

Head of School Search

ST. CATHERINE'S MONTESSORI
HOUSTON, TX
START DATE: JULY 2027



Mission

As a Catholic Montessori school, St. Catherine's is dedicated to an educational experience which awakens in our students the awareness of their gifts and responsibilities as individuals in relationship with Jesus Christ and as stewards of the global community.

Philosophy

The complementary messages of St. Catherine's Montessori and Catholic heritages are perhaps most simply summarized by the School's guiding philosophy Bringing Wisdom to Light. As an AMI school, St. Catherine's follows the traditions established by Dr. Maria Montessori more than 100 years ago. More than simply a method of education, the Montessori approach fosters the development of the whole child - intellectually, physically, socially, morally, and spiritually. As a Catholic community, St. Catherine's nurtures children's spiritual development so that each student may experience the presence of God both individually and in community. Revealing one's inner light is an aspect of service to God outlined in the Gospel of Matthew 5:14-16.

Montessori Vision

Dr. Maria Montessori frequently described the inner wisdom inherent in all human beings and envisioned education as a spiritual mission to unleash each child's inner potential. In *The Secret of Childhood* she writes, "Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make [them] learn things, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within [them] that light which is called intelligence." Montessori believed that, properly nurtured, each child's wisdom radiates outward to create a more peaceful world.

Bringing Wisdom to Light

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father" (Matthew 5:14-16).



Fast Facts



THE SCHOOL

Established: 1966

Grades: 14 Months to Grade 12

Enrollment: 281*



STUDENTS*

Infant Community (14 Months - 3 Years): 7 Students

Primary (3-6 Years): 60 Students

Elementary school (Grades 1-6): 149 Students

Adolescent Community (7th-9th Grade): 42 Students

High School (10th-12th Grade): 23 Students

Student:Teacher Ratio: 15:1

Catholic: 45%



FACULTY & STAFF*

Faculty: 20

Support Staff: 34

Full-time: 51 **Part-time:** 3

Catholic: 52%



FINANCIALS*

Average Tuition: \$18,304

Operating budget: \$6,113,385

Annual Fund: \$195,000 (Budgeted)

Financial Aid Budget: \$175,000

Memberships and Affiliations

NAIS National Association of Independent Schools

AMI Association of Montessori Internationale

NCEA National Catholic Educational Association

NAMTA The North American Montessori Teachers Association

Cognia Primary & Secondary School Accreditation

TCCB ED Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, Education Department

ISM Independent School Management

DELC Dominican Educator Learning Community

EAA Elementary Alumni Association

HAIS Houston Area Independent Schools

GHCAA Greater Houston Catholic Athletics Association

TCSAAL Texas Charter Schools Academic and Athletics League

*Based on 2026-2027 School Year Data, as of 6/8/26



The School

Founded in 1966 by two Dominican Sisters, Sisters Edna Ann Hebert and Shirley Owens, St. Catherine's Montessori began with a bold and visionary purpose: to unite authentic Montessori education with the Dominican charism and Catholic values in a way that develops and nurtures the mind, body, and spirit of every child. What started as a single classroom serving 43 Primary students has evolved into a vibrant and deeply mission-driven learning community of nearly 300 students, spanning ages 14 months through 18 years.

St. Catherine's Montessori holds the distinction of being formally recognized by the Association Montessori Internationale as an AMI Montessori school. As well, the School is an independent Catholic school within the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and is accredited by the Texas Conference of Catholic Bishops Education Department (TCCB ED) and Cognia.

For nearly six decades, St. Catherine's has grown with intention and integrity – remaining steadfast in its commitment to Montessori principles while thoughtfully responding to the developmental needs of children and adolescents. Each expansion of the program has emerged from a desire to provide continuity of learning within environments that cultivate independence, curiosity, responsibility, and joy. In 2025, the School reached a historic milestone when its Adolescent Community and High School programs received formal recognition from AMI, making St. Catherine's the first and only school in the United States – and among the first in the world – to offer a continuous AMI-recognized Montessori program from infancy through high school.

“The great gifts we can give our children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence.”
- Dr. Maria Montessori



Today, St. Catherine's is nationally known for its unwavering dedication to educational excellence, authentic Montessori practice, and the Dominican pursuit of truth – *veritas*. Its mission continues to animate every aspect of school life.

Located in Houston, Texas, in a neighborhood rich with history and culture just southwest of Downtown, St. Catherine's offers both a strong sense of community and exceptional accessibility. Its thoughtfully designed 10.4-acre campus reflects a profound commitment to Montessori philosophy, environmental stewardship, and innovation in educational design. The School further expanded its vision through the acquisition of three additional undeveloped acres in Houston's historic Japhet Community near Buffalo Bayou – a natural setting that opens exciting possibilities for experiential learning, environmental education, and future mission-centered growth.

As St. Catherine's approaches its 60th anniversary, the School stands at a pivotal moment in its history as it plans for future campus expansion. This ambitious goal includes transforming the main campus with new construction as well as renovation of existing learning spaces. This expansion will ensure that every student – from the Infant Community through High School – learns, creates, rests, and prays in environments intentionally designed to support student needs.

[The St. Catherine's Montessori Experience](#)



The Position

Rooted in the Dominican tradition and inspired by the transformative power of Montessori education, St. Catherine's Montessori seeks a visionary and mission-driven leader to serve as its next Head of School beginning July 1, 2027.

The successful candidate will be a thoughtful and inspiring leader who embraces Montessori values, embodies the Catholic faith, and understands the richness of the Dominican charism. This leader will cultivate academic excellence, strengthen community relationships, inspire faculty and students, and steward the School into its next era of growth and distinction.

The Head of School is directly responsible to SCM's Board of Directors. The Head of School has as its primary purpose to preserve the culture and the Dominican charism of the School while furthering the School's mission and vision. As well, they are charged with hiring and guiding personnel to be loving disciples of Jesus Christ and to make sure the unconditional love and respect for the child stays at the center of all the decisions that are made.

The Head of School is the overall leader and facilitator of the community of faith and bears ultimate responsibility for the spiritual life of the School. The Head of School has general oversight of the school's personnel and budget, its educational and developmental programs, its operations, and its facilities. Key responsibilities are to:

- Ensure all employees and students are maintaining a loving and Christian attitude.
- Collaborate effectively with the Board of Directors and keep them informed on the state of the School.
- Ensure that classes are following the AMI curriculum.
- Maintain accreditation requirements and AMI standards.
- Create and guide the implementation plan for the [Strategic Plan](#).
- Collaborate with and guide the Administrative Team.
- Support guides and staff in their work with the children.
- Guide the Parent Service Organization and committees.

To assist the Head of School in furthering the School's mission and goals, they work closely with an Administrative Team that consists of Advancement Director, Business Director, Campus Administrator, Early Childhood Director, Elementary Director, Enrollment Management Director, Facilities/Athletics Director, and Upper School Director.

Guided by its philosophy and a clear mission, strengthened by a remarkable legacy, and energized by a compelling vision for the future, St. Catherine's Montessori offers an extraordinary opportunity for its next Head of School to lead one of the most distinctive Catholic Montessori schools in the country.

Pillars of the Dominican Charism

Prayer
Study
Community
Preaching



Opportunities & Challenges

St. Catherine's Montessori is more than a school—it is a close-knit community where students, families, faculty, staff, and board members are deeply invested in one another. This strong sense of connection creates a welcoming, mission-driven culture built on collaboration, transparency, and trust. The School is supported by thoughtful leadership, an engaged board, and a community that values open communication and shared purpose.

The next Head of School will step into an exciting period of growth and opportunity. With strategic expansion underway, including campus development and increased visibility within both Montessori and broader educational communities, SCM is well-positioned for its next chapter. There is also an opportunity to strengthen relationships with alumni, past parents, and donors to support long-term sustainability and philanthropy.

At the same time, the new leader will guide the School through important challenges. As enrollment and facilities grow, the School will need systems and structures that preserve its relational culture while supporting expansion. As with many schools, financial stewardship will also be essential. The Head of School will help lead fundraising efforts tied to campus growth while maintaining the school's commitment to affordability. Building donor engagement, expanding a culture of philanthropy, and ensuring long-term financial sustainability will be key responsibilities, alongside managing the operational needs that come with a growing campus.



Strategic priorities will include:

- Continuing to position SCM to be recognized as a national leader in Montessori education.
- Deepening the school's Catholic and Dominican identity.
- Strengthening enrollment and retention, especially during key transition years.
- More clearly communicating the distinctive value of the school's Montessori and Dominican education to prospective families.
- Attracting and hiring outstanding mission-aligned AMI faculty.
- Expanding revenue streams by building a culture of philanthropy.
- Leading fundraising efforts for campus expansion.
- Guiding the implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- Strengthening the Adolescent Community and High School programs.



The successful candidate must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church. While Montessori education experience is preferred, it is not required. Candidates who do not have prior Montessori experience but are willing to complete Montessori training are encouraged to apply.

Key qualifications for the next Head of School will be:

- A seasoned educational administrator who holds an advanced degree in educational leadership/administration or an advanced degree with at least 18 hours of administrative coursework; principal certification may substitute for the coursework requirement. **(Required)**
- A mission-centered leader who is deeply committed to Montessori education, lives the Catholic faith, and reflects the Dominican charism.
- An inspiring and engaging presence who fosters a positive culture and motivates others around a common vision.
- A highly visible leader who actively participates in the daily life of the School and the wider community.
- An enrollment-focused leader who understands how to attract, support, and retain mission-aligned students and families.
- A confident and collaborative administrator who can define roles clearly and implement effective systems and organizational structures.
- A strategic and visionary leader who can guide SCM toward long-term strength, growth, and sustainability.
- A relationship-oriented fundraiser who cultivates trust and encourages enduring philanthropic partnerships.
- A collaborative leader who empowers others, strengthens teams, delegates effectively, and promotes alignment among leadership, faculty, and staff.
- A thoughtful and decisive leader who exercises sound judgment, makes fair and firm decisions, and responds effectively to changing circumstances.
- An effective and diplomatic communicator with strong strategic, analytical, and critical-thinking abilities.
- A warm, approachable leader who brings a pastoral and compassionate approach to working with others.



Programs

At its heart, a Montessori classroom at St. Catherine's is not just a room with desks and books. It's a prepared environment that is thoughtfully curated – a space where every object, activity, and layout suits the child. AMI materials and activities are age-appropriate, selected and designed to support the Montessori approach to learning, emphasizing hands-on learning, independence, and real-world skills.

Classes at St. Catherine's are arranged in three-year cycles for each community of learners— Infant Community (14 months to 3 years), Primary (ages 3 - 6), Lower and Upper Elementary (ages 6 - 12), Adolescent Community (ages 12 - 15), and High School (ages 15 - 18). This structured approach of mixed-age classes is fundamental to a child's learning experience. It allows children to remain in the same classroom for three consecutive years with the same guide (teacher), promoting a unique developmental journey.

An integral part of the prepared environment, the guide is foremost an observer trained to recognize the optimal time to present materials and lessons to children as they become ready. Guides also serve as models of the attitude and behaviors being cultivated in the classroom community. Their extensive AMI training prepares them to negotiate the delicate balance of honoring the child's interests and independence while providing the necessary limits for growth.

LEARN MORE

[Overview of Programs](#)
[Infant Community](#)
[Primary](#)
[Elementary](#)
[Adolescent Community](#)
[High School](#)
[College Preparation](#)
[2025-2026 High School Profile](#)

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

[Travel Opportunities](#)
[Service Learning](#)
[Library](#)
[Music](#)
[Athletics](#)





Environmental Stewardship

Rooted in Dr. Maria Montessori's vision of humanity as stewards of creation, St. Catherine's Montessori integrates environmental responsibility into every stage of student life across both campuses. Through hands-on, nature-based learning, students develop an understanding of the interconnectedness of life and their responsibility to preserve and enhance the world around them.

Since 2017, the [Japhet Campus](#) has provided the Adolescent Community with a uniquely Montessori “*erdkinder*” (children of the earth) experience—land-based, experiential education designed to meet the developmental needs of adolescents through meaningful work, collaboration, and self-discovery. The campus inspires spiritual formation, intellectual growth, and community life while fostering creativity, independence, and confidence through project-based and hands-on learning in nature.

Recent renovations to the Japhet Campus main house and the addition of a new outdoor classroom have increased flexibility for using both indoor and outdoor prepared learning environments. These enhancements serve students of all ages while strengthening the Japhet Campus as a pastoral gathering place for the entire school community.

[Environmental sustainability](#) is woven throughout the St. Catherine's experience. The main campus enables students to cultivate gardens, compost food waste, restore native habitats, and participate in sustainability initiatives that connect classroom learning with real-world impact. The school's commitment extends to its facilities as well: St. Catherine's main campus is home to the first [LEED-certified](#) K-12 school building in Texas, and all future development projects are thoughtfully planned with sustainability in mind.



Faith Formation

To support the spiritual life of its students, St. Catherine's Montessori has adopted the teachings of "The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd." Rooted in both Montessori philosophy and Catholic tradition, [The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd](#) nurtures each child's innate relationship with God through prayer, scripture, liturgy, and hands-on exploration. Inspired by the educational principles of Maria Montessori and the rich traditions of the Catholic faith, this program recognizes the child as a spiritual being capable of a deep and personal relationship with God.

Beginning in the Primary years, students visit the Atrium weekly and attend Mass monthly. The Atrium is a carefully prepared spiritual environment designed specifically for children, offering opportunities for reflection, silence, prayer, and contemplation. Through beautifully crafted, tactile materials representing scripture passages, parables, and liturgical elements, children engage in meaningful work that allows them to explore and internalize the teachings of the Church at their own pace.

Guided by trained catechists, students are invited to wonder, reflect, and grow in faith. As children mature, the program deepens to support their expanding spiritual awareness, moral development, and understanding of their role within the larger faith community. Throughout every stage of development, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd remains grounded in one essential belief: the child already possesses a profound capacity for relationship with God. The task of faith formation is not to fill an empty vessel, but to nurture and protect the sacred encounter already unfolding within the child's heart.



Living in Houston, TX

Houston has one of the youngest, fastest growing, and most diverse populations anywhere in the world and while Houston's TexMex and BBQ options are every bit as good as their reputations suggest, Houston has so much more to offer. People from across the globe relocate to Houston every year to take advantage of the abundant opportunities the region provides.

Located in southeast Texas, Houston is the most populous city in the state and the fourth most populous city in the United States. Getting to places is easy with Houston's Bush Intercontinental Airport, the major hub for United Airlines, and one of the largest international airports in the United States.

In addition to being historically a thriving force in the natural energy sector, Houston has become a professional center for aeronautics, biomedical research, and healthcare. The Texas Medical Center, a medical district and neighborhood with over 60 medical institutions, constitutes the largest medical complex in the world including the world-renowned MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Houston's downtown is noteworthy for more than its skyline. Boasting the second-largest concentration of theaters in a downtown area in the U.S., Houston's theater district occupies 17 blocks. Its six performance halls and nine performing arts organizations host the Houston Grand Opera, Houston Ballet, Houston Symphony Orchestra, Alley Theatre, and Theatre Under the Stars, among others.

Also worth mentioning is the Museum District, which draws more than seven million visitors per year to its mile-and-a-half section near downtown. Attractions include the Museum of Fine Arts, the Houston Museum of Natural Science, the Contemporary Art Museum, the Menil Collection and Rothko Chapel, and the Holocaust Museum Houston. Space Center Houston (NASA's official visitor center), the Houston Zoo, and the Downtown Aquarium offer additional venues to explore. Professional sports teams draw large crowds and offer year-round opportunities for spectators. The city's expansive green spaces and commuter bike paths provide ample opportunity to take in the warm weather during all four seasons.

[Click here to see a bird's eye view of this great city.](#)

How to Apply

Applications are now being accepted. Interested applicants are required to be Catholic and possess an advanced degree in educational leadership/administration or an advanced degree with at least 18 hours of administrative coursework; principal certification may substitute for the coursework requirement. Applicants should send a letter of interest, résumé, statement of educational leadership philosophy, and a list of five (5) references to the consultants listed below. Include a brief description of your relationship to each reference and all contact information. Documents are asked to be in PDF format.

For further information about the position and application procedures, please contact the School's search consultants.



Search Consultants



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