

POSITION STATEMENT

ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI



HEAD OF LOWER SCHOOL SEARCH
START DATE: JULY 1, 2026





PURPOSE AND MISSION

We welcome. We wonder. We worship. We love. These words summarize how the St. Andrew's Christian and Episcopal roots are demonstrated in the community. The school's mission—"to nurture a diverse community in the Episcopal tradition, fostering spiritual growth, moral responsibility, academic excellence, and artistic and athletic pursuits, while preparing for a life of service to our community and the world"—guides every program and practice.

OVERVIEW

St. Andrew's Episcopal School (SAES) seeks an experienced, compassionate, and strategic educator to serve as its next Head of Lower School. Serving infants through Grade 4, the Lower School represents the foundation of a St. Andrew's education—where children are known, nurtured, and challenged in an environment that blends academic excellence with empathy, creativity, and character formation.

A coeducational, independent, college preparatory day school, St. Andrew's is distinguished by its mission-driven Episcopal identity, academic profile, its deep commitment to diversity and inclusion, and belief in educating the whole child—mind, body, and spirit. Across its Lower, Middle, and Upper Schools, SAES fosters students who think critically, act with integrity, lead with confidence and compassion, and flourish as unique, resilient, and happy human beings.

The next Head of Lower School will join a vibrant, well-resourced division known for its strong sense of community, exceptional faculty, collaboration, and deeply intentional approach to teaching and learning. This leader will provide strategic leadership and maintain congruency between all programs and the school's mission to ensure the Lower School continues to be a place where curiosity is fostered, character is shaped, and every child is known and loved.

In the Lower School, this mission comes alive through an approach that nurtures both heart and mind. Weekly chapel, social-emotional learning, and a values-based culture teach children to treat others with kindness and respect. The atmosphere in the Lower School is joyful, and the program's balance of rigor and joy ensures that students not only master foundational skills but also develop the empathy, integrity, and resilience that define lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

HISTORY

Founded in 1947 within St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, the school began as a small parish day school in Jackson, Mississippi. Over the past seven decades, St. Andrew's has grown into one of the leading independent schools in the Southeast, now serving more than 1,000 students across two campuses in Jackson and Ridgeland. Throughout its evolution, SAES has remained steadfast in its founding vision: to offer a rigorous education within a community guided by faith, inclusivity, and moral purpose. The school's national reputation for academic excellence and innovation reflects both its Episcopal heritage and its forward-looking educational philosophy.

LOCATION

The Lower School campus in Jackson provides a welcoming, child-centered environment surrounded by open green spaces, play areas, and gardens. Students and families describe the campus as warm, safe, and joyful—a place where “every adult knows your name.” As Mississippi’s capital, Jackson offers cultural richness and diversity, with access to museums, civic programs, and community partnerships that enrich the educational experience.

LOWER SCHOOL ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The Lower School at St. Andrew’s is known for its intentional and well-balanced academic program, combining intellectual challenge with developmental appropriateness and social-emotional growth. Faculty work collaboratively to design and refine curriculum that is thoughtful, engaging, and aligned with the school’s mission. Key programmatic strengths include:

- **Discovery through Science:**

Students have early opportunities for scientific wonder through the Early Childhood Art-Science curriculum, blending artistic concepts with early chemistry and biology concepts. The Discovery Center in the Lower School provides state-of-the-art laboratories, a maker space, and digital resources to provide a firm scientific foundation. Semi-annual farmers markets are a hallmark of the 4th-grade junior master gardener program, introducing important scientific and horticultural concepts that continue into middle school.



- **Global Voices:** An extension of the Global Studies program, Global Voices features immersive experiences to expose students to the beautiful diversity within our community and around the world. Important events like Diwali, Lunar New Year, and Hanukkah are celebrated by the entire community, reinforcing inclusion, understanding and appreciation of difference, and global competence.
- **Arts and Music:** A robust arts curriculum encourages expression and creativity through music, visual arts, and performance. Students interact with art and music well before they can even walk, and continue their progression through their elementary years, culminating in art shows and grade-level musicals.
- **World Languages:** St. Andrew’s students begin their study of Spanish at an early age. As they progress through the school curriculum, they launch from their Lower School foundation and have the option to study a different language in middle and upper school. Spanish lessons are often taught entirely in the target language and emphasize rich cultural elements of the Spanish-speaking world.

- **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL):** Deeply embedded in daily practice, SEL ensures that children feel seen, supported, and valued. Teachers guide students in developing empathy, resilience, and self-awareness, emphasizing care for self and others. With the support of specialists in learning services, counseling, and chaplaincy, teachers adapt instruction to meet individual needs and provide a robust academic experience for both the heads and hearts of students.
- **Faculty Collaboration:** Regular planning and support meetings ensure alignment across grade levels and divisions to provide consistency and continuity of academic experience. The tight-knit faculty experience is driven by professional excellence and high expectations tempered with strong support.

The result is a dynamic learning environment where children grow academically while developing confidence, creativity, and a strong moral compass.

LOWER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

There are three distinct levels that comprise the campus of the Lower School: Foundations (for infants and toddlers), Early Childhood (for preschool and kindergarten) and Lower School (for Grades 1-4).

Foundations: Rooted in science, kindness, and love and administered by experts in early childhood development, Foundations nurtures infants' and toddlers' curiosity and emotional growth by stimulating brain development through rich, interactive experiences that begin a lifelong love of learning. Grounded in the school's Episcopal values, the program welcomes families of all faiths and cultures, fostering empathy, compassion, and meaningful connections in an intentionally diverse community. The Director of Foundations reports to the Head of Lower School.

Early Childhood Center: The Early Childhood program provides a deeply supportive environment that tends to each child's health and happiness. It celebrates the wonder of childhood while nurturing the skills and confidence that prepare children for more specific subject learning. In these years of profound growth, teachers guide each child's social, emotional, physical, cognitive, linguistic, and spiritual development—shaping enthusiastic learners and thoughtful human beings. The multisensory program invites children to investigate their world with curiosity and joy, filling each day with discovery, collaboration, and creativity. Students learn to practice kindness, respect, cooperation and responsibility empowering them to care for themselves and others in their community. The Director of the Early Childhood Center is also the Associate Head of Lower School and reports to the Head of Lower School.



Lower School: The Lower School Program meets each child where they are and equips them with the skills, confidence, and character to reach higher—academically, socially, and personally. The challenging and developmentally calibrated curriculum ensures mastery of core subjects while inspiring curiosity and collaboration through hands-on projects and individualized support. Included in the curriculum is a service-learning program that encourages students to understand and respond to the needs of others, nurturing compassion, leadership, and a lasting sense of purpose. By the end of Lower School, St. Andrew's students see themselves as capable learners and responsible citizens—ready to meet challenges with confidence and contribute their unique gifts to the world.



LIFE BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

St. Andrew's Lower School offers an abundance of opportunities for students to explore their interests and build community beyond academics.

- **Spiritual Growth:** St. Andrew's follows the liturgical calendar and has weekly chapel services in the Episcopal tradition. Students in the Lower School also participate in the Montessori-based Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in Little Chapel, which focuses on God's love through Jesus as the Good Shepherd.
- **Physical Education and Wellness:** Daily physical activity supports both health and character development. In addition to recess, students are part of a robust fitness program that builds coordination, fine/gross motor skills, and allows students to explore a host of athletic options. As they age, they have access to additional opportunities like our intramural program and Strong Saints, a morning program that grows athleticism in developmentally appropriate ways.
- **Service Learning:** Age-appropriate community engagement instills empathy and a sense of civic responsibility. St. Andrew's faculty beautifully build community within and outside their classroom walls, and as they age, students are able to participate in local service opportunities.
- **Traditions and Community Events:** Beloved traditions such as May Day, the kindergarten Fairy Tale Tea Party, and the 2nd grade Ocean Day create shared memories and a deep sense of belonging. Many older students and alumni still remember these traditions with fondness as important signposts through their St. Andrew's journey.

Together, these experiences, along with many others, foster confidence, connection, and joy in every child's school journey.

SCHOOL DATA

Year Founded:	1947
Ages/Grades Served:	6 weeks - 12th grade
Total Enrollment:	Including Foundations: 1050; PK3-12th: 973
Diversity %:	34% Students of Color
Students Receiving Aid %:	34%
Total Non-Faculty Aid Given:	\$1,874,440
Annual Budget:	\$19.6 million
Lower School Faculty:	66
Student/Faculty Ratio:	7:1
Average Lower School Class Size:	14
Average Faculty Tenure at School:	8 years
Lower School Tuition:	\$21,390
Most Recent Accreditation:	March of 2023
Accreditations, Memberships, Affiliations:	<p> AdvancED Association of College Counselors in Independent Schools (ACCIS) College Board Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Educational Records Bureau (ERB) Institute for Global Learning Independent School Management (ISM) INDEX National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES) National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Southern Association for College Admission Counseling (SACAC) Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS) Malone Schools Online Network (MSON) </p>



NEW LOWER SCHOOL BUILDING

In 1966, the new St. Andrew's building was heralded as "an architectural and educational wonderland." It is in that same spirit that they have begun construction on a new Lower School building, set to open in the fall of 2026. The new building and dining facility is phase I of a campus master plan, which will later include phases II and III. The plan reimagines the possibilities of elementary education and will provide unparalleled opportunities for teaching and learning.

NOTABLE OPPORTUNITIES

- Enrollment and Market Position:** With shifting demographics and competitive pressures, the school seeks to strengthen admissions alignment, faculty engagement in recruitment, and summer outreach.
- Leadership Structure and Capacity:** The next leader will help shape a sustainable structure that allows for focused oversight of Foundations, Early Childhood and Lower School programs.
- Opening the new building:** With the new building comes an incredible opportunity to translate robust culture into a new facility while building new operational practices, safety protocols, and organizational habits.
- Faculty Growth and Accountability:** Encouraging open dialogue, shared responsibility, and professional growth will further strengthen the school's culture.
- Transitions and Continuity:** Strengthening coordination between Foundations, Early Childhood, and Lower School will ensure smooth academic and social-emotional progression.

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head of Lower School serves as the educational and administrative leader for all programs from Foundations through Grade 4. Reporting to the Associate Head of School, the Head of Lower School is responsible for the overall climate, culture, and direction of the division.

- Provide strategic leadership for the Lower School and maintain congruency between the school's mission and all activities of the Lower School
- Act as the educational leader of the Lower School, responsible for day-to-day operation.
- Serve as the principal decision-maker for the Lower School.
- Serve as the primary articulator of the Lower School's programs, expectations, behavioral guidelines, and other information to ensure all constituencies are fully informed.
- Recognize and manage the balance between supporting the independence of faculty and overseeing curricular and programmatic coherence and consistency across grade levels, divisions, and departments.
- Observe and serve as a consultant to faculty in matters of development and implementation of curriculum, classroom management, teaching methods, and general school procedures.
- Conduct regular meetings with faculty which deal with routine school matters and with the stimulating exchange of ideas on issues of educational/philosophical interest and concern.
- Assist in the planning and presentation of school assemblies and programs and in maintaining a comprehensive calendar of school events.
- Work closely with new families to welcome them into the St. Andrew's community and help them understand the school's culture.



- Serve as a spokesperson for all issues at the Lower School and represent the Lower School and St. Andrew's in the larger community.
- Hire, supervise, and provide strategic direction for Lower School faculty and staff.
- Oversee the professional growth and annual evaluations of Lower School faculty and staff.
- Develop and manage the Lower School budget.
- Work with appropriate departments to plan and conduct standardized assessments and communicate results with appropriate stakeholders.
- Collaborate with the Office of Admission to recruit, enroll, and retain mission-appropriate students.
- Ensure effective communication and facilitate mutual understanding with Athletic Department
- Serve as one of the principal liaisons with the St. Andrew's Parents' Association.
- Work closely with the Office of Institutional Advancement to support the school's friend- and fundraising efforts.
- Serve on the school's Senior Leadership Team and appropriate committees.
- Stay current on trends in independent schools and curriculum by taking an active role in professional activities and attending relevant professional meetings and conferences.



QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate will demonstrate the following:

- Master's degree required.
- Five to ten years of experience in an elementary/lower school is required. Leadership experience in an independent school is preferred.
- Deep understanding of child development and expertise in social-emotional learning and academic foundations.
- Ability to interface and maintain effective relationships with students, faculty, administrators, parents, alumni, and guests.



- Professional written and verbal communication, organizational, and interpersonal skills
- Collaborative and empowering leadership style with the ability to build strong teams and foster professional growth.
- Ability to handle multiple, simultaneous, and complex tasks and projects efficiently and effectively without constant supervision.
- Commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Respect for and willingness to embrace the Episcopal identity of the school.
- Proficiency in G Suite is preferred.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested candidates may apply online through Resource Group 175 at:

<https://rg175.com/candidate/login>

Applications should include:

- Letter of Interest
- Résumé
- Personal Statement or Educational Philosophy
- List of five references (references will not be contacted without prior notice)

Inquiries and nominations may be directed to the consultant supporting the search:

Joe Coleman
joe.coleman@rg175.com