



# OREGON EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

Portland, Oregon

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**HEAD OF SCHOOL**  
Start Date: July 2023  
[oes.edu](http://oes.edu)



Carney  
Sandoe  
& ASSOCIATES



Oregon  
Episcopal  
School

## Mission Statement

Oregon Episcopal School prepares students for higher education and lifelong learning by inspiring intellectual, physical, social, emotional, artistic, and spiritual growth so that they may realize their power for good as citizens of local and world communities.

## OVERVIEW

An independent, co-ed, college preparatory day and boarding school, Oregon Episcopal School offers classes from pre-K through grade 12 on a campus in Portland surrounded by woods and wetlands. Founded in 1869, Oregon Episcopal School (OES) is the oldest independent Episcopal school west of the Rockies. Thanks to its unparalleled surroundings and robust history, OES today successfully operates at the nexus of nature and nurture; the school thrives on its proximity to truly awe-inspiring nature and, at the same time, it offers students a unique opportunity to develop their mind, body, and spirit in equal measure.

Perched on the Pacific Rim, nestled between the ocean and the mountains, bordered by both natural wetlands and urban development, OES would not be the same were it located anywhere else; place is paramount to the OES culture. The school community works together to foster students' intrinsic curiosity about complex environments and people of diverse backgrounds, creating intentional connections and collaborative, sustainable solutions.

Equally important as its physical home, OES's Episcopal foundation also makes it a place unlike any other. Rooted in a rhythm of gathering and reflection, OES faculty and staff educate toward a larger purpose—toward inclusion and respect, understanding and compassion, service, and social justice. Additionally, grounded in the belief that the advancement of knowledge flows from open and rigorous inquiry, OES cultivates the life of the mind and the whole person by connecting questions with exploration and discovery, theories with scrutiny, expression with art, and self with subject.

## At a Glance

Founded: 1869

Total students: 880

Students of color: 44%

Total faculty: 116

Faculty of color: 16%

Faculty with advanced degrees: 81%

Student/teacher ratio: 7:1

Financial aid awarded: \$3.5M

Students receiving aid: 21%

Endowment & Reserves: \$35.2M

Mascot: Aardvark



OES is seeking a new Head of School to assume the role in July 2023. Strong candidates will be collaborative, flexible, and dynamic with the ability to genuinely connect with diverse individuals and who find joy in being visible, immersed, and connected to a school community. The new Head will have a rich personal faith, too, that models empathy and compassion, a commitment to justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion, and honors the tremendous value gained from interpersonal relationships

## SCHOOL HISTORY

Oregon Episcopal School began in 1869 as St. Helen's Hall, a boarding and day school for girls. It attracted students from the rural areas of Oregon, as well as from Alaska, Hawaii, Washington, and Idaho. The school moved several times during its first century to different locations in downtown Portland before moving to its present location in Raleigh Hills in 1964.

In 1972, St. Helen's Hall merged with Bishop Dagwell Hall, an all-boys school, and was renamed Oregon Episcopal School. Over the years, the school has grown in the number of students and in the quality of its facilities. Meyer Hall was built in 1996 as a spacious new facility for Middle School students that was topped by a "green" roof with soil and plants in 2006. The Drinkward Center for Math, Science, and Technology opened in 2003 with state-of-the-art laboratories and equipment. In 2016, the school introduced a new 45,000 square foot Lower School facility for pre-K through fifth grade students. Designed to facilitate the Reggio Emilia-based curriculum, its openness, transparency, and light reflect a willingness to embrace new ideas, cultures, and people that is at the core of OES's mission, vision, and values. The newly renovated and vastly expanded Athletic Center, now with almost 42,000 square feet, opened September 2021. The OES campus also has two wetland areas, a ropes course, nature trails, greenhouse, gardens, a Chapel, and multiple outdoor athletic facilities.



## THE SCHOOL

Among the woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife of the hills of Southwest Portland lies the unique educational experience that is Oregon Episcopal School. The school occupies a 59-acre campus where nearly 900 students in pre-K through grade 12 share an excellent faculty, follow a college preparatory curriculum, and contribute to a strong sense of community. Small classes at every level provide intimate learning environments that allow teachers to instill in each student a love for learning and to help young people develop their spirit as well as their mind. “Students are known as a whole person,” commented one faculty member, “not just an academic person. We care about students’ learning and well-being.” Offering a true liberal arts curriculum, OES is dedicated to scholarship and an enriched academic environment of “learning by doing” that strives to help each individual reach their fullest potential. This way, each educational experience leads to the next one, and can always be driven by the passion and persistence of the student who serves, in effect, as the architect of their education. A current parent noted, “Our children are pushed to extend themselves and are taught and supported and then encouraged to keep extending themselves.”



“The school community lives its values,” reflected a faculty member. “I feel like we’re all pulling in the same direction.” OES believes that all forms of diversity in its community are essential to the school’s success and is committed to raising awareness about differences, engaging in dialogue, and recognizing the courage it takes to see the world in new ways. “Part of the reason we chose OES is because we saw a range of families—a range of parental situations, multiracial families, blended families, transplanted families, families from a range of socioeconomic situations,” commented a current parent, “and we’ve been able to develop deep and rich connections with those who are and who are not like us.” All members of the OES community respect that the extent to which the school commits to ongoing dialogue and effort towards inclusion will determine its ability to wholly fulfill the school’s mission and realize its vision. The OES Board Inclusion Committee ensures the school’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is realized throughout the school. This commitment is articulated in the school’s [Diversity and Value Statement](#).

The school is accredited by or holds memberships with the National Association of Independent Schools, the Northwest Association of Independent Schools, the Association of Boarding Schools, the National Association of Episcopal Schools, the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, and the Center for Spiritual and Ethical Education.



## ACADEMICS

### Lower School (Pre-K through Grade 5)

The youngest OES students are part of the Beginning Years community, where the seeds for connectedness, awareness, reflection, and inquiry first take root. This emergent program draws from constructivist educators and the Reggio Emilia approach. Learning at this level is an active process as students make discoveries and apply learning to new contexts. For children who would benefit from a gift of time—a year to grow and develop between kindergarten and first grade—OES offers the Primary class option.

In the Intermediate Years of Lower School (grades 2-5), community conversations focus on social justice, reflections, and activism within the classroom, the school community, and beyond. Students are challenged to grow, dig deeper, show perseverance, and work through challenges while supported by their peers, teachers, and community. Classes dive into academic content, accessing and building upon skills to better understand themselves, their community, and their history. With a solid base of literacy skills to build upon, the Intermediate Years challenge students to deepen their understanding of these skills and concepts, utilize and build upon these critical literacies, and uncover new truths and perspectives.



### **Middle School (Grades 6-8)**

Driven by “what’s best for students,” teaching and learning in Middle School fosters connections and cultivates creative and critical thinking. Because the Middle School years are a time of great transition, the Middle School creates a learning environment where students can take risks and feel supported by the community. The curriculum is developed by individual classroom teachers in collaboration with each other, their departments, and with the Head of Middle School. The program also includes courses in humanities, English, history, world languages, mathematics, science, art, instrumental and vocal music, drama, religion, technology, health and wellness, and physical education. Overall, whether students are collecting water samples in the wetlands or practicing for an instrumental performance, inquiry is at the heart of the OES experience. Placing students at the center of their learning encourages them to seek out their own opportunities for intellectual growth and become lifelong learners.



### **Upper School (Grades 9-12)**

When students join the Upper School, they discover a culture that values intellectual growth, independent thought, creative problem solving, and sustained curiosity. They find a wide variety of classes and activities and are supported in their efforts to improve, challenge themselves, and take initiative. All of this happens as they become part of a well-resourced community with supportive adults who care deeply about the students with whom they work. OES also offers a boarding program for domestic and international students in grades 9 to 12 who have the opportunity to interact with people from all over the world, learn to live in community, and engage in important journeys of self-discovery.

The Upper School community is built on a foundation of diverse experience and perspectives. As such, the academic program is scaffolded to emphasize intellectual challenge, student agency and choice, and learning skills. Over the course of their four years in Upper School, students explore new ideas and areas of study, discover passions, commit to long term projects, and build out meaningful, significant understandings. Classes are intentionally challenging, with the intensity and expectations increasing as students gain confidence, develop skills, and grow in their capacity for learning. The diverse offering of classes and experiences is essential in, as the school's Identity Statement says, "educating toward a larger purpose—toward inclusion and respect, understanding and compassion, service and social justice, and toward meaning and commitment beyond ourselves."



### *College Counseling*

The OES college counseling team works closely with students as they search for colleges where they will thrive. Encouraging them to take ownership of an experience that offers a prime opportunity for maturation, OES combines individualized advice with programs and resources designed to help students—and their families—navigate the search and application phases in a thoughtful manner. The school has an excellent, well-established reputation with colleges across the country and hosts visits from over 125 college representatives each year who meet with interested students.

## College Matriculation

Graduates of the class of 2021 are attending the following colleges and universities, among others:

Bates College  
Boston University  
Bowdoin College  
Brandeis University  
Brown University  
Bryn Mawr College  
Claremont McKenna College  
Colby College  
Colgate University  
Colorado College  
Emory University  
Fordham University  
Hamilton College  
Johns Hopkins University  
Macalester College  
Middlebury College  
New York University  
Portland State University  
Rhode Island School of Design  
Stanford University  
Swarthmore College  
Syracuse University  
Tufts University  
University College Dublin  
University of British Columbia  
University of California, Berkeley  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign  
University of Oregon  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Vermont  
Vassar College  
Wake Forest University  
Wellesley College  
Williams College  
Yale University



## THE ARTS

The arts program gives students the opportunity to embrace their innate sense of wonder and creative imagination, and build a refined artistic skill set with which to express their ideas. Observation and reflection are the roots of artistic practice in the Lower School, through which the youngest students develop their intrinsic creative instincts. Students engage in active practice—making, performing, reflecting—which allows them to gain a sense of their emotional, visual, auditory, and physical worlds, connecting them with their community.

As students in Middle School transition to a more complex understanding of the world and themselves, their artistic practice (in vocal/instrumental music, performing arts, and visual arts courses) is a vehicle through which to articulate and explore ideas. Students choose from a variety of options—choir/band, acting, visual arts—to develop a deeper level of skill and explore cultural and art historical influences. A core focus in the Middle School arts program is the development of collaboration skills, a growth mindset, community building, intercultural competence, and interpersonal communication.

In Upper School, students can explore their artistic and personal voice through refined, informed application of more advanced technical skills. Choosing from a wide variety of classes and extracurricular opportunities in visual, performing, musical, and cross-disciplinary work, students experience open-ended practices, refine project and time management skills, and engage fully in the OES Inquiry Cycle (Explore, Connect, Create, Commit, Reflect). Particular attention is paid to iterative thinking, constructive critique, and collaborative practice.



## ATHLETICS

The athletics program at OES offers all students the opportunity to participate on a team and in meaningful physical activity. At all levels, athletics emphasize positive group involvement, good sportsmanship, and respect for fellow team members, and opponents. The program seeks to promote the health and safety of the participants and provide opportunity for growth through individual and team participation.

At the Upper School level, approximately 85% of students participate in at least one sport. There are three seasons of different sports, as well as year-long opportunities. OES fields more than 60 teams gauged for different levels of skill. The no-cut policy means every student who wants to participate will have the opportunity to be on a team and play in the games. Upper School sports include cross country, fencing, soccer, volleyball, ski racing, basketball, golf, lacrosse, tennis, and track and field.



## SCHOOL LIFE

As an Episcopal School, OES thrives on and supports all members of the community as they learn from and alongside one another at every turn; students and adults are consistently encouraged to weave different perspectives and philosophies into their own unique way of understanding the world. The history and traditions of the Episcopal Church provides a common framework that emphasizes the value and dignity of diverse individual religious practices and spiritual needs.

OES has a thoughtful and inclusive pre-K through grade 12 Chapel program, which includes a chaplain on the leadership team of each division. Chapel offers inclusive space for intentional conversation and reflection and provides opportunities for students to share, honor, and seek value in the rich variety of religious traditions present at OES. The religion curriculum, taught by both chaplains and other faculty, offers age-appropriate academic instruction at all levels. Both programs introduce students to Christianity, as well as other religious traditions, and underscore the significance of religious and spiritual thought and practice across human culture.

Both programs are also strongly tied to the OES Community Engagement Program, reflecting the care of Episcopal schools for issues of social justice. Community Engagement at OES inspires responsibility, develops leadership, and encourages compassion, while broadening and deepening local, national, and global connections. Active and age-appropriate participation in thoughtfully organized projects, followed by intentional time for conversation and reflection, create a rich atmosphere of true service and true learning.



Program components are guided by the nationally recognized NYLC Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice. All Upper School students must complete a number of service hours to graduate. Community Engagement is an element of many academic classes, activities, and school trips. The entire school participates in Mt. Hood Climb Service Day each May as a way of giving back to their city in memory of the 1986 tragedy on Mt. Hood.

Gatherings are another special tradition at OES that provide a safe, playful, and valuable forum for student leadership, the sharing of important and timely announcements, the honoring of celebrations and transitions, and the thoughtful and civil reflection on shared values. Gatherings happen several times a week in each division. Gatherings of the entire school community (including parents, staff, and alumni) take place three times a year and include: the Opening of School Belltower Gathering; a special holiday gathering before leaving for Winter Break; and the Mt. Hood Climb Service Day Belltower Gathering in May. This service day tradition began as a way to observe the Mount Hood Climb tragedy that occurred in May of 1986, taking the lives of nine members of our community, including seven students, the school chaplain, and a dean.



Experiential Education at OES serves as a complement to and extension of academic and student life. For example, Winterim is the week before spring break when Upper School students participate in immersive, experiential pursuits, both on and off campus. For this program, faculty and students develop a diverse offering of courses, varying from international and domestic trips to local exploration, community engagement, and discovering new skills. Students and faculty also regularly explore their nearby magnificent outdoor resources through a variety of activities that include time spent in the OES woods, team building on the OES Challenge Course, canoe excursions, and overnight class trips. Many of the activities work on trust building, confidence building, and team building skills. And, beginning in third grade, every grade level participates in age-appropriate overnight trip experiences that range from field study to grade-level themed retreats. Through these experiences, students build cooperation and self-awareness, learn skills, increase knowledge on a wide range of topics, and develop the concept of giving back to others.

The OES boarding program offers approximately 60 Upper School students from 14 different countries an exciting, challenging, and safe place to grow. Dorm faculty are committed to cultivating a program that nurtures enthusiastic learners. The boarding program offers both scheduled and unscheduled time, alongside community responsibilities. Students are encouraged to participate and become active members of the community through evening responsibilities and a variety of leadership roles. The 2021-22 student body president is a boarding student. Once a week, the boarding community gathers for a “family dinner” to connect through thoughtful conversations.



## PORTLAND, OREGON

Known for its eco-friendliness, avant-garde restaurants, food carts, and coffeehouses, Portland, Oregon is a gem of a city. Though it has a long list of nicknames (e.g., Stumptown, the City of Roses, Bridge City, P-town, PDX) it has singularly emerged as an urbanite's dream with some of the most pedestrian-friendly streets in the country, cultural attractions galore, plenty of trails for hiking and biking (miles of them are found in nearby Forest Park) as well as access to water sports along the Willamette and Columbia Rivers that crisscross the city—and this all exists against the backdrop of the spectacular Mt. Hood.

The summer months are when Portland really shines. With consistent warm weather and lighter than average rainfall from June to August, the city's vibrant outdoor scene kicks into high gear. Residents take advantage of the nicer days with an impressive selection of outdoor dining options and loads of great festivals, including the Waterfront Blues Festival and the Portland Rose Festival each June, and in July, the Oregon Brewers Festival and the Big Float, where upwards of 70,000 people descend on the city's waterfront for a massive people-powered flotilla and beach party. Whether it's strolling through any one of the 275 public parks and gardens or kayaking down the Willamette River that cuts through the heart of the city, there are endless options to explore and enjoy the outdoors. Better yet, Portland was named a "platinum" bicycle-friendly community by the League of American Bicyclists, mostly due to its 385 miles of bikeways and its bike share system called Biketown.



In Portland, you'll find an eclectic mix of neighborhoods—each with its own unique vibe. From high-end shopping downtown to vintage boutiques in the city's Southeast quadrant, from fine dining restaurants in Nob Hill and the Pearl District to casual eateries on Division, there's really something for everyone. The city is also host to the iconic Powell's City of Books, the Lan Su Chinese Tea Garden, the Oregon Zoo, and Washington Park's Rose Gardens, as well as a formal Japanese Garden. For sports enthusiasts, Portland is home to the Nike World Headquarters, adidas North American headquarters, the Portland Trailblazers (NBA), the Portland Thorns (professional women's soccer), and the Portland Timbers (professional men's soccer).

Portland also has one of the most active beer scenes in the country with over 70 microbreweries in the greater metro area. While beer might be the first drink that comes to mind when planning a trip to the area, Portland also has a standout wine scene. Just to the south of Portland, in the Willamette Valley, you'll find around 80 wineries and over 200 vineyards that produce the majority of the state's acclaimed wine. For those who prefer coffee, the city has even more independent coffee roasters than there are breweries: it has 80 in the city limits alone.

Portland is a place that delights unlike any other. With stunning natural beauty, top-tier cultural offerings, and gastronomical delights, Portland feeds the mind, body, and spirit.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

By many measures, OES is thriving. Accomplishments in recent years include: steady enrollment, development of and progress on a master plan of the physical campus, and the renovation and expansion of the Athletic Center and Lower School with successful capital campaigns to complete both projects. During her 10 years at OES, Mo Copeland steadied and stabilized a community that had weathered many leadership transitions, and as one faculty member said, "she helped us think about our future."



The work ahead includes:

**Recruitment, retention, and development of outstanding faculty and staff.** The excellence of OES is delivered through a professional, dedicated, learning-oriented, and student-centered faculty and staff. The new Center for Learning and Teaching is dedicated solely to helping current faculty learn and grow through customized coaching and support. Attracting, retaining, and developing an outstanding faculty and staff must remain one of the school’s highest priorities.

**Focus on inquiry-based learning, experimentation, and innovation.** The OES community expresses pride in a culture and practice that places inquiry-based learning at the center of the student experience. “We value conversation and discussion—it’s aligned with the inquiry process,” commented a student. The invitation for students to investigate and explore is reinforced by a commitment to supporting faculty as they experiment with innovative approaches to teaching and learning. “Growth is not just for students,” noted an administrator. “The faculty are always seeking to be learners and growers alongside students. It’s not a static place. Adults in the community have a spirit of jumping in and trying things out.” The Head of School and the leadership team will be asked to continue supporting a culture that values inquiry and innovation by all members of the community.

**Fostering and broadening a sense of community.** The strong sense of community is one of OES’s strengths most often cited by students, parents, and employees. “When we visited as a prospective family, everyone smiled at us and welcomed our daughter,” recalled a current parent. Another noted, “OES is truly our home away from home.” “I hope the sense of community never changes,” commented a current senior. Faculty often spoke of their connections and collegial relationships with one another as well as with students and their families. The next Head is expected to be a critical contributor to that sense of community and will need to ensure that the leadership team maintains community building as a priority.



**Portland Matters.** There is a widespread desire for OES to explore additional ways to deepen its connection with Portland and, more broadly, with Oregon.

**Continuing and celebrating the work of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.** In 2013, a committee of students, parents, faculty, staff and administrators drafted a commitment to being a diverse and inclusive community. Approved by the Board in 2014, [the values may be reviewed here](#). The next Head, in partnership, with the leadership team and community will continue to use that statement as a guide, especially as the school seeks to diversify its community, examine its academic program, existing structures and systems, and strives to ensure that all students and families are seen, heard, valued, and have access and opportunity to succeed.

**Attending to the boarding program.** OES's boarding program is small—60 students—but impactful and distinctive in the area. Looking ahead, continuing to recruit broadly and to attract and retain dynamic and community-oriented students will be important as will investing in and supporting the further integration of the boarding students into the life of the school and seeking to improve residential facilities.

**Strengthening the continuity of teaching/learning across divisions.** Developing and supporting cross-divisional partnership and collaboration to ensure smooth and clear transitions for students and to enhance faculty/staff partnerships across the school.

**Continuing to honor the Episcopal identity and values in a diverse community.** While the majority of students, families, and employees of OES are not Episcopalian, the community appreciates having a common framework of values for gathering and conversation.



The Episcopal tradition is comprehensive and inclusive and values inquiry and reason as a path to true understanding. OES encourages every community member to pursue questions where they lead, as well as to value the learning and thought inherited from the past. The next Head will need to continue to share and support OES's Episcopalian history and identity and to help manage the school's relationship with the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon.

## DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Board of Trustees and greater OES community are interested in candidates who are educational visionaries who delight in fostering a community in which reflection and innovation are highly valued. There is a preference for candidates with proven leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills to help the School maintain its commitment to excellence within the context of its mission as an Episcopal school. The School is therefore most interested in candidates who demonstrate most, if not all, of the following:

- A passion for educational and organizational excellence and demonstrated experience in providing the leadership necessary to help a school achieve and sustain that excellence.
- Effective communications skills with faculty members, parents, students, community members, the Board of Trustees, and the Diocese, keeping these groups appropriately informed of potential issues and/or needs.
- Eagerness to engage actively with employees, students, parents, and community members and maintain visibility in the day-to-day life of the School.
- Personal and professional commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging with demonstrated success in helping advance a school-wide commitment to DEI.
- A leadership approach that, through appropriate delegation, effectively empowers others to guide the commitment, energy, and wisdom present in the faculty, staff, board, and the larger OES community.
- A warm, approachable presence that invites and respects the views of others (while comfortable holding them accountable).
- An understanding of and commitment to strategic external affairs, including fundraising, marketing, and broader community involvement. The successful candidate must be comfortable asking for financial support and have a commitment to encouraging a culture of philanthropy.

The favored candidate will be someone with a lively intellect and a warm, empathic presence, someone who relishes knowing and being known by the full community. This person will be confident with strong emotional intelligence, fine personal values, and excellent communication skills. A down-to-earth, accessible style, a sense of humor, and a willingness to listen, while drawing wisdom from the views of faculty, students, and parents and others will be valued and appreciated.

## TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- Three recent writing samples that could include speeches, blog posts, articles, or letters to the community to:

### **Jennifer Wong Christensen**

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### **Search Timeline (dates subject to change)**

- **February 15, 2022:** Application materials due (candidates strongly encouraged to be in contact with consultants before then).
- **March 19, 2022:** Search Update
- **April 15-16, 2022:** Semifinalist Interviews
- **April 18-29, 2022:** Finalist Interviews