

## Headmaster

July 1, 2023



Saint Thomas' Episcopal School is a K through 12 private day school in Houston, Texas with current enrollment of 540 students. The school is accredited by the Southwest Association of Episcopal Schools. Saint Thomas' seeks a Christian educational leader who will embrace and celebrate the Christian identity, focus on classical education, and commitment to academic excellence that have been hallmarks of the school for almost seven decades. Saint Thomas' is the day school of a family-oriented parish and is blessed with experienced and dedicated faculty and staff. The school is committed to single-sex education in the Lower and Middle Schools (through 8th grade). The Upper School program provides 9th through 12th grade students with an impressively wide range of academic offerings. Graduates are prepared for academic success in higher education and possess a moral compass grounded in Christian values to guide them in their adult lives. Saint Thomas' has earned a world-wide reputation for its Scottish Arts program, which adds to the educational experience of the students and is a great source of pride for the Saint Thomas' community. In the Spring of 2022, the school will open a 115,000 square foot state of the art Middle School, Upper School, Science, and Arts facility that will enhance the already strong academic and arts programs provided to all students. In addition to reviewing this introductory opportunity profile, candidates will want to fully explore the embedded links to the Saint Thomas' [website](#).

# Mission

Saint Thomas’ Episcopal School forms honorable men and women through a classical education grounded in a Christ-centered worldview.

# Core Values

*Honor Christian Faith Love*  
*Discipline Excellence Respect*

# School History and Identity

The 2022-2023 school year will mark the 68th year in which Saint Thomas’ Episcopal School has provided students with a Christ-centered, classical education. As the oldest classical Christian school in Houston, Saint Thomas’ has remained committed to the educational philosophy and core values of the founders who established the school. The school community holds firmly to these traditional norms and values and does not follow cultural or educational trends that conflict with our mission. The school has had only three Headmasters since its founding, reflecting a strong commitment from incumbent Headmasters. The future Headmaster will be welcomed to a community steeped in tradition and committed to the continuous development of its academic and religious programs to serve the next generation of Saint Thomas’ Saints.

In response to the needs of the community, a few years ago Saint Thomas’ Episcopal Church added a preschool for 18-month to 4-year-old children. This preschool now serves approximately 70 students. The long-term vision is to merge the preschool with the K through 12 school.

In 2017, Hurricane Harvey resulted in substantial damage to Saint Thomas’ Episcopal Church and School. Nearly 70% of the campus was impacted. The school leadership acted quickly to acquire portable buildings that were placed on a parking lot across from the campus and formed a temporary “Scotland Yard” to house initially the Lower School, and later the Middle and Upper Schools. Saint Thomas’ launched a capital campaign in support of a \$29M project to repair the church sanctuary and other flooded buildings and to construct a new state of the art academic building for the Middle and Upper Schools, the Scottish Arts, and the administration. A sixty-space parking garage was included with the new building. The new facility is scheduled to open in the Spring of 2022.

While walking through campus, attending Chapel or classes, one senses the friendly, safe, and welcoming environment of the school community. The student body is racially, socioeconomically, and internationally diverse. Teachers and students are hardworking and focused on academic, artistic, athletic, and religious development. The school’s core values of honor, Christian faith, love, discipline, excellence, and respect are present throughout the Kindergarten through 12th grade experiences. Community members are proud to be a part of the distinctively Christian, classical, and academically rigorous environment present at Saint Thomas’ Episcopal School.

# Quick Facts

<b>Enrollment</b>	
Preschool	72
Lower School K-5	209
Middle School 6-8	154
Upper School 9-12	188
<b>Tuition</b>	
Pre-School	\$3,805-\$9,285
Lower School	\$18,850
Middle School	\$21,240
Upper School	\$23,750
<b>Finances</b>	
Operating Income	\$11,005,000
Operating Expenses	\$10,771,000
Financial Aid	\$1,074,000
Annual Fund	\$304,695

# School Information and Accomplishments

- 120 Faculty and Staff
- 6:1 Student to Faculty ratio
- 8 Sports Offered
  - 22 State Championships
  - 10 State-Runner-Ups
- 5 Juvenile Pipe Band World Championships
- 24 United States Scottish Highland Dance Champions
- #1 State Champions in TAPPS Drum Competition
- 5 Consecutive years qualifying for the Middle School Quiz Bowl National Championship
- 3 Consecutive years qualifying for the High School Quiz Bowl National Championship
- #1 In Junior Classical League tournament competition
- 7 Consecutive years advancing to state competition in Mock Trial



## Houston

Saint Thomas' Episcopal School is located in a quiet neighborhood southwest of downtown Houston, near the Texas Medical Center and the Uptown / Galleria area. Houston is the fourth most populous city in the United States with over 2.3 million people in 2020 and is recognized for its internationally diverse community. Houston has a broad base of industrial businesses including energy, manufacturing, space / aeronautics, transportation, and oilfield equipment. The city has the world's largest concentration of health-care and health research institutions and is the home of the NASA Johnson Space Center and the Mission Control Center.

The nearby Museum District in Houston hosts nineteen museums in a walkable area, plus innumerable galleries and community spaces. The Houston Zoo, Hermann Park, and Miller Outdoor Theater are also located in the Museum District. There are over 150 museums in greater Houston. In addition, a Theater District provides a wide array of performance options, including resident theater, opera, symphony, and ballet companies. Located centrally in Houston, Memorial Park offers an extensive urban wilderness and active recreation park. Houston is also known for its outstanding and culturally varied culinary options.

Professional sports teams include the NFL Texans, MLB Astros and NBA Rockets, which are the marquee franchises in the city. Professional soccer, rugby, the Houston Grand Prix, and Houston Rodeo add to the experiences for sports fans.

Houston is the home of four public universities. The University of Houston has three distinct campuses within the city. Texas Southern University is a historically black university. There are three private universities including Rice University, the University of St. Thomas, and Houston Baptist University. In addition, Texas A&M University has three campuses, including its flagship College Station campus, within a short drive of the city.

## Program

Saint Thomas' Episcopal School is a college preparatory school that prepares students to succeed in university and to demonstrate leadership informed by Christian virtues in their communities and professions or vocations throughout their lives. Saint Thomas' diverse student body benefits from personalized attention, an outstanding learning environment, exceptional academics, and an emphasis on the arts, which work together to build a strong basis for future success.





## Chapel

Chapel is an integral part of daily instruction at St. Thomas'. Prior to Hurricane Harvey, the daily Chapel program included all students in grades 1 through 12. Recent renovations and repairs to the church combined with changes to Covid protocols will allow the new Headmaster and community to resume school-wide daily Chapel.

Chapel allows students, teachers, staff, and parents a time to gather together as one, study the Word of God, sing psalms, praise, and reflect. Saint Thomas' student body is populated with a diverse community representing a variety of religions and beliefs. All members of the community participate and listen respectfully during the Chapel Service. Chapel is also a time to acknowledge the achievements of individual students, teams, clubs, and other school activities.

## Preschool

As remarked above, while [Saint Thomas' Episcopal Preschool](#) is not currently incorporated in the school, the vision is ultimately to merge it with the K through 12 school, providing an effective, integrated learning environment. The preschool offers a high-quality early childhood experience for young students in a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment where children learn and grow using a developmentally appropriate curriculum. The preschool philosophy embraces the following attributes:

- Promote positive and collaborative learning and problem-solving skills
- Produce social skills and emotional awareness to build independence and relationships
- Enhance both fine and gross motor skills to facilitate prewriting
- Grow in God's love with an understanding of Christianity
- Establish a sense of community and a proper understanding of stewarding God's creation

Saint Thomas' Preschool prepares children for the more formal learning environment they will encounter in Kindergarten.

## Lower School

The [Lower School](#) lays the foundations of literacy and mathematics, and develops skills in physical education, art, music, and science to provide a solid platform for future studies and beyond. Paper and pencil media are emphasized, avoiding excessive use of electronics in the classroom.

Kindergarten at Saint Thomas' Episcopal School is the first step towards a well-rounded, classical education with Christian values. Children are academically, mentally, and emotionally well-prepared for subsequent Lower School grades. Class time features a daily worship service that includes a Bible story complementing the daily curriculum. Coursework focuses on the study and practical application of structured phonetics-based reading instruction, mathematics, spelling, handwriting, lab science, Spanish, and history, as well as character building exercises.



The first through third grade curricula provide a solid foundation in the skills of reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, and grammar, as well as in science, history, and Spanish. Both rote memory (mathematics facts memorization) and critical thinking are emphasized. Students also gain an understanding of the Christian worldview through worship in Chapel and sacred studies class. Latin instruction begins in the fourth grade. The fourth and fifth grades continue to build on the basic foundation that has been laid while focusing more on preparing students for the accelerated liberal arts curriculum in Middle and Upper schools. Marking period Honor Roll recognition begins with fourth grade students, for example. By fifth grade, students develop their organizational skills, by employing note-taking techniques and outlines for study and recall.

## Middle School

Saint Thomas' [Middle School](#) curriculum builds on principles of personal responsibility and citizenship as introduced during the Lower School years. The Middle School serves as a safe place during a critical time in the development of a child's personal identity. Students enhance their abilities in time management, independent versus team-based collaboration, and connected thinking throughout their academic day. The Middle School follows a "class period" schedule, and students move to different classes and teachers throughout the day. Students select their own electives from a broad range of possibilities, including dance, foreign languages, programming, cryptography, and oral performance. In accordance with the school's classical educational philosophy, Latin is required in middle school. Clubs and class trips supplement the traditional education offered at Saint Thomas' and are a popular part of the program.

## Upper School

Saint Thomas' offers students a rigorous, college preparatory liberal arts [Upper School](#) curriculum that emphasizes mathematics, sciences, and languages in addition to the traditional liberal arts disciplines of English, history, religion, and philosophy. Roughly twenty Advanced Placement (AP) courses are available beginning in the sophomore year. Students with the most rigorous course schedules could take between six and ten AP courses during their Upper School career. Courses are taught in a seven-period schedule. Grades are posted at the end of each marking period (quarter).

Saint Thomas' engages students in a classical-style education, including study of Latin, philosophy, and the classics. Students must complete required literature reading each summer which in the past has included *Quo Vadis*, *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *The Picture of Dorian Grey*, and *Twelve Years a Slave*. Mathematics classes are significantly tracked through the Middle and Upper Schools.

Saint Thomas' neither calculates nor reports class rank. Grade Point Averages are computed on a weighted 4.0 scale and students earn an additional point for each AP class. Non-academic electives (i.e. band, highland dance) are not computed in the GPA.

## College Matriculations 2019-2021

Arizona State University  
University of Arkansas (2)  
Baylor University (15)  
Bellevue College  
Blinn Team Texas A&M (4)  
Boston University (2)  
University of California-Davis  
University of California-San Diego  
University of Central Arkansas  
Colorado Mesa University  
Colorado School of Mines (2)  
Colorado State University-Fort Collins  
Columbia University  
University of Connecticut  
Cornell University  
University of Denver  
Dordt University  
Florida Institute of Technology  
Fordham University  
Furman University  
George Washington University  
Georgetown University  
Hampton University  
Houston Baptist University (2)  
University of Houston (7)  
Johnson & Wales University  
Liberty University  
Louisiana State University (3)  
Mississippi State University  
Mississippi University for Women  
University of Missouri-Columbia  
Northeastern University  
University of Oklahoma- Norman (2)  
Pennsylvania State University  
University of Pennsylvania  
Prairie View A & M University  
Purdue University  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
Rice University (3)  
Savannah College of Art & Design  
Southern Methodist University  
Southwestern University  
Saint Edward's University (2)  
Stephen F. Austin State University  
Syracuse University  
Texas A & M University (17)  
Texas Christian University  
Texas State University ( 3)  
Texas Tech University (4)  
University of Texas- Austin (5)  
University of Texas-San Antonio (6)  
University of Texas-Tyler  
Trinity University (3)  
Tulane University  
United States Coast Guard Academy  
University of St. Thomas  
University of Virginia  
University of Washington  
Wyoming Catholic College



## Visual and Performing Arts

The arts have always been an important element of the Saint Thomas' Episcopal School experience. From Kindergarten onwards, creative skills are nurtured and explored through arts that extend from the Scottish Arts program to visual art, theater, choir, orchestra, and private music lessons. The new academic building is equipped with large art studios, including a kiln.

Beginning in Kindergarten, visual arts and general music instruction teach the foundational elements of singing, drawing, and design so that students can pursue the path they choose with the confidence and capabilities to succeed. Students may participate in a formal choir by audition beginning in 3rd Grade and can audition for the Junior String Ensemble. Middle School adds opportunities in choir and theater (Oral Presentation) as well as the String Ensemble for 7th and 8th grade students with sufficient note reading and skills development. Upper School students enjoy continued advanced choral and orchestral opportunities as well as an extensive list of live theater performances. From the fall musical, to the spring play, to the talent show, to the senior showcase, each student is given opportunities to shine — onstage and off.

### Scottish Arts

A unique part of Saint Thomas' is its world-renowned Scottish Arts department. Comprised of piping, drumming, and Highland Dance, the Scottish Arts program enjoys an international reputation for excellence, as well as world championships to show for their hard work. Each year the program presents the [Sounds of Scotland](#) performance to the entire Houston community.

Students participating in the Pipe Band receive instruction on the Great Highland bagpipe or Scottish snare, tenor, or bass drum. Students may begin learning to play the bagpipes and drums in the 4th grade and progress through three levels (C, B, A) of the Pipe Band. The A and B band members participate in the annual Salado Highland Games in Salado, Texas. The A band also travels internationally to perform and compete in the World Pipe Band Championships.

Highland Dance students in the Lower, Middle, and Upper Schools receive the benefits of superior physical exercise, precise muscle control, personal grace, a sense of rhythm, and coordination between body and mind. Students may elect to take after school dance instruction to prepare for competitions at the local, regional, national, and international levels. Competitive dancers typically participate at highland games in Salado, Houston, and Arlington, and perform at various elementary school and church groups in the Houston area.



## Athletics

Saint Thomas' Episcopal School Saints offer [numerous sports K through 12](#) as a key aspect of character and leadership development skills both on and off the field. Student athletes are expected to uphold Saints team values of character, commitment, and community. Saint Thomas' believes that by putting God first, followed by family, academics, and athletics, student athletes become balanced spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally. Over forty teams are fielded in the Middle and Upper Schools. Summer programs are offered in cross country, girls' volleyball, and basketball. Saint Thomas' competes in TAPPS - Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools.

## Clubs and Activities

Saint Thomas' Episcopal School offers students opportunities to pursue their academic and service interests beyond the classroom through [extracurricular activities](#). Academic clubs and activities are designed to promote critical thinking and reasoning skills, as well as teamwork. Offerings include both academic and service clubs. Jr. Classical League (Latin), Mock Trial, Quiz Bowl, and Math & Science Club lead the academic clubs. On-campus clubs offer students a variety of activities designed to promote character building and leadership. Numerous clubs provide service within and outside Saint Thomas' including Student Foundation, Student Ambassadors, Hope Club, Cub Scouts, Girls Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Cotillion. Spiritual growth is provided through Awaken the Dawn, an Upper School weekly service and Bible study.

[Summer activities](#) include the Kidventure summer camp for ages 3 through 4th grade, Student Life Camp for 3rd-6th grades, and Generate Youth Camp for 9th through 12th grades. Students can also enjoy vacation Bible school, Language Kids Camp that introduces younger students to world languages, a Rice University math camp, and the Balmoral Workshop introducing and honing piping, drumming, and dance skills.

## Upper School Honor Council

A significant component of student formation is the Honor Council. In its judicial role, The Honor Council reviews and judges any case that comes before it concerning violations of the school's Honor Code. It then makes recommendations for action to the Headmaster, where the final appeal rests. The Upper School Honor Council is comprised of four seniors and four juniors. The Headmaster and Upper School teachers nominate junior students at the beginning of each year, and then their classmates vote on the list of nominees. Elected juniors serve for two years.

## Athletics Offerings

**LS**—basketball, soccer

**MS**—cross country, girls' volleyball, soccer, basketball, track & field, golf, tennis, swimming

**US**—cross country, girls' volleyball, soccer, basketball, track & field, golf, tennis, swimming





## Governance

The by-laws of Saint Thomas' Episcopal Church and School provide for a School Board, consisting of twelve members and its Chair, who is currently (and traditionally) the Rector of the church. The Vestry of Saint Thomas' delegates to the School Board the authority to establish policies and to properly administer, control, operate, and maintain the school. The Headmaster is appointed by the School Board and its Chair. The School Board meets regularly throughout the year. In recent years the School Board has developed two successive strategic plans to guide the development of the school. The School Board members serve on various committees and work with the Headmaster to advance the school.

## Administration

The Headmaster and Rector share the professional services of a Chief Business Officer and an (Interim) Director of Advancement / Director of Communications, who provide support to the church, the school, and the preschool. The Headmaster is expected to provide work direction to these staff pertaining to their activities in support of the school. The Headmaster, along with these officers and the preschool director, serves with the Rector as the Senior Leadership team of Saint Thomas' Episcopal Church and School. In addition, the Headmaster meets regularly with the division heads for the Lower School, Middle School, and Upper School. The Director of Admissions, Director of Technology, and Athletic Director also participate in administrative team duties.

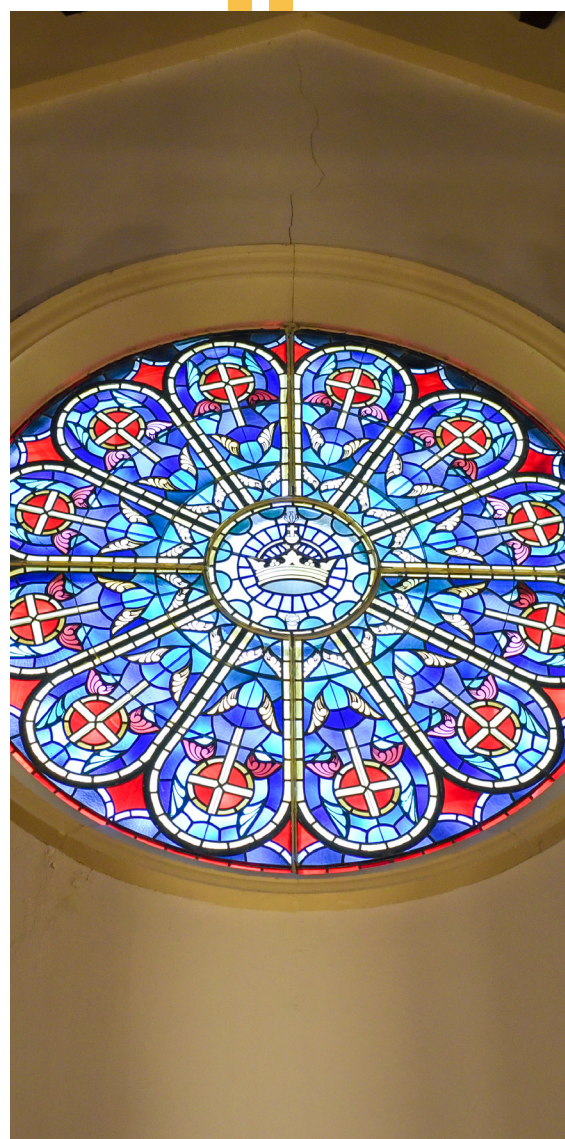
## Finance

In recent years, the School Board and Headmaster have been taking deliberate steps to modernize and professionalize the administration of the school. In 2020, Saint Thomas' employed its first Chief Business Officer (CBO) to support business and finance operations for the church and school. The CBO also oversees facilities and information technology for the church and school. Substantial progress has been made to rationalize finances, advance day-to-day operations, and ensure that long-term financial decision-making related to loan covenants is properly forecasted and managed. Successful partnership with FEMA following Hurricane Harvey and the grant of federal PPP Loans during the COVID-19 pandemic have strengthened the school's financial position.

## Advancement

The school is close to concluding a major capital campaign to support the \$29M renovation and construction project made necessary by the impacts of Hurricane Harvey. The donations generated by this campaign substantially exceeded initial expectations, reflecting the commitment of the community to the success of the school.

Long-term growth and success of both the church and school require professional and effective development and communication functions. There are plans to transition from the current interim Advancement Director role to a permanent "Chief Advancement Officer", who will oversee all fundraising, alumni relations, community engagement, marketing, and communication for the church and school.





## Opportunities at Saint Thomas' Episcopal School

One of the highest ranked independent schools in the Houston area, Saint Thomas' Episcopal School has overcome many challenges in recent years, beginning in 2017 when Hurricane Harvey devastated large portions of campus. In the aftermath of this event, and through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Saint Thomas' community has forged ahead to achieve the recent renovation and re-opening of the church, renovation of multiple other damaged buildings, and the construction of a new signature building on campus.

Middle and Upper School students will return to their own spaces in this remarkable facility this spring. Strong leadership from the School Board, Vestry, and school administration have brought Saint Thomas' through these challenges to another inflection point in its history, the selection of a new Headmaster to succeed a longtime, beloved, and successful Headmaster, Michael Cusack, Class of 1979. There are many opportunities ahead for the Saint Thomas' community and the Headmaster:

- Focus on enrollment and retention to better address attrition levels at certain grades and return Saint Thomas' to its more sustainable and historic levels of enrollment
- Strengthen and promote the school-wide commitment to academic excellence, Christian education, and classical education while advancing the educational experience of every child
- Work with the School Board to lead the faculty and school community toward a clearer definition of classical-Christian education by building alignment around essential goals and values
- Partner with the Rector to better align the church and school, unify the school and preschool, and strengthen the School Board / school administration relationship
- Continue efforts of the School Board and Interim Headmaster to professionalize school policies and consistently implement them across the community
- Communicate and adhere to policies and procedures for all community members that are consistent with the mission and core values of the school; restore the clear Saint Thomas' School identity and unify the School culture
- Complete the development of a clearly defined organization with well-defined job descriptions
- Bring to maturity a professional development and evaluation system designed to proactively support teachers, staff and administrators in a consistent manner that strengthens the school and reinforces the benefits of a classical-Christian education
- Develop a plan to prioritize and address staffing needs
- Maintain important school traditions that define the Saint Thomas' culture and unify the community
- Enhance school-wide, transparent communication to ensure community trust and participation in school improvement efforts
- Enhance teaching methods and curriculum to better leverage the single sex classrooms in the Lower and Middle Schools
- Support and expand the Center for Academic Excellence, which is the support service division for students with learning differences.

## Candidate Attributes and Experiences

Saint Thomas' Episcopal School, with the support of its community, seeks a passionate, engaged, and committed Headmaster who has demonstrated the ability to embrace and advance the unique mission, vision, and philosophy of education of the School.

### *The new Headmaster will be:*

- A committed Christian who believes and models a Christ-centered worldview
- Committed to Saint Thomas' classical-Christian educational philosophy, high academic expectations, strength of community, arts, physical education, and Scottish Arts program
- Inspiring and passionate about the School, its faculty, staff, and students
- A person of empathy, compassion, and high integrity who is also a relationship builder with strong emotional intelligence attributes
- Highly visible, accessible, and approachable by all constituents
- A role model for children and adults able to show warmth, care, and joy
- Passionate about working with faculty to further enhance academic and extracurricular programs
- Comfortable in all relevant professional and social environments.

### *Candidates must demonstrate most, if not all, of the following critical competencies:*

- Ability to grow the enrollment of a school in a competitive environment
- Track record for uniting a community around a vision and strategic plan
- A flexible thinker who can lead through change while respecting and honoring tradition
- Highly skilled at resolving conflict when required
- Enthusiasm for fund raising and community development
- Commitment to service to the school and greater community.

### *Candidates should demonstrate the following executive leadership and management abilities and credentials:*

- An advanced degree or equivalent experiences, such as extensive continuing education, and demonstrated professional development
- A record of achievement with at least seven years of senior administrative experience
- A demonstrated understanding of systems thinking, consistent policy implementation, active support of faculty and staff, and a commitment to accountability
- An understanding of the advantages of single sex education, especially in the Lower and Middle Schools
- The ability to address big picture issues as well as the details of leading a school community
- Experience in recruiting, supervising, and developing high functioning teams and the necessary employee support that ensures the retention of excellent and motivated faculty
- Respected as an excellent communicator with skill in public speaking and writing.



## Information On The Search Process And Calendar

A search is underway to identify a new Headmaster for Saint Thomas' Episcopal School in Houston, Texas. The new Headmaster will assume the role on July 1, 2023. Saint Thomas' Episcopal School is an accredited member of the Southwest Association of Episcopal Schools. The School has appointed a Search Committee to conduct the search and has engaged a national executive search firm, Educational Directions Incorporated, to assist the Search Committee.

Candidates are asked to express their interest in Saint Thomas' Episcopal School Headmaster position no later than July 1, 2022. Please direct all inquiries, applications, and nominations in confidence to:

**Mike Murphy, Partner**  
[mmurphy@edu-directions.com](mailto:mmurphy@edu-directions.com)  
727-409-2330

**Dr. John Watson, Partner**  
[jwatson@edu-directions.com](mailto:jwatson@edu-directions.com)  
239-293-1124

### ***Each candidate should submit:***

- A letter addressed to the Search Committee explaining his or her specific interest in Saint Thomas' Episcopal School
- A resume
- A personal statement
- The names, email addresses, and telephone numbers of five professional references. (Finalists will be expected to provide seven additional references)
- Reference letters sent directly to the search consultant are optional
- Electronic submission of credentials is expected.

### ***Search Calendar:***

All Application materials due	<b>July 29</b>
Semifinalist Selections	<b>Sunday, Aug 21</b>
Semifinalist Interviews	<b>Sat &amp; Sun Sept 17-18</b>
Finalist Interviews	<b>Sept 29-Oct 7</b>

**The compensation package will be within the expected norms of comparable schools.**

*It is the policy of Saint Thomas' Episcopal Church and School to maintain a school environment that is free from discrimination and to conduct its educational practices, admissions program, financial aid policies, hiring and other school-administrative programs on the basis of an individual's qualifications and abilities. Saint Thomas' Episcopal Church and School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (unless it is required as a bona fide occupational qualification), sex, national origin, age, or any other characteristic that is protected by law.*

