and investments wisely to enhance its financial outlook year over year. Additionally, the School manages a small cash endowment.

Fundraising

Philanthropy is positive at St. Michael's. One hundred percent of the board and parents at St. Michael's participate in the Annual Fund. The yearly benefit auction has consistently raised over \$200K in one event. The development office also supports alumni relations and marketing efforts.

Governance

St. Michael's hosts an active and nimble Board of Trustees. Membership hovers around 12 members but can be as large as 15 with the following structure: Chair, filled by the sitting Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Northern California; President and Executive Committee; and general members, including a member of the Vestry. Most Board members serve two three-year terms. The Board uses a standard matrix to recruit a broad spectrum of talent and representation. The Board meets every other month, and participates in CAIS conferences and follows NAIS and CAIS guidelines for governance.



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THE LOCATION

St. Michael's location in Northern California is tremendously appealing, from its great restaurants and weather to lifestyle and recreation opportunities. A few hours from top destinations like Lake Tahoe, Napa Valley and San Francisco, there are easy weekend getaways to Yosemite National Park, Carmel, and the Monterey peninsula.

Sacramento has been coined "America's Farm to Fork Capital" as it sits among 1.5 million acres of farms and ranches that grow more than 160 crops for local markets and abroad. It is also home to more than 40 regional farmers markets—including the largest California Certified Farmers' Market in the state. Top area chefs form close relationships with farmers and

source ingredients for their restaurants, crafting seasonally driven menus. A recently published New York Times article (December 2023) credits Sacramento's highly diverse community and some of the world's best produce for turning Sacramento into a great restaurant city.

The ethnic and cultural diversity of the area is noteworthy. News & World Report describes Sacramento as one of the most racially diverse cities in the United States.

The weather in Sacramento is relatively mild year-round, with plenty of sunshine and little rainfall. With hot, sunny summers, brisk autumns, chilly winters and warm springtime, Sacramento experiences all of the seasons. Known as "The City of Trees" with multiple parks and outdoor spaces, there are plenty of spots for picnics, horseback riding, boating, cycling, hiking, paddle boarding and water skiing. The American River Parkway is a large network of parklands that begin in downtown Sacramento and goes all the way to the Folsom Lake Recreation Area—accessed just two miles away from the School. In addition, just outside of the city is the Sacramento Delta which is filled with endless rivers and tributaries.

Sacramento has several professional sports teams, most notably the NBA's Sacramento Kings, Sacramento River Cats baseball (a Triple-A affiliate of the San Francisco Giants), and the USL's Sacramento Republic FC Soccer. There is a vibrant arts scene with numerous galleries, performance venues, and festivals throughout the year. Theater, performing arts such as ballet and opera, and museums are accessible and noteworthy.

The cost of living in Sacramento is relatively low compared to other major California cities, which means your money can take you further, particularly if you are looking for a good place to raise a family. Excellent college resources are in the area: California State University, Sacramento, and UC Davis as well as world-class major hospital systems.

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THE FACILITIES

St. Michael's, located on the site of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, is beautifully arranged on approximately six acres and was upgraded in 1999 to include a lovely promenade that winds through the heart of the campus. The original campus, organized in 1963, began with a beautiful Episcopal chapel, which continues to be used as the School's chapel, and grew along with the Church's facilities. Shared spaces include classrooms and a parish hall that currently houses the Early Childhood and PreK programs, a lunchroom, and a full commercial kitchen. Another original classroom building has been converted to a math lab, art rooms, and offices. Administrative spaces, a reading specialist room, a lower school science lab, and a good-sized

library with an attached classroom are also part of the current campus layout. The iMAST building is a central focus on the campus. It proudly integrates a beautiful theater and multipurpose facility attached to a music/green room studio and middle school science lab.

The School has a regulation-sized gymnasium that houses many school events and hosts local sports competitions in addition to the School program. Two large climbing structures and asphalt basketball courts round out the athletic facilities. There is a non-regulation outside playing field that is an opportunity for development along with the three adjacent residential properties the School has purchased. The campus is gated with a full video surveillance system.

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THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

The successful candidate for the Head of School at St. Michael's has the opportunity to shape and lead the positive educational journey of young people from Preschool-Grade 8 and will embody and demonstrate the following skills, qualities, and leadership capabilities, all of which are important for the leadership appointment at St. Michael's:

- A master educator who is experienced with research-based best practices in articulating and supporting the delivery of a top-notch, forward-looking Preschool-Grade 8 program
- A leader who appreciates the significance of a faith-based identity for a school in the 21st century and works in partnership with St. Michael's Church
- An articulate, heartfelt spokesperson for the School's commitment to being a diverse and inclusive community
- An inspiring communicator—in person and in print—who can marshal the various constituencies of St. Michael's to consensus and clarity about the mission and values of the School
- A leader with excellent managerial skills who can orchestrate the management of the School, clarify roles and responsibilities, and make changes when needed in a timely manner.
- A skilled recruiter who recognizes excellence in teaching and continues to make recruiting, supporting, and developing a high-performing, collegial faculty a priority, including attention to HR policies and practices
- A leader skilled in strategic planning who is wise enough to preserve the best of St. Michael's today and who will address the challenges of the future, including financial sustainability as well as facilities planning and implementation
- A confident fundraiser who supports the School's goals in philanthropy, who also supports the School's marketing efforts

- A leader who leads with optimism and energy, unquestioned integrity and humility, warmth and empathy, a commitment to inclusion and collaboration, a sense of humor, and an innovative mindset
- A leader who is forward-thinking and can lead educational innovation with imagination and confidence
- A visible leader who appreciates and supports the community ethos that is so cherished among all the constituencies at St. Michael's

Each of the attributes described here has been carefully chosen and is significantly important in the search for the next head of school at St. Michael's.



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TO APPLY

Leading St. Michael's will be an exercise in building on the deep strengths of the School. Everything is in place: a vibrant mission, clear identity and core values, a well-honed program, talented students, capable and dedicated faculty, and a supportive and high-functioning Board of Trustees and parent/guardian community.

Salary and benefits for the position are competitive with a base salary range of \$270-330K.

Applications for this opportunity must be submitted to the RG175 portal before April 12, 2024, for consideration.

Apply here: <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

Your application will require a:

- Cover letter
- Current resume
- A writing sample (or two)
- Five references

Please direct any questions or communication to Coreen R. Hester, RG175 consultant for this search: chester@rg175.com

