



ST. JOHNS COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

Orange Park, FL

HEAD OF SCHOOL
July 2026



St. Johns Country Day School, a PK–12 independent, nonsectarian school in Orange Park, Florida, is seeking a dynamic and visionary Head of School to begin in July 2026.

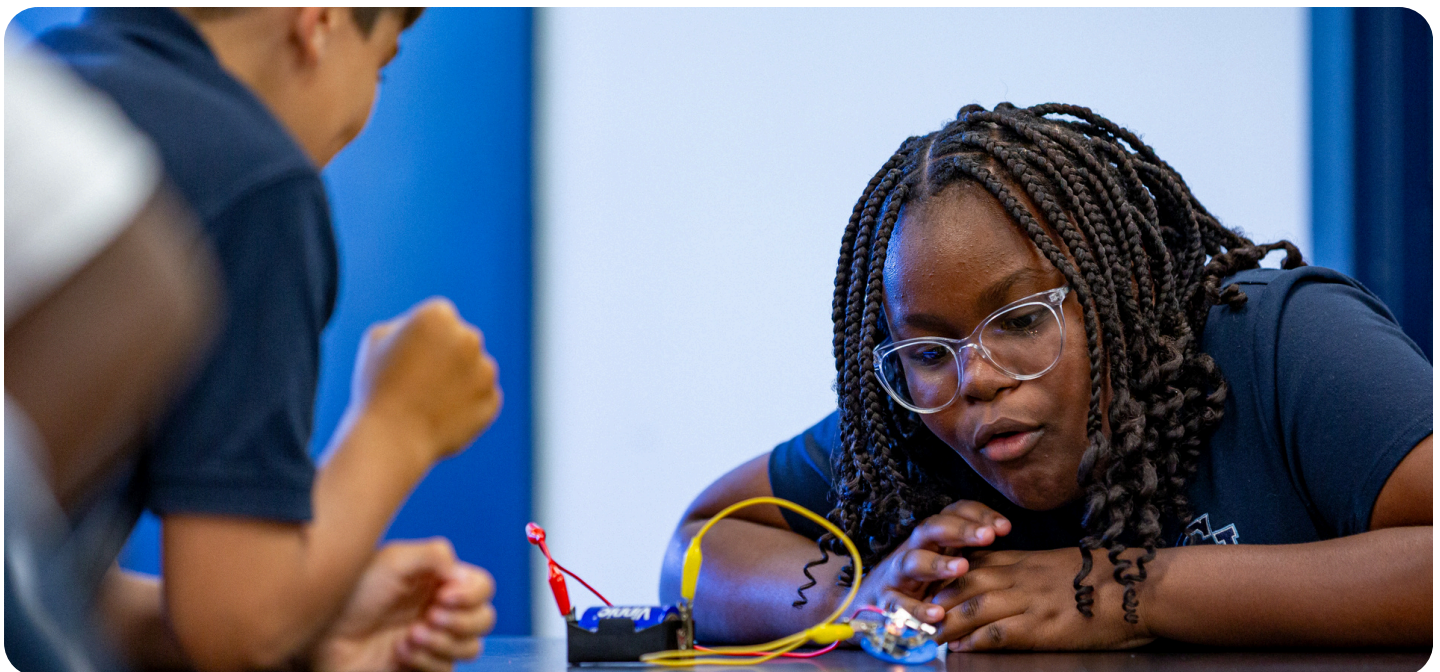
Located in a vibrant community just outside downtown Jacksonville, St. Johns serves 486 students from across the greater Northeast Florida area. The school is known for its strong college preparatory program, characterized by small class sizes and a nurturing, student-centered approach. Widely regarded as one of the best PK–12 independent schools in Northeast Florida, St. Johns offers a supportive and challenging environment where students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

MISSION

St. Johns Country Day School's mission is to provide a superior college preparatory program with an innovative curriculum that stresses academic accomplishment, artistic excellence, and athletic competition in a supportive environment that develops students who *Seek Solutions, Accept Responsibility, and Create Collaboration*.

HISTORY

St. Johns Country Day School was founded in 1953 by Dr. Edwin P. Heinrich and his wife Dorothea to provide a quality, co-educational, college-preparatory education in Northeast Florida. It opened with 25 students in grades 1–10 in a leased Orange Park building. Before the end of its second year, the school was accredited by the Florida State Department of Education and became a charter member of the Florida Council of Independent Schools, which Dr. Heinrich helped found. By 1956, enrollment reached 127 students, and the first class graduated. A year later, the school moved to its own 26-acre campus. Dr. Heinrich led the school until 1970 and remained involved until his death in 1977. Mrs. Heinrich continued her support until 2006. Over the decades, the campus has expanded to include modern classrooms, labs, gyms, a pool, a performing arts center, and the Heinrich Learning Resource Center.



LOCATION

The campus at St. Johns offers a peaceful, spacious environment that supports both learning and community. Set on over 26 acres in Orange Park, the grounds are filled with mature trees and open green spaces, creating a serene atmosphere just minutes from the city. The campus brings together students from age three through grade 12 in a connected layout that encourages interaction across age groups and fosters a strong sense of belonging. Facilities include modern science labs, art studios with kilns and printmaking equipment, athletic fields, gymnasiums, a 3D design and innovation lab, and dedicated performance spaces.

Jacksonville and Clay County boast a unique blend of coastal charm, urban amenities, and affordable living. With over 20 miles of beautiful beaches, the St. Johns River, and an extensive park system, the area is ideal for outdoor enthusiasts. The area has a growing job market, diverse neighborhoods, and a lower cost of living compared to many other major U.S. cities. Jacksonville also offers a vibrant arts and food scene, family-friendly communities, and year-round sunshine.



PROGRAM

The St. Johns Country Day School curriculum is designed to inspire curiosity, creativity, and confidence. Through a hands-on and collaborative approach, students learn to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems with purpose. Every course, from the earliest grades through graduation, encourages exploration and innovation, preparing students to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

The **Lower School** program uses a developmentally responsive curriculum that focuses on foundational content, skill development, and social-emotional learning to ensure student success both now and in the future. The program is responsive to the individuality of each child, with the objective of helping children explore and develop as they construct a positive self-concept.

As students enter the **Middle School**, the curriculum expands to include deeper academic challenges and a broader range of subjects, while still offering personal guidance in a supportive environment. Unique experiences like *Minterim* allow students to step outside traditional academics for short-term enrichment courses, service learning, and creative exploration.

The **Upper School** program becomes more specialized and college-focused, with honors and AP courses, multiple elective options, and opportunities to dive deep into personal passions through the *Fellowships* program. Students participate in *Winterim*, internships, leadership development, and real-world projects that prepare them for success beyond high school. Through its College Counseling Office, the school provides early, personalized guidance to help each student navigate exploration, applications, and decisions.



PROGRAM (continued)

St. Johns offers a vibrant **arts program** that encourages creativity and self-expression through visual and performing arts. Students can explore drawing, painting, and other studio arts, as well as participate in theater productions and stagecraft. The school's **athletics program** is equally robust, featuring a wide variety of sports including soccer, basketball, baseball, volleyball, softball, golf, tennis, track & field, cross country, swimming, and wrestling. Known for its championship-winning competitive spirit, St. Johns provides students with rich opportunities to excel both artistically and athletically.



BY THE NUMBERS

Enrollment 486

34 PS & PK

169 K-5

142 6-8

141 9-12

24% BIPOC Students

12:1 Student-Teacher Ratio

Employees 93

59 Teachers

6 Instructional Support

28 Administrative

Tuition \$14,750 - \$28,500 (full-day)

21% Need-Based Financial Aid

6 Students receiving merit-based awards

Endowment \$2.5M

**Spartan
Foundation** \$1M

TRADITIONS

Since its founding, St. Johns has developed traditions that bring meaning and pride to the entire school community. A few of the most cherished traditions include:

- Daily Flag Raising Ceremony with the entire community gathered in the main quad for announcements and celebrations
- Senior and First Grade year-long buddy program
- Thanksgiving Feast
- Senior Presentation prior to Thanksgiving break
- Mr. St. Johns community fundraiser
- Lessons and Chorals Christmas Program
- Signing of the Honor Pledge
- White Gowns and Tuxedos for Graduation



FINANCES AND ADVANCEMENT

The school has strengthened its financial position over the past six years. Still, the new head of school will need to strategically increase enrollment and develop a plan to continue the momentum the Advancement Office has achieved in recent years. The board and school community are optimistic about the future, but are aware that a leader who is creative in the use of financial resources and dedicated to increasing revenue is needed to advance the school.

GOVERNANCE

St. Johns has a 13-member board that is characterized by passion and positivity. The board is intentionally composed of a blend of current parents, past parents, and alumni. The board has supported the head of school in addressing significant challenges that developed before 2020. Since then, the board has focused on its role in governance and has given the head and her administration authority to lead operations. The board engages in professional development and continues to implement best practices.



CANDIDATE ATTRIBUTES AND EXPERIENCES

The Board of Trustees at St. Johns Country Day School and the St. Johns community seek a head of school who enthusiastically embraces college preparatory education and will establish deep roots in the school, Orange Park, and Clay County. The next head of school will find a welcoming and supportive community that is committed to the mission, values, and traditions that characterize St. Johns Country Day School.

Candidates must demonstrate most, if not all, of the following critical competencies. The successful candidate will be able to:

- Create and implement a comprehensive strategic enrollment strategy, with a critical focus on student retention in the upper grades
- Focus intently on strategic financial management with particular attention to building a culture of philanthropy
- Be committed to community development, building enduring relationships with students, parents, faculty, staff, and alumni
- Become immersed in building connections between the St. Johns community and Clay County residents and organizations
- Be the chief storyteller, bridge builder, and champion of St. Johns
- Be dedicated to sustaining and building upon a program that creates college preparatory success
- Prioritize the recruitment, retention, and support of faculty and staff
- Honor the history and traditions while seeking new opportunities to strengthen the program and ethos of St. Johns
- Support and enhance the collaboration between academic divisions
- Analyze the administrative structure to ensure that individual functions align with school goals



CANDIDATE ATTRIBUTES AND EXPERIENCES (continued)

The next head will model the following characteristics. They will be:

- Present and visible
- A strong academic leader
- Accessible and approachable to all community members
- Able to set high expectations and focus on accountability
- Trusting and trustworthy
- An excellent communicator in writing and speaking
- Able to demonstrate integrity at all times
- A strong and collaborative problem solver
- A decisive and transparent decision maker
- Focused on always doing what's best for students
- Committed to embracing the family feel that defines the St. Johns experience
- Dedicated to making the campus safe and secure
- Well-balanced in emotional intelligence



APPLICATION PROCEDURES

A search is underway to identify a new Head of School who will begin their tenure on July 1, 2026.

The school has engaged the national executive search firm Educational Directions to assist the Search Committee and the St. Johns Country Day School community with the search. Please direct all inquiries, applications, and nominations to:

Mike Murphy mike.murphy@edudx.com
Jay Underwood jay.underwood@edudx.com

Candidates should express their interest and begin the application process as soon as possible. It is expected that interested candidates will contact the consultants prior to submitting their application portfolio for additional information. Candidates should submit:

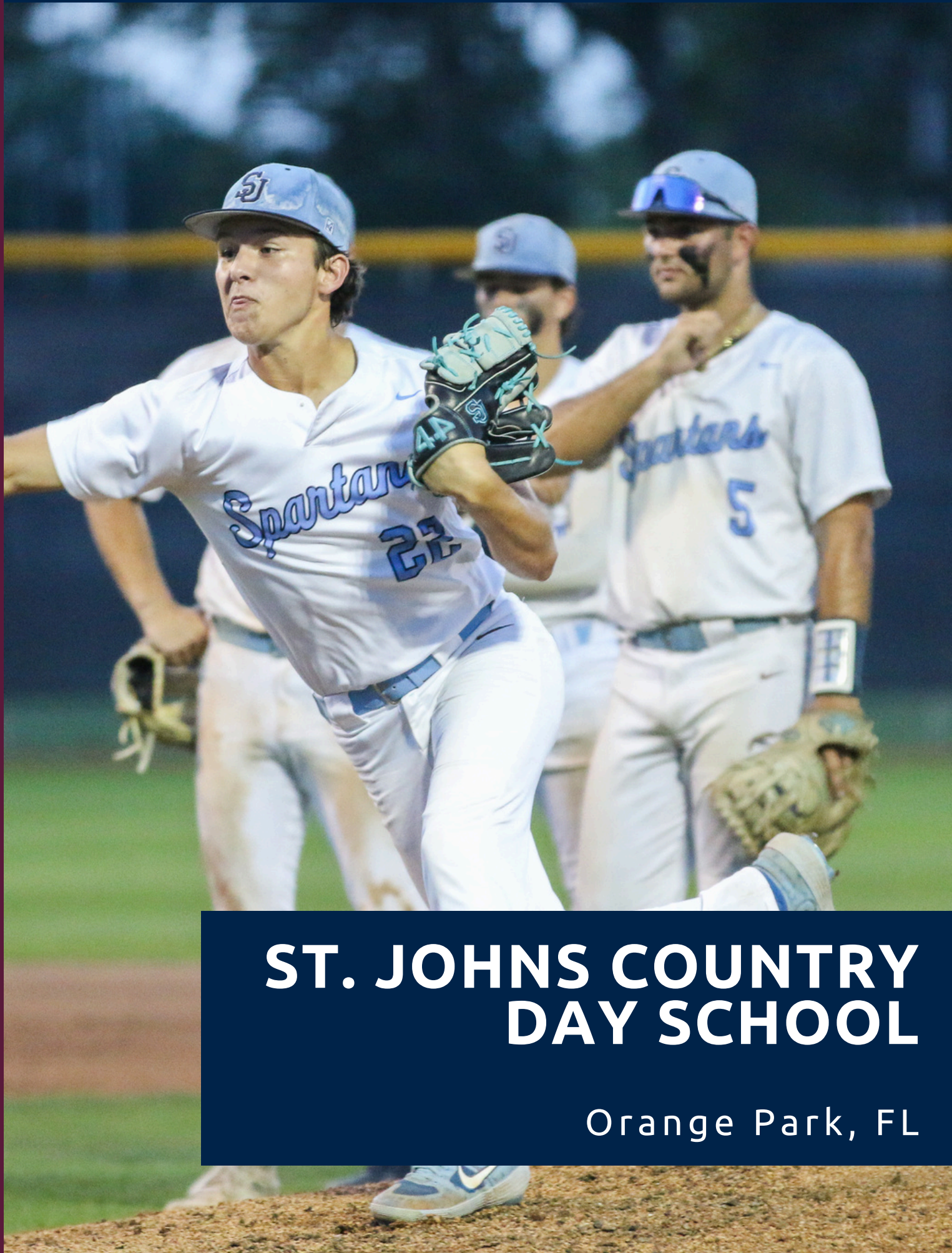
- A letter of interest addressed to the Search Committee explaining their interest in St. Johns Country Day School
- A current resume
- A personal statement detailing their professional journey and philosophy of education and leadership
- The names, e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, and affiliation to the candidate of five professional references. References will be contacted after obtaining permission from the candidate. Finalists will be expected to provide seven additional references.

Expedited Search Calendar

- November 14 | Application deadline
- December 8 | Candidates notified of status
- December 19-21 | Semifinalist interviews (on site)
- January 7-16 | Finalist interviews (on site, two days)

St. Johns Country Day School and Educational Directions reserve the right to accelerate or delay the search calendar as needed.





ST. JOHNS COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

Orange Park, FL