

HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

CHICAGO JESUIT ACADEMY

Chicago, Illinois

cjademy.org

Start Date: by July 2025



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

CARNEYSANDOE.COM

Mission Statement

Chicago Jesuit Academy is a loving and academically rigorous tuition-free Catholic elementary school for students and families from resilient communities impacted by historical disinvestment. CJA accompanies its students and alumni from enrollment through the start of their careers as they develop their gifts and grow as men and women for others.

Jesuit Connection

Chicago Jesuit Academy is a member of the Jesuit Schools Network (JSN). The JSN includes 91 secondary and pre-secondary schools across the country that educate students in the Jesuit tradition – a tradition that values academic excellence, Ignatian spirituality and a commitment to social justice. Chicago area schools belonging to the JSN include: CJA, Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, Christ the King Jesuit College Prep, St. Ignatius College Prep and Loyola Academy.

At a Glance



Established
2005



Enrollment
310+



Total employees
96



Student-faculty ratio
12:1



Students of color
100%



Students receiving aid
100%



Faculty with advanced degrees
63.5%



Campus size
100,000 sq. ft.
facility, newly renovated
and expanded

Employees of color: 50%

Tuition-free private school

Endowment: \$6 million+

Annual operating budget: \$10.982 million



Overview

Since opening in two rented classrooms in 2005, Chicago Jesuit Academy's (CJA) firmly rooted and focused mission has guided its professional community, families, current students, alumni, and supporters, enabling the school to expand its student population, campus, reach, and impact in remarkable ways. A 3rd-8th grade school community drawing students, primarily but not exclusively, from Austin and other neighborhoods on Chicago's West Side, CJA has served boys since its founding and developed a co-institutional model and began admitting girls in 2022. In the midst of a strategically driven expansion, the school projects it will grow its current population of approximately 310 students to 426 by the 2027-28 academic year.

CJA is tuition-free and admits students of all religious backgrounds. 3rd-5th grade students are admitted without regard to their past levels of achievement. The school provides a rigorous and transformative educational experience to its students and demonstrates its continued investment in the lives of its alumni through its distinctive College & Career Persistence Program, which provides truly comprehensive support, including but not limited to identifying best-fit high schools, supporting secondary school engagement and success, guiding the college search, and assisting with the early stages of the professional and vocational careers of its alumni.

As it searches for its next Head of School, CJA seeks a talented educational leader whose roots in the classroom, leadership skills, administrative experience, and professional and personal commitments align with [CJA's mission and "graduate-at-graduation" values as well as the Jesuit tenet of *cura personalis*](#) ("care for the whole person"). While a Jesuit school, the Head of School need not be Catholic.



Opportunities and Challenges

Lead and manage during a period of significant growth and change: CJA will continue to grow over the next three years, ultimately doubling in size between 2022 and 2027. For the community, this reality feels both incredibly exciting and somewhat daunting. The Head of School will lead during this time of significant growth and change, identifying how to evolve its systems, communications, and more for a larger student, family, and professional community and to adapt itself to meet the needs of its growing population of girls while maintaining the strong sense of identity and connection that has typified the CJA experience to date.

Bring increased cohesion to the curriculum and pedagogy: Balancing individual teacher autonomy, a scaffolded curriculum, and shared teaching practices remains a critical conversation among professional community members at CJA. The Head of School will help guide student-centered discussions, seeking to develop shared agreements around curriculum and teaching practices to increase cohesion and minimize transitions for students as they progress from grade to grade and teacher to teacher. In this work, it will be essential for faculty to feel their voices and experiences are heard and that they will continue to be empowered to work in a way that is most effective for students' success.

Strengthen a co-teaching model with multi-age classrooms: CJA is unique in that each classroom has two adults working with and supporting students. The Head of School is a support in managing the co-teaching model and teacher-to-teacher relationships. Additionally, many classrooms at CJA are multi-age and multi-grade level. The Head of School will think creatively and outside of traditional classroom structures about how to best serve students based on student data, strengths and learning styles. For the Head of School, the top priority is always meeting students' individual needs in an effort to elevate their gifts, talents and abilities.

Engage with Austin and other proximate communities: CJA feels a strong sense of connection with Austin and the other communities on Chicago's West Side. Its Head of School needs to be among CJA's public facing leaders and contribute to the ongoing cultivation of its relationship with the communities it serves. The Head of School gives special priority to recruiting and retaining faculty and staff whose lived experiences mirror those of CJA's students and alumni.



Embrace the joy and the challenge: CJA's commitment to work within historically disinvested communities results in work that is both joyful and challenging, and the Head of School will need to embrace the full spectrum of what the days, weeks, and academic years bring for them and their community and lead with hope and joy. From time to time, circumstances will require the Head of School to lead and buoy the community through particularly difficult circumstances.

About the Position

In addition to these opportunities and challenges, The **Head of School** reports to the President and is responsible for accomplishing the mission of CJA's lower and middle school in collaboration with our students, alumni, parents, staff, teachers and the broader CJA community. The Head of School is the **instructional leader** of CJA. The Head of School is responsible for maintaining and strengthening a loving and academically rigorous school culture that invites each member of the community to be a person for others who aspires to be open to growth, loving, religious, seeking intellectual excellence and committed to doing justice in the service of others. CJA has an extended school day and 11-month school year to better serve students and families.

First and foremost, the Head of School is an outstanding teacher. In any situation, the Head of School **seeks first to understand** the context of the person they serve – whether that person is a student, alumna/us, parent, staff member, teacher or another member of CJA's community. The Head of School then uses their understanding of that person's unique context to inform what experiences, opportunities for reflection, actions and evaluation ought to come next. In all that they do, the Head of School strives to see in each person their fullness, strength and God-given gifts.



The Head of School:

- Uses information about students' strengths and needs provided by students, their families, student assessments, grade-level teams, the Learning Resource Center and the Student Services Team to prioritize and **allocate resources in the best service of students**. They work closely with the Assistant Head of School to assess and respond to the immediate and longer-term needs of each student and class.
- Builds and maintains **strong and loving relationships** with students and families and helps all teachers and staff do the same. They are “on call” for any student, alumni or family emergencies.
- Oversees the recruitment, hiring, professional development and **retention of great teachers** and school staff who will do whatever it takes to help students succeed. The Head of School serves as an instructional coach for a subset of teachers and oversees the informal and formal observations of each teacher in collaboration with the Assistant Head of School and the team of instructional coaches.
- Has strong relationships with their teachers and staff and knows their talents, strengths and areas for growth. The Head of School is **adept at finding the best available role** for each teacher and staff member. They allow the parts to be the parts so that the whole of CJA can be the best and strongest possible whole. With the support of CJA's Chief Financial Officer, the Head of School is a careful steward of their budget and spends every dollar always asking, “Is this the highest and best use of these resources for our students?”
- Creates, defines and implements a plan for the growth of the lower and middle school for both boys and girls. The Head of School develops a shared vision for this growth by actively involving the broader CJA community in this process.
- Serves as the public face of the leadership of CJA's lower and middle school. The Head of School **communicates effectively** with parents, benefactors, board members and the broader community.
- Manages reporting to and building effective relationships with the Illinois State Board of Education, the Jesuit Schools Network, the Archdiocese of Chicago and CJA's accrediting institution with support from the Assistant Head of School, the Director of Mission & Ministry and the Director of Compliance.



- Partners with CJA's development team by sharing their work and the work of CJA's students, teachers and staff with benefactors who **support the scholarship needs** of our students.
- Manages the Assistant Head of School, Director of Mission & Ministry, Director of Programs, Director of Student Recruitment & Compliance, Director of Parent Partnership and the team of instructional coaches.
- Collaborates with CJA's College & Career Persistence Team in their work to help each alumna/us find their unique path through high school, post-secondary education and the start of a meaningful career.
- Is detail-oriented, has **exceptional organizational skills** and is someone who consistently covers any base they say they will cover with skill and grace.
- **The Head of School is not perfect.** When they make a mistake, they take responsibility for the mistake and do whatever is necessary to fix it.
- Embraces the Catholic and Jesuit identity and mission of CJA and is **sincerely committed to building a diverse, equitable and inclusive school community.** The Head of School believes all children deserve a high-quality education and a school community where they feel they belong.

Strong academic experience and credentials are also required as is past teaching experience. Additionally, an Illinois Principal PEL Administrative Endorsement or its equivalent are preferred. An ideal candidate will have experience learning, teaching or working in Chicago schools and an extensive knowledge of Chicago's education landscape. The successful candidate will have an appreciation of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm and believe in an education that forms the whole person – *cura personalis* – in the Jesuit tradition.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about Chicago Jesuit Academy.

[School Website](#)

[Community Partnerships](#)

[School History](#)

[Our Way of Proceeding](#)

[School Community](#)

[About Chicago, Illinois](#)

[CJA Impact](#)



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:

- Cover letter expressing interest in this particular position
- Current résumé

Selected candidates may also be asked to provide:

- Writing samples specific to this search
- List of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission)

Expressions of interest and initial application materials may be sent to:

Chris Boyle

Consultant

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Brandon Jacobs

Consultant, DEIB Practice Group Leader

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