



Head of School Search

July 1, 2022

St. Bernard Academy

2304 Bernard Avenue

Nashville, TN 37212

www.stbernardacademy.org



**The
Education
Group**

Mission

At St. Bernard Academy, our mission is to provide an excellent Catholic academic education built on a foundation of self-discipline, compassion, and a sense of responsibility for social justice in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy.





OVERVIEW



Founded in 1866, six Sisters of Mercy came to Nashville and opened Saint Bernard Academy to 400 female students. Today St. Bernard Academy serves 385 coeducational students as an uniquely independent Catholic day school located at the edge of the Vanderbilt University campus in Nashville, Tennessee. The close proximity to Vanderbilt provides the opportunity for meaningful connections between St. Bernard and the Vanderbilt community, although the school also draws from a wide geography representative of the greater Nashville area, which provides a delightfully heterogeneous community of learners from many distinctive backgrounds.

The school's mission is: *to provide an excellent Catholic academic education built on a foundation of self-discipline, compassion, and a sense of responsibility for social justice in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy.* St. Bernard believes living out this mission nurtures the students spiritually, personally, and academically, motivating them to strive for achievement in eight core characteristics: mercy, respect, integrity, responsibility, honesty, citizenship, empathy, and service. There is a spirit that permeates the halls of SBA that you feel when you walk through the doors. It's a combination of a history that spans over 150 years, the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy that continues to drive the school mission, and a diverse community that becomes family.

In the fall of 1988, parents of the school formed a not-for-profit foundation and purchased the high school building from the Sisters of Mercy, ushering in the school's new era as an independent, coeducational elementary school.

Today, St. Bernard Academy comprises the original high school building and several additions serving 385 students in Junior Kindergarten through 8th Level. The campus fully supports student life and enrichment activities with several distinctive features including a chapel, science lab, music room, art studio, student support center, and new space for additional fine arts, administration, and aftercare services.

The St. Bernard experience provides students the ability to pursue academic excellence, while focusing on their spiritual development and leadership potential. The School is accredited by the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS) and is a member of the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA), the Tennessee Association of Independent Schools (TAIS), and is affiliated with the Mercy Education System of America (MESA).

ACADEMICS

St. Bernard Academy holds high expectations for students and provides a nurturing and challenging environment to help them meet those expectations and reach their highest potential. St. Bernard prepares children for acceptance to and success in the most selective college-preparatory schools in Nashville. The school demonstrates academic excellence through ongoing faculty attention to curricular improvement and adoption of learning goals – spiritual growth, social responsibility, personal wellness, interpersonal skills, communication skills, thinking and reasoning, expanding knowledge, and learn to learn – that benefit the whole child while preparing each student with the skills and habits of the mind they will need to succeed.

Lower School (Junior Kindergarten - Fourth Level)

The early elementary years are incredibly formative for children's academic, social, and spiritual growth. St. Bernard immerses these young students in a supportive and nurturing learning environment. The school seeks to cultivate active and creative learners through a developmentally appropriate curriculum, creating habits and values that are relevant and long lasting. Beginning in first level, students are offered both grade level and accelerated curriculum in language arts, math, and reading.

Upper School (Fifth - Eighth Level)

In the Upper School the academic curriculum remains anchored in the four core disciplines of mathematics, language arts/literature, science, and history. Writing-intensive language arts curriculum in upper school culminate in an eighth-level research paper project. Language offerings expand to include French as well as Spanish.



Student Support Services (SSS)

Student Support Services is a program designed to support and enrich students through research-based methods proven to unlock student potential. The team is comprised of the school counselor, learning specialists, and a speech/language pathologist. The SSS serves as a resource and as part of a collaborative team with teachers, parents, and outside providers. SSS staff work individually with students but also work closely with classroom teachers and parents to provide ongoing support. For students with dyslexia currently at SBA, a support group for students with dyslexia and their families has been formed to provide further support in navigating the school years. The Einstein Club plans three to four events per year ranging from all group activities (students and families together) to individual activities for students. Parents are offered further education regarding dyslexia through speakers and videos.

PROGRAM FEATURES

SERVICE-LEARNING

Each level, and many clubs and activities, incorporate a Service-Learning component into their curriculum at SBA. Older and younger students are working together, and enriching lives, through service with the school's well-respected Nashville partners "connecting our students' head, heart, and hands" through various projects throughout the year.

EXPLORATION

Students build community outside the SBA walls through school exploration trips. From field trips, to day trips, to week-long educational experiences, SBA students in all levels are offered numerous opportunities to explore – both locally and internationally. All students enjoy visiting numerous local arts, sciences, and cultural centers around Nashville. Day trips begin in the third level with students visiting nearby state attractions. Upper school students participate in outdoor education including community building, nature exploration, outdoor survival, environmental awareness, astronomy, and orienteering. Eighth level students spend a week in New York City, where they visit museums, experience the culture, and learn about the city's history. SBA sponsors the opportunity for a global education journey each summer to rising 5th through 8th level students. These trips incorporate service-learning, sightseeing, and a little bit of adventure to destinations including Costa Rica (2015), Ecuador (2017), and Peru (2019).

SPIRITUAL LIFE

At St. Bernard Academy, spiritual life is an important aspect of student life. The school is rooted in the tradition of the Catholic Mercy sisters, but remains a wonderful religiously diverse community, welcoming students and families from many faith traditions and



cultures. Each day at SBA begins and ends with a prayer of thanksgiving for the day, gifts individually given, and the gifts to share with others. Students also attend a monthly mass service with each grade level preparing one mass during the school year.

ATHLETICS

St. Bernard offers athletic participation to students as early as Kindergarten. Sports include basketball, cheerleading, cross country, football, golf, soccer, and volleyball. Participation in athletics helps students grow and learn the value of competition, sportsmanship, and effort. Every student who wishes to participate in a particular sport is given an opportunity.



AFTERCARE

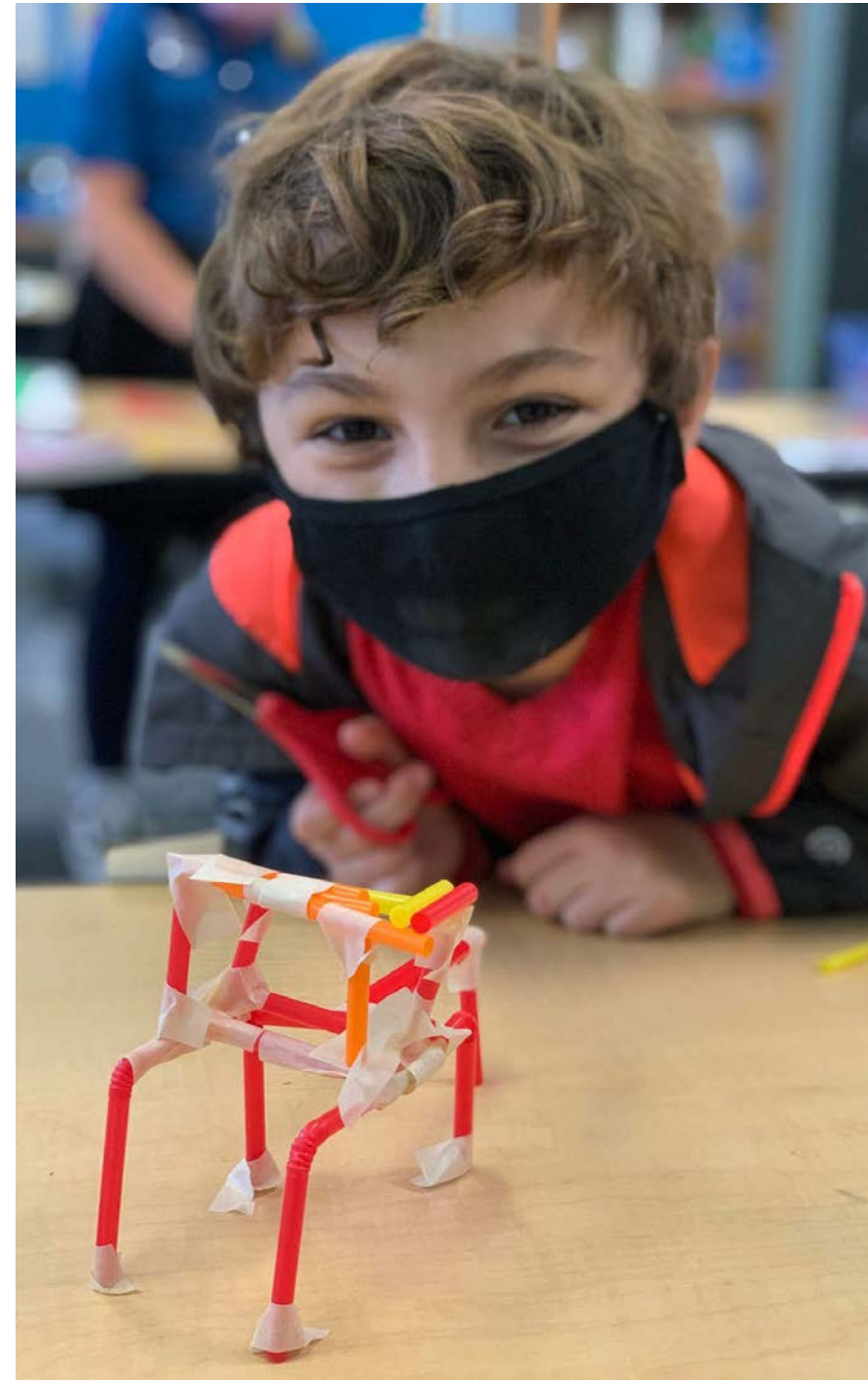
At St. Bernard Academy, the Aftercare program is designed to ensure an enriching, convenient, and successful after-school experience for students and parents. Licensed through the Department of Education, students in Aftercare build community, engage in physical activities, and use their imaginations even after the final bell rings for the school day.

SUMMER PROGRAM

Summer Play Days are offered from early June through the end of July. Children from all schools are invited to join and participate in themed games, activities, and art projects. Special guests join every week to enjoy new topics and opportunities. An additional Summer Camp is offered for academic enrichment; this year Wacky Waves is an exhilarating, cutting-edge area of engineering. In this unit, students will design, build, and test various circuits and electronic projects.

FINE ARTS

Beginning in Junior Kindergarten, music and art classes are incorporated directly into the daily curriculum. The fine arts teachers and directors have combined experience of more than 85 years, and strive to foster a love for the arts in every student they teach. Visual arts, music/choir, theatre, and band offer opportunities to gain confidence in a students' arts interest.





ST. BERNARD ACADEMY FAST FACTS

SCHOOL



Catholic, Independent, coeducational Elementary School

Established: 1866 by Sisters of Mercy

Grades: Junior Kindergarten - 8th Level

Total Enrollment: 385

- **Lower School (JK-4th):** 221
- **Upper School (5th-8th):** 164

Average Class Size: 12

Student/Teacher Ratio: 10:1

Student/Professional Ratio: 6:1

Ethnic Diversity: 18%

3.2-acre campus centrally located in Nashville not far from Vanderbilt and Belmont Universities, and close to HBCU's Fisk University and Meharry Medical College

2017 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence

FACULTY

Teaching Staff: 42

- **Full Time:** 40
- **Part Time:** 2

With Advanced Degrees: 48%

TUITION

\$13,920



Nashville is famous for the Grand Ole Opry, the Ryman Auditorium, aka the Mother Church of Country Music, and twangy honky tonks, but music is just a byproduct of the larger city culture. Music City is a place where people are creative, innovative and eclectic. Entrepreneurs flourish in areas such as healthcare, IT, and a plethora of new start-ups enjoying a solid start in this booming town. The tendency for innovation has positively influenced Nashville in myriad ways. The job market is strong and diverse. The exploding entertainment industry employs everyone from the musically talented to the huge crowd of support staff specifically talented in their own specialties. Complimenting the creativity of the music scene is a large and skilled group of individuals providing artisanal crafts and workshops.

Of course, music is a huge draw in Nashville. Located downtown, the Country Music Hall of Fame attracts more than 1 million visitors each year. Also nearby, many talented musicians regularly take the stage at the Ryman Auditorium and the Ascend Amphitheater. In terms of nightlife, lower Broadway is an amazing array of honky tonk performances, restaurants, and bars, with the Nashville sound pouring out of watering holes like Tootsies Orchid Lounge and Robert's Western World every day and night.

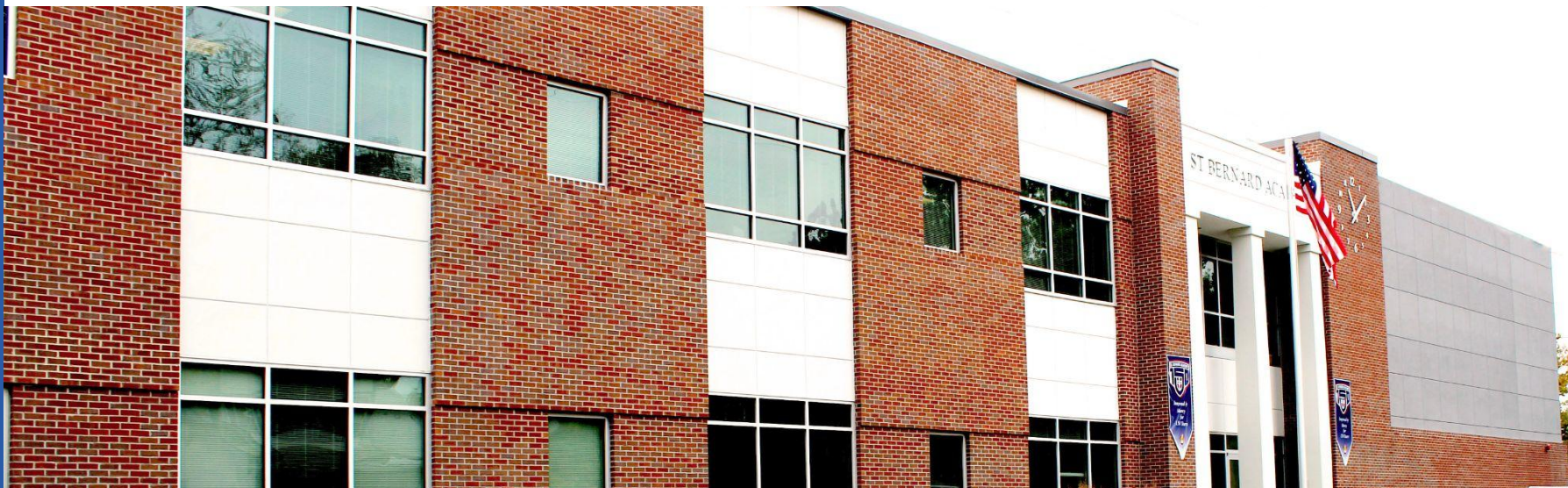
Food is also a huge part of the Nashville draw. It is known for traditional meat-and-three joints and hot chicken, but also is home to many highly skilled chefs and high-end restaurants serving the millions of tourists, as well as locals, that flood the Nashville community every year.



Large numbers of Tennessee Titans (NFL) and Nashville Predators (NHL) fans come to town on game days and contribute to the booming economy of Nashville. The minor league baseball team Nashville Sounds also call the area home, as does the Nashville SC Major League Soccer team.

Nashville is a wonderful place to raise a family and is home to many family-centered activities such as Centennial Park, the Adventure Science Center and the Nashville Zoo at Grassmere. The cost of living in Nashville is relatively modest for such a desirable city and hovers 3% below the national average.

In general, the weather in Nashville is enjoyable, with more than 200 days of sunshine per year. Four distinct seasons provide Nashville with an interesting and diverse climate with each season ideally lasting approximately one-quarter of the year, providing a very nice balance.



The Position

St. Bernard Academy seeks a leader to build upon the success of Mr. Chuck Sabo who has served as Head of School since 2006. The next Head will be expected to lead the faculty, promote the school, articulate the value proposition, and work with the Board to engage in strategic planning. The leadership team includes two academic division heads, a dedicated Business Manager, Director of Admissions, Director of Development, Director of Technology, Director of Operations, Office Manager, Marketing Assistant, and School Nurse. The Head of School is responsible for leading and overseeing all aspects of the school and works closely with the Board of Trustees.

Responsibilities begin **July 1, 2022.**



Professional Qualifications

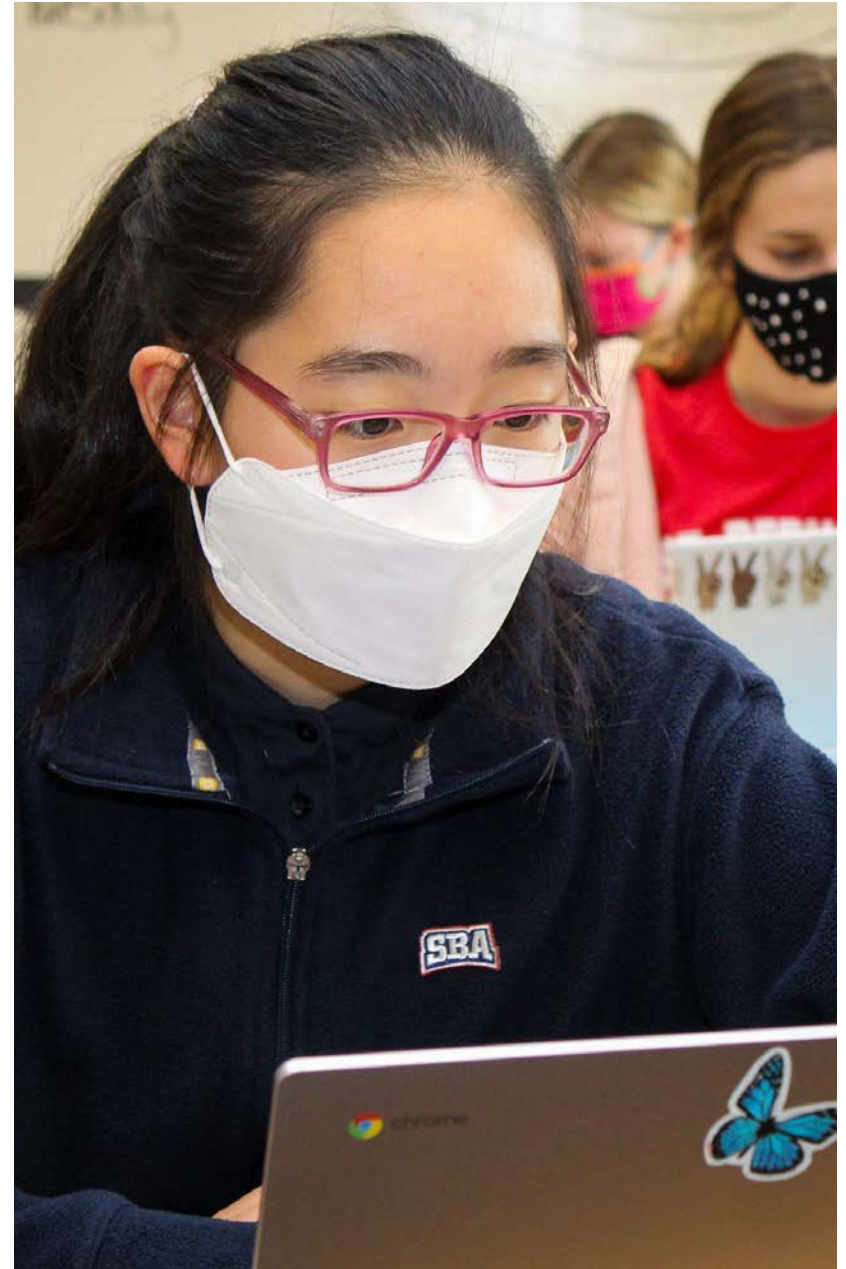
The successful candidate will exhibit the following:

- Professional, progressive and visionary educator
- Strategic thinker - both short and long term
- Proven track record of success
- Community builder - Outgoing, engaging, networking, inclusivity
- Leader/developer of educators - promoting both group work and autonomous innovation
- Excellent communicator
- Experience working with parents/boards
- Business acumen - especially in independent schools
- Interest and talent for fundraising
- Preferably lower and/or middle school experience

Personal Qualities

The strong family atmosphere of Saint Bernard's Academy expects a leader who demonstrates the following personal characteristics:

- A strong Catholic identity
- Highly personable and positive - values relationships
- Ability to motivate - create a culture of helpfulness
- Supports inclusivity and social justice



Challenges and Opportunities

The new Head of School will be challenged to:

- Implementation of new Strategic Plan - develop tactics and strategies
<https://www.stbernardacademy.org/about/strategic-plan-2020>
- Further promotion of Catholic Identity, while continuing to respect religious diversity at the School
- Continue rigorous academic programming, while supporting social and emotional learning
- Continued nurturing of the whole-child concept
- Financial stability and sustainability
- Support justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion within SBA community
- Develop and support a high quality faculty
- Develop new enrollment markets - East Nashville
- Increase use of strategic marketing
- Improve development and support of athletic and fine arts programs



How to Apply

Prospective candidates should send the following materials in a single PDF document to the search consultants. Candidates will be evaluated as materials received:

- Letter of interest specifically addressing this position and school
- Resume (education and work experience)
- Statement of educational philosophy
- List of five professional references with contact information
- Letters of reference, if available, but not required



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St. Bernard Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected status in the administration of its educational, admission, financial aid or employment policies, or any other programs administered by the School.