

# POSITION STATEMENT

# **SACRED HEART**

# **SCHOOLS CHICAGO**

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS



**HEAD OF SCHOOLS SEARCH**  
**START DATE: JULY 1, 2027**

SACRED  HEART  
THE ACADEMY & HARDEY PREP





## OVERVIEW

Sacred Heart Schools Chicago is a mission-driven community with a rich, 150-year history and a lasting impact on generations of students and families. Serving approximately 500 students from Preschool through Grade 8, the school is the oldest independent school in Chicago and offers a distinctive educational experience as a Catholic, independent school grounded in the [Goals and Criteria](#) of a Sacred Heart education and its international network of schools.

At its core, Sacred Heart is a Catholic school that welcomes families of all faiths and perspectives, united by a shared commitment to faith-based education and the development of the whole child. The School seeks a Catholic Head of Schools who can lead within this tradition, honoring its role in the life of the school by embracing the diverse community it serves and fostering a strong sense of belonging. Its model of single-sex classrooms within a coeducational campus supports individual growth while fostering confidence and mutual respect.

Located on a beautiful, historic campus in Chicago's Edgewater neighborhood, adjacent to Loyola University Chicago, Sacred Heart is

closely connected to the surrounding community. This relationship reflects a commitment to service and engagement beyond the School's walls. The campus supports a vibrant academic program alongside rich opportunities in the arts, athletics, and student life, within a warm and connected community that draws families from across the city.

What distinguishes Sacred Heart is not only the strength of its academic program, but also the experience it offers. Upon entering the School, students are greeted by a message beneath a statue of Jesus: "I know you and I love you." That spirit shapes the School's approach to educating each child: students are known and supported as individuals, relationships are central, and the education is often described as transformative rather than transactional. St. Madeleine Sophie Barat founded the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1800 to make God's love known through the formation of young people. Sacred Heart Schools is rooted in 150 years of tradition in Chicago and connected to a global network spanning 41 countries and more than 150 schools. Long recognized as a leading independent school, Sacred Heart is well positioned to build on that foundation with renewed clarity and energy for the future.

# SACRED HEART SCHOOLS AT-A-GLANCE

<b>12 to 20</b>	Class size depending on the grade
<b>7:1</b>	Student Teacher ratio Pre-K-8
<b>86%</b>	test into honors/advanced math and French/Spanish in high school
<b>97%</b>	of students are accepted into their first choice independent/Catholic high school
<b>26%</b>	of students from the high school classes of 2024-25 were admitted to top-25 universities such as Princeton, Yale, Stanford, Penn, Dartmouth, and Notre Dame (48% admitted to top-50 universities)
<b>85%</b>	student participation in 50 sports teams
<b>70</b>	special clubs and activities
<b>50%</b>	students of color
<b>30</b>	zip codes represented
<b>26</b>	languages spoken at students' homes
<b>23</b>	faiths represented in the student body
<b>1,432</b>	service hours performed by Sacred Heart students in 2024-25
<b>23</b>	students participated in exchange programs
<b>67%</b>	of faculty with advanced degrees
<b>65%</b>	of faculty with 10+ years of experience
<b>1876 founding</b>	Chicago's oldest independent school

## MISSION

Sacred Heart Schools on Sheridan Road – the Academy of the Sacred Heart for Girls (founded in 1876) and Hardey Preparatory for Boys (founded in 1935) – are independent, Catholic, single-sex elementary schools committed to academic excellence within the context of a Christian community. Sacred Heart welcomes students of all races, religious beliefs, and socio-academic backgrounds. This educational mission is deeply rooted in the 200-year tradition of the Society of the Sacred Heart and shared with the Network of Sacred Heart Schools located on every major continent, including 25 schools in the United States and Canada.

The Sacred Heart Schools' mission is to educate both the head and the heart of its students within a spirit of curiosity, creativity, and compassion, within every student, promoting excellence in academics while nurturing character, faith, and a commitment to service.



## VISION AND CORE VALUES

There are Five [Goals of Sacred Heart Schools](#) that guide the work of the school's leadership and faculty, and that permeate the community. They are:

- A personal and active faith in God
- A deep respect for intellectual values
- A social awareness that impels to action
- The building of community as a Christian value
- Personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom

## COMMUNITY AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Community is central to Sacred Heart Schools Chicago and is deeply woven into the fabric of everyday life. Families, faculty, and students often describe the School as warm, welcoming, and grounded in a shared sense of purpose. Relationships are at the heart of the experience, and a strong alignment around the School's values and the Goals and Criteria creates a sense of connection that extends beyond the classroom.

Partnership between parents and teachers is an important element of this community. Families are deeply invested in their children's growth and in the life of the School, and many contribute their time, talents, and energy in meaningful ways. Parent involvement enriches both classroom and school life, supporting students and strengthening the community as a whole.

Like many schools, patterns of parent engagement have evolved in recent years. There is an opportunity to deepen connection across the parent community and to strengthen partnership and communication between families and the School. Building on a strong foundation of care and commitment, community members are committed to forming an even more engaged and cohesive community in the years ahead.



## PROGRAM

The model of a single-sex classroom experience on a co-ed campus is not only intentional—it is strategic. Much thought is given to the progression and balance from co-ed to single-sex learning as students move from Primary School to Middle School. At every stage, students are given opportunities to develop the skills needed to thrive in both single-sex and co-ed environments. High academic expectations and rigorous standards remain consistent across all grade levels and within each classroom.

Sacred Heart Schools are a Catholic school that embraces students of all faiths. It is an education rooted in faith, supporting student spiritual growth while enhancing their academic and social development. The schools cultivate critical thinking, compassion, and a strong moral compass. The entire curriculum is guided by the Five Goals of a Sacred Heart education – faith, intellect, social awareness, community, and personal growth. Community service isn't merely an extracurricular activity at Sacred Heart; it's an integral part of the learning experience for all students that begins to cultivate the virtues essential to embarking on a path of discernment and realizing their full potential as socially aware, empathetic thinkers committed to compassion and justice.

The academic program at the Sacred Heart Schools is fully accredited, rigorous, and nurturing. Each of its three divisions – Primary (PK-SK), Lower (Grades 1-4), and Middle School (Grades 5-8) – is led by a dedicated Division Head who fosters a close collaboration among students, faculty, and families while maintaining a warm, family-like atmosphere that defines a Sacred Heart education.

From the earliest years, students engage in a rich curriculum that includes language arts, math, science, social studies, both French and Spanish, art, music, technology, physical education, and religion. Their integrated approach combines rigorous academics with social-emotional learning and service opportunities, nurturing well-rounded individuals prepared for top public and private high schools.

A more detailed description of the academic programs within each division can be found in the schools' website: [Student Experience - Sacred Heart Schools Chicago: remarkable PK-8 education](#)



## STUDENT EXPERIENCE: ATHLETICS, ARTS AND CAMPUS LIFE

At Sacred Heart, athletics are an integral part of educating the whole child and are viewed as an extension of the classroom. Rooted in the School's Five Goals, the athletic program emphasizes teamwork, perseverance, sportsmanship, and personal growth. The Campbell Building features one of the largest gym facilities among private elementary schools in Chicago, with two full-size basketball courts that support physical education, team practices, competitive play, and school-wide events.

The arts are similarly central to the student experience. Creativity flourishes in dedicated art studios, a music wing, and a stage equipped with modern lighting and sound. Through visual and performing arts, students develop confidence, discipline, collaboration, and the ability to express themselves with clarity and purpose. Beyond the school day, a wide range of extracurricular offerings and specialized

programs provide additional opportunities for exploration, enrichment, and discovery.

Occupying a full city block overlooking Lake Michigan, Sacred Heart's campus reflects both its history and its commitment to providing a dynamic and engaging learning environment. Spacious classrooms support both independent and collaborative work, while a newly renovated library offers inviting spaces for reading, research, and quiet study with views of the lake. Keeping responsible digital citizenship at the forefront, a 1:1 technology program equips students with iPads, Chromebooks, and laptops (depending on grade level) to support the thoughtful integration of technology across the curriculum. Hands-on learning is emphasized in dedicated STEAM labs for Primary and Lower School students, as well as an advanced science lab for the Middle School, fostering curiosity, experimentation, and problem-solving.

Together, these programs and spaces create a student experience that is engaging and aligned with the School's mission to educate both the heart and the mind.



## FINANCES

Strong financial oversight exists between the administration and the Board. Key components of the annual budget include: \$16 million in operating expenses, \$5.4 million in tuition assistance, and fundraising revenue of nearly \$2.5 million. The school consistently surpasses its fundraising goals, driven by the Sacred Heart Annual Fund and an annual parent-organized gala.

The school completed its last capital campaign in fiscal year 2019, raising nearly \$10 million. These funds were dedicated to classroom expansion, program enhancements, and endowment growth for tuition assistance. Through sound fiscal management, generous philanthropic support, and favorable market returns, the school has grown its endowment to ~\$36 million.

A portion of the endowment will be used to pay down the school's existing debt, which currently stands at \$8 million. The majority of the endowment returns are used to help fund operations and to reduce pressure on tuition increases. The endowment affords the school the resources needed to manage enrollment fluctuations and to invest in bolder strategic initiatives when warranted.



## STRENGTHS

Sacred Heart Schools Chicago is a proud, mission-driven community with a rich history that makes a lasting impact on those who are part of it. Rooted in the [Goals and Criteria of the Network of Sacred Heart Schools](#), the school offers a distinctive educational experience that is both values-based and academically rigorous. Its strengths are both programmatic and deeply relational, creating a community where students are known and thoughtfully supported based on their individual needs.

Key strengths include:

- Distinctive identity as both a Catholic and independent school, offering the traditions of a faith-based education alongside the resourcing and flexibility of an independent model
- Unique structure of single-sex classes within a coeducational campus, valued by all, central to the student experience, and differentiated in the Chicago market
- Warm, inclusive, and values-driven community where students, families, alumni, and faculty both foster and experience a sense of belonging
- Talented and deeply committed faculty who are widely regarded as caring, dedicated, and invested in each student's success
- Strong academic program with a long-standing reputation for preparing students well for high school, as evidenced by the impressive college acceptance performance
- Students who are widely described as kind, thoughtful, and engaged, contributing positively to the culture of the School
- Strong commitment to the development of the whole child, balancing academic rigor with character, service, and leadership

- High school placement outcomes that reflect strong preparation, with students well-equipped for success in a range of secondary school settings
- Diverse and welcoming community that brings together students and families from a wide range of backgrounds
- Enduring traditions and a sense of continuity that connect past, present, and future members of the community with a vast network of alumni from not only Sacred Heart Chicago but the entire network of Sacred Heart schools
- Campus and facilities that support both academic and co-curricular programming
- Established culture of philanthropy, with a committed donor base that supports the School's mission and future aspirations

## THE OPPORTUNITY

Sacred Heart Schools Chicago stands at an important and promising moment in its history. With a strong foundation, a clear mission, and a deeply committed community, the School is poised to enter its next chapter. The opportunities and challenges ahead are interconnected and offer a meaningful platform for the next Head of Schools to strengthen the School's identity, reinvigorate the community, and shape a clear and sustainable path forward.

### Enrollment and Market Positioning

Sacred Heart is navigating a changing and competitive enrollment landscape shaped by demographic shifts and evolving family expectations. This moment presents a meaningful opportunity to thoughtfully define and align around the School's optimal enrollment size, one that best supports its program, strengthens community, and ensures long-term sustainability. There is a growing opportunity to articulate Sacred Heart's distinctive value proposition more clearly and confidently, building momentum and attracting mission-aligned families.

### Clarity of Identity

Closely tied to enrollment is the opportunity to bring greater clarity and confidence to the School's identity. Sacred Heart's unique combination of Catholic tradition, inclusive community, and single-sex education within a coeducational environment is a defining strength. There is an opportunity for the next Head of Schools to articulate this identity with clarity and conviction, building on the School's Catholic tradition and fully embracing its diverse community.

### Community Confidence and Engagement

As Sacred Heart approaches a milestone anniversary, community engagement and communication present an important opportunity. While there is a strong sense of passion for and commitment to the School and its mission, patterns of engagement have evolved in recent years. Clear, consistent communication and visible follow-through will be essential to strengthening relationships and fostering a more connected community, including not only current families, but also the alumni network and their families.

### Further Deepening the Faculty Experience

The School has an opportunity to build on the strength and dedication of its faculty by further enhancing support, alignment, and professional growth. Faculty are deeply committed to their students and the mission, and there is a shared interest in strengthening clarity of expectations, consistency in leadership, and the overall teaching experience at Sacred Heart. Continued investment in faculty support and development will help sustain program quality and reinforce a strong, cohesive adult community.

### Governance and Leadership Partnership

In a period of transition and complexity, the Board has, out of necessity, been deeply engaged in supporting the School's stability and forward progress. Looking ahead, there is a shared desire to strengthen the partnership between the Board and the Head of Schools, ensuring clarity in roles, clear communication, and a governance structure that enables the Head to lead with authority while the Board focuses on strategic oversight and support for the Head.

# THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

The successful candidate will be a mission-driven, visible, and relational leader who understands and embraces the unique identity of Sacred Heart Schools Chicago and who brings the strategic perspective and organizational leadership to lead the School with clarity.

The next Head of School will bring:

- A deep commitment to Sacred Heart's mission, with the ability to authentically articulate and model Catholic identity and uphold the Goals and Criteria
  - Pastoral leadership with clear decision-making
  - The ability to inspire confidence and unify the community around a shared direction
  - A strategic and forward-looking mindset, with the ability to translate vision into clear priorities and action
  - Strong financial and operational acumen, aligning enrollment, program, and resources to support long-term sustainability
  - The ability to clearly define and communicate the School's identity and value proposition
  - A compelling and confident presence as an ambassador for the School, engaging prospective families, donors, alumni, and the broader community
  - Clear, confident communication, marked by consistency and follow-through
- Sound judgment and decisiveness, with the confidence to make and stand behind difficult decisions
  - A commitment to high standards and accountability, ensuring clarity of expectations and follow-through across the organization
  - Experience leading and aligning teams, while developing and supporting leaders
  - A visible and engaged presence in the life of the School
  - A commitment to fostering a sense of belonging in the community, grounded in thoughtful and practical application
  - Personal qualities of humility, authenticity, resilience, and respect for the community that foster a strong sense of partnership





## APPLICATION PROCESS, SALARY AND BENEFITS

Sacred Heart Schools Chicago has retained Resource Group 175 to support its search for a new Head of Schools. If you wish to submit your application, you may do so at:

<https://rg175.com/candidates/signup>

Applications include:

- Letter of interest (cover letter)
- Resume or CV
- One additional document that could be either a Personal Statement, your Leadership or Educational Philosophy, or a writing sample of your choice
- Names of four current references and contact information (references will not be contacted until the semifinalist stage of the process).

**The deadline for receipt of full application materials is August 21, 2026.**

The Search Committee intends to interview semi-finalist candidates in the early fall. Finalists will be invited to campus for a 2-day visit in the fall. Any questions or further information about the position, please contact either of the consultants below:

- Jim Scott, Resource Group 175, [jim.scott@rg175.com](mailto:jim.scott@rg175.com)
- Steve Morris, Resource Group 175, [steve.morris@rg175.com](mailto:steve.morris@rg175.com)

The anticipated salary range for this role is \$250K - \$300K. Compensation slightly above this range may be considered for candidates with exceptional experience. Sacred Heart Schools Chicago offers a comprehensive benefits package including a retirement plan with employer contribution, comprehensive insurance benefits, and support for professional growth.