

# EARLY SCHOOL DIRECTOR SEARCH

## ST. MARGARET'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

San Juan Capistrano, California

[smes.org](http://smes.org)

Start Date: July 2025

**ST. MARGARET'S**  
EPISCOPAL SCHOOL



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES

CARNEYSANDOE.COM



## Mission Statement

Our mission at St. Margaret's Episcopal School is to educate the hearts and minds of young people for lives of learning, leadership and service.

## Core Values

- **Character** - We emphasize integrity, spirituality, empathy, perseverance, and responsibility
- **Community** - We champion mutual respect, engagement, collaboration, service learning, and a commitment to the common good.
- **Balance and Breadth** - We believe personal growth, balance and well-being are fostered through a broad range of academic, artistic, athletic, and co-curricular opportunities.
- **High Expectations** - We prepare and empower our students to discover and develop their unique gifts and talents to achieve their full potential.
- **Equity and Inclusion** - We embrace and celebrate the identity of every human being, and advocate for equity, inclusion, and justice.

## Episcopal Identity

St. Margaret's Episcopal School is upheld by the basic principles of our Episcopal tenets that individuals and institutions are called to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being. Episcopal schools are not solely communities for Christians, rather as ecumenical and diverse ministries of educational and human formation for people of all faiths and backgrounds. Episcopal schools also integrate religious and spiritual formation into the curriculum and life of the school community. Episcopal schools exist not merely to educate, but to demonstrate and proclaim the unique worth and beauty of all human beings.

# At a Glance



Established  
**1979**



Early School  
enrollment  
**84**



Financial aid awarded  
**\$5 million**



Campus size  
**22.7-acres**



Students of color  
**54%**



Faith backgrounds  
**22**



Early School employees  
**26**

Total students: 1,234

Wee Tartans: 5

Admissions admit rate: 40%

Admissions yield: 80%

Total faculty: 112

Local cities and communities  
represented: 28

Faculty with advanced degrees: 64%

Annual faculty professional  
development: 100%

Faculty of color: 22%

Students receiving aid: 15%

Endowment: \$25 million

Annual operating budget: \$50M

Advanced placement courses: 26

STEAM labs and studios: 19

Student clubs: 55+

Varsity sports: 24





## Overview

St. Margaret's Episcopal School (SMES) is a vibrant learning community where natural curiosity and academic pursuit flourish. As an independent, co-educational day school serving students in preschool through grade 12, SMES provides a vigorous college-preparatory program dedicated to educating the hearts and the minds of its students and nurturing the whole child. Students have unlimited opportunities to discover and explore new passions and curiosities. They are supported and cheered on by a diverse and welcoming community rooted in the Episcopal identity and values. Students and teachers are eager and enthusiastic to be here, to be together, to learn and grow, and that energy is contagious.

In 1979, the Reverend Canon Ernest D. Sillers opened the doors of St. Margaret's Episcopal School in pursuit of a mission to educate the hearts and minds of young people for lives of learning, leadership, and service. The school's mission is rooted in the development of five core values in its students: character, community, balance and breadth, high expectations, and equity and inclusion. While the landscape of education has changed over the last four decades, the school's mission and core values have remained constant. The fifth core value of equity and inclusion was added by the Board of Trustees in the Fall of 2019.

The school has been working off its [Strategic Plan](#) from 2016 (updated in 2022) and plans to complete a new strategic plan in 2025. Overall, it is clear that the Board of Trustees and Head of School Dr. Jeneen Graham have set a bold and transformative course for St. Margaret's, its students, and professional community while honoring the legacy and core values on which the school was built. The strategic planning ensures the school looks towards a transformative future and allows St. Margaret's to discover authentic student needs for deeper connection and relevance in their learning and a whole-child approach to student health and wellness.

Related to all-school initiatives, the school will be breaking ground in 2025 on a 30,000 square foot building, The St. Margaret's Commons, as part of its [Tartans Thrive](#) capital campaign. Clearly, the future is bright at St. Margaret's!

In December, it was announced that St. Margaret's Early School Director, Dr. Cris Lozon, had accepted a Head of School role elsewhere in California, which she will assume in the summer of 2025, and which has resulted in this exciting leadership opportunity. St. Margaret's Early School program is described well on the school's website ([here](#)). The Early School Director is part of the senior leadership team at the school and reports directly to the Head of School. The Director has a *Pedagogista* (the *Reggio Emilia* equivalent to a Director of Teaching and Learning) and Administrative Assistant as part of the early school leadership team, and the Director oversees roughly 25 professional community members, serving 84 young learners in the school's Early School Program. The Director also oversees the school's Wee Tartans Program, which is an infant program offered to St. Margaret's professional community. So, in spite of its relatively small size, the Early School division at St. Margaret's is exceedingly well staffed and resourced. The school seeks a leader who can help it continue its impressive trajectory over the past decade.



## Opportunities and Challenges

St. Margaret's Early School is a joyful place. Its young learners buzz around the outdoor classroom and the interior spaces, watched closely but guided lightly by professional community members. In spite of the seeming effortlessness with which this all occurs, there is a research-based approach behind it all, as St. Margaret's Early School follows the *Reggio Emilia* philosophy. *Reggio Emilia* is decidedly constructivist, wherein student growth and development is achieved through play and exploration. The *Pedagogista* role is akin to an Assistant Head/Director of Teaching and Learning and is intended to provide the Director the necessary support and partnership to remain faithful to the philosophy.

The next leader of the Early School needs to be a believer in a constructivist approach to the education and development of young children. The faculty in the Early School are on board, and many have engaged deeply in professional development in the past decade to increase the overall expertise of the faculty in the division. The school seeks a new Early School Director who exhibits many if not most of the qualifications and personal attributes listed below.

## Qualifications and Personal Attributes

- Approachable and accessible: present in the life of the division, from drop off to pick up,
- Significant and successful classroom teaching experience and a track record as an effective instructional leader, preferably in a constructivist, early school environment;
- Empathy for the day-to-day demands of teaching;
- Genuine affection for and understanding of young children;
- Well-versed in and committed to equity and inclusion practices with experience in guiding students, colleagues, and parents in their growth in these spaces;
- Forthright and authentic: able to give adults concrete feedback to support professional development and programmatic excellence;
- Ability to manage difficult conversations with grace and compassion;
- Open to feedback with the ability to be discerning and discreet;
- Humility and integrity;
- Strong communication skills – both verbal and written;
- Calm, clear, and kind.

# Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about St. Margaret's Episcopal School.

[School Website](#)

[Equity and Inclusion](#)

[Tartans Thrive](#)

[College Matriculation](#)

[Virtual Campus Tour](#)

[About San Juan Capistrano, California](#)



## To Apply

Review of candidate materials will begin immediately. Interested candidates should submit electronically in one email and as separate documents (preferably PDFs) the following materials:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this position;
- A current resumé.

Selected candidates will also be asked to provide the following:

- Responses to writing prompts;
- A statement of educational philosophy OR a piece of professional writing like a speech, article, letter or blog post;
- A list of five professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission).

### **John Faubert**

Consultant

john.faubert@carneysandoe.com

### **Sabrina Zurkuhlen**

Consultant

sabrina.zurkuhlen@carneysandoe.com

*The full-time equivalent salary range for this position is \$125,000 - \$160,000. The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to several factors that include years of experience, education level, and expertise.*