

C A R E E R O P P O R T U N I T Y

## HEAD OF SCHOOL

# Saint John's School

San Juan, Puerto Rico



Application deadline: January 6, 2010

Founded in 1915, Saint John's School is widely regarded as the preeminent college preparatory day school on the island of Puerto Rico and one of the top schools in the Caribbean, serving nearly 700 students in grades PPK through 12. Coeducational and nonsectarian, Saint John's offers its academically talented students a rigorous curriculum and enriching extracurricular opportunities. The low student-teacher ratio and small class sizes - coupled with warm, frequent interactions among students and faculty - help to forge the caring, close-knit, family-oriented community that is a defining characteristic of the school.

The culture at Saint John's School encourages exceptional achievement. Saint John's School has a strong record of success at preparing bright, highly motivated students for admission to the most selective colleges and universities, 96 percent of whom further their education in the United States. Both of the 2009 Presidential Scholars from Puerto Rico (only two are selected from each state) are recent graduates. Saint John's fosters an appreciation for cultural and ethnic diversity. While English is the principal language of instruction, a special emphasis is placed on teaching and learning Spanish. Once composed primarily of expatriate American and international families, the school today draws most of its enrollment from the local population.

The oldest city under the U.S. flag, San Juan is a modern, active, and busy port and tourist resort as well as the financial capital of the island. Saint John's is located in the Condado district, a pedestrian-friendly oceanfront community that is home to landmark hotels, high-rise condominiums, excellent beaches, and wonderful restaurants. Situated on a comfortable, four-acre urban campus in a residential area, the school is located one block from the beach. The attractive, well-maintained campus has recently been renovated and expanded to create distinct but integrated sections for each division.

Able led for the past eight years by retiring Head of School Barry Farnham, Saint John's School is well positioned to welcome a personable, engaging leader with a clear vision of excellence and a commitment to accountability who can continue to build upon the school's many successes.

### WHO SHOULD APPLY

For a position to begin in July 2010, the Board of Trustees is seeking an experienced, energetic, and inspirational leader who is committed to high academic standards and eager to engage a seasoned faculty and parent body with high expectations. This is an exceptional career opportunity for an educator who will wholeheartedly embrace the rich multicultural environment and mission of Saint John's School, and move the school forward with enthusiasm and determination toward its centennial celebration.



On the web: [www.sjspr.org](http://www.sjspr.org)

THE SCHOOL  
AT A GLANCE  
2009-10

**Founded:** 1915

**Location:** 4-acre urban campus  
on the north coast of Puerto  
Rico

**2009-10 enrollment:** 692  
Elementary (PPK-5): 360  
Middle (6-8): 153  
Upper (9-12): 179

**Student Profile:**

Hispanic: 84%  
Continental U.S.: 8%  
International: 8%

**Faculty:** 77 full time; 43% with  
advanced degrees

**Average class size:** 15

**Endowment:** \$1.4 million

**Indebtedness:** \$14.7 million

**Operating budget:** \$8 million

**Total development funds raised,  
2008-09:** \$165,000

**2009-2010 tuition:** \$7,800-  
\$12,278

**Financial aid, 2008-09:** \$19,000

**Board of Trustees:** 17

**Accreditation:** Middle States  
Association of Colleges and  
Schools

**Member:** National Association of  
Independent Schools, Puerto  
Rico Private Schools  
Association, Cum Laude Society

## MISSION

The mission of Saint John's School is to ensure that all of our students develop a passion for learning, build strength of character, and contribute compassionately as independent thinking members of society, all within a learning environment committed to academic excellence.

## VISION

At Saint John's our vision is to maintain and build upon our tradition of academic excellence, as well as to reaffirm our commitment to overall excellence inspired by the high expectations of everyone within our community - the Board of Trustees who govern us, the Administrators who lead us, the Staff who sustain us, the Parents who support us, the Students who embody us, the Faculty who distinguish us, and the Alumni who honor us.

## PHILOSOPHY

In an environment that blends traditional with modern educational practices, Saint John's aims to develop the intellect, spirit, and creativity of every student. The school believes in the intrinsic capacity of each student to develop self-control and self-direction, and it fosters the emergence of leadership qualities, analytical ability, respect for tradition and human reason, development of a sound and responsible value system, and an appreciation of life.

## CORE VALUES

At Saint John's School, we believe that:

- Respect and appreciation for individual differences enrich all.
- The quest for knowledge and the process of learning are the keys to empowerment.
- Nothing has a greater influence on an individual than family.
- Everyone has value and something to contribute.
- People are responsible for their choices and actions that follow.
- The strength of a society is dependent on the character of its members.



## DEFINING STRENGTHS AND UNIQUE ATTRIBUTES OF SAINT JOHN'S SCHOOL

The Saint John's School family is proud of the accomplishments and character of its student body, the experience and professionalism of its faculty, and the strength and collaborative work ethic of its administrators. The school has a longstanding reputation for providing generations of highly motivated students with a well-rounded, excellent education. The diverse, multicultural, and bilingual learning environment fosters the development of students as individuals and leaders as well as critical and creative thinkers. Emphasis is placed on students developing self-control, self-direction, and becoming compassionate global citizens.

The faculty, many of whom are veterans of many years, are well respected for their expertise and dedication to the school and the students. In the secondary school, in particular, some teachers have been at the school for 20 to 30 years. Teachers are supported by ample resources and a strong and supportive team of division directors and administrators. An engaged and active parent body – a sophisticated, well-read, and well-traveled group – gives of its time unselfishly to contribute to the success of numerous school events and programs.

Saint John's School is viewed as the school of choice in Puerto Rico for parents seeking a high-quality education. Once composed primarily of expatriate American and international families, the school today draws most of its enrollment from the local population. Approximately 84 percent of the students are native Puerto Ricans, most from well-educated, affluent families where Spanish is the first language. Still, the school remains richly diverse, with the remaining 16 percent of families drawn from Asian, Brazilian, Cuban, and Israeli backgrounds as well as the U.S.

Fifteen percent of the students are children of alumni, a group that is eager to be engaged in the school community. The Alumni Association, created in 2009, has developed a database of more than 1,000 graduates.

### THE STUDENT BODY

Intelligent and hardworking, Saint John's students are committed, active partners in their education. Mean SAT scores for the Class of 2009 were 597 Verbal, 612 Math, and 614 Writing. Forty-eight percent of the most recent graduating class were accepted to their first-choice college. The 42 graduates of the Class of 2009 included 2 Presidential Scholars, 2 National Merit Scholars, 5 National Hispanic Recognition Scholars, 11 AP Scholars, 3 AP Scholars with Honors, and 2 AP Scholars with Distinction. Graduates of that class are attending:

Amherst College	School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Boston University	Syracuse University (3)
Brown University	Temple University
Bryant University	The George Washington University (2)
Cornell University (2)	The University of NC at Chapel Hill
Florida Institute of Technology	The University of Tampa
Fordham University	University of Chicago
Georgia Institute of Technology	University of Miami
Harvard University	University of Michigan (2)
Haverford College	University of Notre Dame (2)
Ithaca College	University of Puerto Rico, Rio de Piedras(2)
Johns Hopkins University (2)	University of Puerto Rico, Utuado
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (3)	University of Vermont
New York University	Vassar College
Purdue University	Wellesley College
Rochester Institute of Technology	Wesleyan University

### FACILITIES AND RESOURCES



Located in an attractive and prestigious section of San Juan, the four-acre urban campus is compact, modern, bright, and well maintained. Facilities include an elementary school complex with a new four-story addition that offers specialized areas for art, music, performing arts, computers, and science. The Annex Building – a campus showcase that opened in 2008 – houses the high school wing. It includes additional classrooms and areas for science laboratories and a technology center. The 12,000-volume library, with separate space for elementary and secondary students, has sections for English, Spanish, French and Puerto Rican materials.

The Centennial Master Construction Plan, commissioned in 2003, includes a 10-year enhancement plan that has created distinct but integrated areas for each of the three divisions. Occupancy of the final phase – a new Arts/Humanities Center – is planned to coincide with the school’s 100th anniversary in 2015. Upgraded athletic facilities include an air-conditioned gymnasium and fitness center. A multi-purpose outdoor lighted courtyard opened in the fall of 2009 for day and evening activities.

The school has also made great progress in technology in recent years. Wireless technology is available in classrooms, which are equipped with computers that have Internet access. All math and science rooms in the Middle and High School have SmartBoards. Laptops are required for all students in grades 7-12.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The elementary school of Saint John’s (grades PPK-5) offers an integrated, theme-based, hands-on curriculum that is viewed by many in Puerto Rico as a model program. In self-contained classrooms averaging 15 students, youngsters receive a great deal of personal attention. The traditional subjects – literature-based reading and writing, mathematics, social studies and science – are taught in an environment that stresses active learning, communication, problem solving, and citizenship. The pre-pre-kindergarten class for 14 three- and four-year-olds was added last year. An extended day program is available from 3 to 6 p.m. for students in grades PPK-8.



A publishing center staffed with parent volunteers allows young students to publish their own books, from writing and illustration through the binding process. Spanish language instruction begins in Kindergarten; Spanish as a Second Language is also offered. All children in grades PK-5 participate in an innovative computer literacy program, a physical development program emphasizing wellness, and an integrated arts program with classes in art, music, and humanities.

Middle School students (grades 6-8) receive a challenging academic program that is developmentally appropriate and emphasizes personal responsibility. Core academic classes include English, math, social studies, science, and Spanish; physical education is daily. Exploratory classes are offered in the visual and performing arts, technology, writing workshop, Puerto Rico events and history, and research, among others. Students may also select Algebra I and French classes.

Students in the High School (grades 9-12) follow a traditional, rigorous, college preparatory curriculum enriched with electives and AP courses. Advanced Placement courses are offered in 13 subjects. Electives include art in architecture, chemistry in art, contemporary communications, drama, essay writing, film analysis, finite math, French, journalism, communications, fitness conditioning and training, French culture, and Hispanic culture. Seniors study the history of Puerto Rico.

Saint John’s scholars are active and successful participants in a wide range of academic competitions, within and beyond the school. Monthly in-school competitions are held in science, current events, and history, and are well attended. The school is proud of its record of success in numerous scholastic endeavors. Among their recent achievements: 16 of the 48 members of the eighth-grade class received the 2009 President’s Education Award for Academic Excellence.

Fine and performing arts offerings are being expanded and enhanced. Elementary students participate in monthly musical assemblies, grade-level plays and museum field trips. Middle School students select fine and performing arts classes within their exploratory program, and participate in an annual talent show. Advanced art instruction is offered to students in grades 9-12. High school students participate in an annual play and readers theater and compete in forensics and oratoria. Students in grades 4-12 perform in the school-wide annual musical production.

The increasing emphasis on community service reflects a key component of the school’s motto: *Knowledge, Service, Character*. Students and adults work together to provide solutions to local community problems. Faculty members take students monthly to feed the homeless in Old San Juan. Students also work with local churches and elementary schools, the Ronald McDonald House, the Humane Society, and the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Beginning with the 2009-2010 academic year, students in grades 9 and 12 must complete 30 hours of community service.

## ATHLETICS AND OTHER EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

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A lively school spirit exists at Saint John's, and the new multi-purpose room at the school is abuzz with activity on any given day, whether for physical activity or as a gathering space for clubs. A comprehensive selection of extracurricular and athletic activities encourages students to pursue their individual interests. At the high school level, students can participate in any of 16 clubs, including English and Spanish Forensics, Environmental Awareness, Model United Nations, National Honor Society, Organization of American States Club, Youth in Action, and Varsity Club, among others. School-wide events include Movie Premiere, Discovery of Puerto Rico Day, Haiti Hurricane Collection Relief, Homeless to Harvard, Noche de Bohemia, Basketball and Volleyball Tournaments, and Friendship Day. Student publications include two literary magazines (English and Spanish), a school newspaper, and yearbook. Elementary students enjoy chorus, painting, ballet, French and computer classes, yoga, and scouting, among other activities, as part of the After School Program.



Balancing the demanding academic program, Saint John's athletics offerings continue to expand and welcome more participation by students in grades 1-12. Saint John's is an active member of the Puerto Rico High School Athletic Alliance (grades 7-12) and the LAMEPI (Liga Atletica Mini de Escuelas Privadas, Inc.) league at the elementary level. Junior varsity and varsity teams include girls and boys cross country, swimming, soccer, volleyball, basketball, indoor soccer, and tennis. In total, the athletics program fields 46 interscholastic and intramural teams at the super-mini, mini, juvenile, JV and varsity levels. New in 2009, the super-mini program is designed to engage students in the younger grades (1-3) early on in a love of sports. Sailing is offered to middle school students as an exploratory program. Although limited, the school has court space for basketball, volleyball, and indoor soccer; other teams use facilities in the local community.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AWAITING THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

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Saint John's School is a sound and thriving institution with a rich history and traditions. During his eight-year tenure, retiring Head of School Barry Farnham has made important strides toward meeting the challenges presented to him, and the school is positioned well for its next leader. The school's divisions are skillfully led by administrators who work well together in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation; they are highly regarded by faculty, parents, and students alike. The school community feels a great sense of pride and school spirit, and its members seek opportunities to be involved with the larger San Juan community. The physical plant - both existing and new construction - is a fresh, light-filled, welcoming school home.

Saint John's School is blessed with a dedicated 17-member Board of Trustees that has played an active role in establishing the school's strategic direction and priorities. The Centennial Capital Campaign, begun in 2003, has enabled sound investments in the school's facilities. The Strategic Academic Plan (2007-2014) offers a roadmap of mission-driven academic priorities and strategic goals, including more formalized service-oriented projects, character education, and improved student performance on the ERB exams. Both plans are well into their implementation phases, and the school is reaping the results. While much has been accomplished, additional challenges and opportunities await the next Head of School.

## FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

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Saint John's meets its operating costs and the expense of maintaining its facilities primarily through tuition, fees, and the building fund. Operating costs, however, continue to rise. Puerto Rican tax laws do not provide incentives for donations to educational institutions, so annual and capital giving programs are not a well-accepted part of the independent school culture on the island. Nonetheless, the school recently hired its first Director of Development and implemented a strategy that is making progress. Parents are as generous with their gifts as with their time, with 15 percent making substantial donations. The newly created Alumni Association is another promising development in institutional advancement efforts.

To date, 2009 capital fund donations have reached \$400,000 out of a goal of \$1 million. Total indebtedness for physical plant improvements is \$14.7 million. The cost of the entire master construction plan is projected to be \$15 million to \$18 million, with completion planned for 2015.

The next Head will need to devote energy and attention to institutional advancement efforts by pursuing additional parent, Board, and alumni support as well as raising awareness among trustees regarding their fundraising roles and responsibilities. Cultivating additional gifts will be necessary to continue facilities improvements, scholarship aid, and improvements to faculty compensation and development. Teachers, whose salaries are low by U.S. standards (although benefits are locally competitive), have not seen their compensation increase in three years. A new Business Manager will be joining the school in the near future, and careful oversight of school finances will be particularly important in light of current economic conditions.



## ADMISSIONS AND MARKETING

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As with most independent schools in today's economic climate, Saint John's School is facing admissions challenges. Enrollment, as high as 760 students half a decade ago, dipped below 700 this year despite determined marketing efforts. Other independent schools on the island are experiencing similar enrollment challenges; thus there is increasing competition for students. The next Head will be expected to play an important role in furthering admissions efforts by being a visible presence in the local community as well as by driving school improvements and cost controls that would make the school even more attractive to prospective families. Because the school is tuition-dependent, effective recruitment and careful enrollment management are vitally important.

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND FACULTY

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Under the leadership of the current Head, Saint John's has continued to enhance and modernize its educational program. The Strategic Academic Plan, which will continue to drive thoughtful changes in the next five years, provides for continuous assessment of students' learning and teachers' performance, and sets priorities for professional growth and development. Efforts to bring more continuity to the PK-12 curriculum are under way. Consideration might be given to expanding the role of department chairs to include oversight of the curriculum from grades 6-12.

Asked to offer their opinions on the challenges awaiting Saint John's next leader, many members of the school family expressed concerns about a perceived decline in academic rigor – and about achievement gaps and weaknesses in certain disciplines. ERB testing, while embraced by many as a performance measure, is not without its detractors. Others voiced concern about the intense focus on academics that leaves less time for students to pursue athletic or arts endeavors.

Because an engaged and talented faculty is integral to the Saint John's culture, the next Head should expect to devote considerable attention to retaining excellent teachers and recruiting talented new faculty. There has been some turnover recently among the newer faculty, and a number of veteran faculty are approaching retirement. The next Head will be expected to ensure that the school does all it can to support and develop the talents of younger teachers. All faculty would benefit from leadership that continues efforts to unite them and their divisions in working toward common goals. A faculty evaluation system, recently developed but not yet fully implemented, will be an important tool in building an even stronger team of educators.

The headship of Saint John's is an excellent opportunity for a savvy educational leader who values programmatic excellence and has a keen understanding of financial planning and oversight. The new Head of School should be someone who is eager to create a long-term relationship with this wonderful school community and to be an active participant in the daily life of the school.

## WHO SHOULD APPLY: QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

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The headship of Saint John's School is an appealing career opportunity for a strong, dynamic, and confident educational leader who is eager to make a commitment to a lively, family-oriented school culture and island community. Benefits include a school-supplied car and a generous housing allowance. The Board of Trustees is seeking a talented, experienced educator who can inspire and unite constituents behind a common vision of excellence. The ideal candidate will offer most or all of the following:

### PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

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- Solid academic credentials, including an advanced degree.
- A record of success as a senior administrator in educational institutions with high standards.
- A clearly defined educational philosophy that melds traditional and progressive approaches; an innovative thinker who is open to new approaches in learning.
- A demonstrated ability to hire well, supervise wisely, and effectively balance delegation and oversight.
- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills.
- Demonstrated ability to motivate, develop, and earn the respect of veteran and new faculty.
- A strong interest in marketing and development coupled with a keen aptitude for financial oversight.
- Willingness to participate in fundraising efforts and able to cultivate a culture of giving.
- Knowledge of and interest in curriculum and pedagogy across the PKK-12 spectrum.
- Fluency in Spanish, while not required, would be a major asset.

### LEADERSHIP STYLE

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- A moral leader of strong character and unquestioned integrity.
- A strategic, proactive leader with the ability to move the school forward in ways consistent with its mission, history, and traditions.
- A consistent leader who listens well and who can thoughtfully balance disparate views.
- A collegial and supportive leader who will demonstrate a sincere interest in all constituents of the school and be an advocate for all aspects of a balanced educational program.
- A steady leader who blends vision with follow-through, is able to build consensus, and promotes teamwork.
- A warm, engaged, approachable, and visible leader.

### PERSONAL QUALITIES

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- An outgoing, positive personality coupled with a genuine interest in and enjoyment of children and young adults.
- Cultural sensitivity and finesse; able to lead a diverse, bilingual community.
- A genuine interest in understanding and embracing the culture of the island.
- Creativity and flexibility.
- Open and fair-minded; able to inspire trust and goodwill.
- The ability to balance respect for tradition with openness to thoughtful change.
- An ability to work with parents and teachers as partners in the education of children.
- Sound judgment and diplomacy, coupled with a willingness to make difficult decisions and insist upon appropriate accountability and boundaries for both adults and students.
- Desire to make a long-term commitment to the school.



#### Anticipated Search Calendar:

Application deadline:	January 6, 2010
Search Committee selects semifinalists:	January 13, 2010
Semifinalist interviews:	January 23-24, 2010
Finalist visits:	February 2010
Appointment:	By March 2010
Start Date:	July 1, 2010

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS & PROCESS

Applicants should submit, no later than **Wednesday, January 6, 2010**, the following:

- A cover letter explaining why they are particularly interested in and qualified for this position.
- A current résumé.
- A statement of educational philosophy and/or other supporting material (e.g. articles or speeches) that would be useful to the Search Committee.
- The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three references. (*We will obtain permission from candidates before contacting references.*)

This information should be addressed to James and Martha Wickenden, lead consultants for the search, and transmitted via email attachment to:

***searches@wickenden.com***

After an initial review of applicants, the Search Committee will select semifinalists, who will be interviewed over the weekend of **January 23-24, 2010**. Finalists (and their spouses, if applicable) will be invited to the school for a more comprehensive series of interviews with representatives of the school's constituencies. Wickenden Associates will keep all applicants informed of their status throughout the process.

Ideally, a final selection will be made by March of 2010. The successful candidate will become the next Head of Saint John's School on July 1, 2010.

Prospective candidates interested in learning more about this opportunity or the search process are invited to call Wickenden Associates at 609-683-1355.