St. Joseph’s Preparatory School
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
President
Start Date: July 1, 2021
www.SJPrep.org
Founded in 1851 by the Society of Jesus, St. Joseph’s Preparatory School (the Prep) is an independent, Catholic, college-preparatory school for boys. Located in North Philadelphia, it is the only Jesuit high school in the Delaware Valley and one of 68 Jesuit Secondary Schools in the United States. The school serves approximately 900 students and is dedicated to providing a robust educational experience to its students while balancing its highly-regarded classical program with extensive offerings of athletics, theater, music, and club opportunities. Even more important is the school’s commitment to produce graduates who are “men for and with others” and who will serve their families, churches, and communities.

The sense of pride, enthusiasm, and “Brotherhood” permeates the campus at all levels. Students, parents, alumni, faculty, and administration fully embrace the Jesuit traditions and high aspirations of the school. The school is also devoted to maintaining its urban presence and commitment to diversity, service, and a welcoming, inclusive culture. Despite the challenging demographics, enrollments remain strong and steady. A bold strategic plan is also in place, and an ambitious capital plan is achieving its goals and generating the resources necessary to complete a timely campus renovation and renewal plan.

As with all Jesuit secondary schools, the Prep operates in the President/Principal Model. In this increasingly popular and powerful leadership structure, the Principal reports to the President and oversees day to day academic operations, freeing up the President to serve as the visionary and outward facing “Institution Builder.” Rev. John W. Swope, S.J. was appointed President in 2015 and will be transitioning to a new role in the Jesuit community following the completion of the next academic year. An outstanding new Principal was recruited this past year and brings proven leadership and passion for Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy. The school now seeks a President with exceptional
vision and entrepreneurial leadership skills who will work closely with the board and leadership team in taking this extraordinary school to the next level.

This is a rare opportunity to lead a high-performing all-boys Jesuit secondary school with deep ties to its community and an unwavering commitment to its Catholic and Jesuit identity and mission.

**SCHOOL HISTORY**

St. Joseph’s Preparatory School was founded in 1851 in Philadelphia. The school grew out of a small parish church created by Rev. Joseph Greaton, S.J. in Center City in 1733. As the city and parish blossomed over time, the Jesuits of the Maryland Province decided to create Saint Joseph’s College with a supporting preparatory department to serve the growing Catholic immigrant population. In the late 1800s, the college and school moved to Girard Avenue, near the site of the Centennial Exposition. When the college later relocated to the northwestern corner of the city, St. Joseph’s Prep took over the Girard Avenue campus and became an independent institution in 1927. By 1939, enrollment reached 735 students. A devastating fire in 1966 destroyed two-thirds of the school, but with their commitment to serving an urban population, Jesuits quickly made plans to rebuild on the same site.

**THE SCHOOL**

Today, the Prep, as the school is affectionately known, offers students a world-class education that takes advantage of both a vibrant academic program and the school’s location in the culturally rich
city of Philadelphia. The school is a diverse community of young men who hail from over 245 different elementary and middle schools, 172 different zip codes, and 10 different counties. St. Joseph’s Prep diversity/inclusion initiatives and programs enhance the life of the school, contributing to an environment that reflects and nurtures the recognition and appreciation of human dignity and multiple perspectives while embracing and celebrating shared experiences. The religious expression of the school aids in nurturing a holistic experience for the students in mind, body, and spirit.

The Prep is fully accredited by the Pennsylvania State Department of Public Instruction and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. It is also an active member of the Jesuit Schools Network, National Catholic Education Association, the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools, and the Association of Delaware Valley Independent Schools.

**ACADEMICS**

Rooted in the classic liberal arts model of Jesuit education, St. Joseph’s Prep strives to be at the vanguard of student-centered learning. With its talented, dedicated faculty (97% of whom hold advanced degrees) and its challenging and innovative curriculum, the school works to ensure that all students are prepared to thrive at the world’s top colleges and universities and to grow into lives of personal and professional success and service. At the center of the Prep’s academic philosophy is the Ignatian tradition of educating the mind, body, and spirit. Competence, Conscience, and Compassion are the roots of this Jesuit model of education at work here. No student should reach the end of his day feeling either unchallenged or unloved.

To graduate from the Prep, a student must earn a minimum of 26 academic credits, satisfy the State of Pennsylvania requirement for physical education, and fulfill community service requirements
through the Ignatian Service Program. But that's just the core of the program. Students can also take Advanced Placement (AP) courses in 17 areas, including History, English, Science, Latin, Mathematics, Computer Science, and Psychology. They can enroll in any of the numerous electives in the sciences, humanities, and arts. They can take public speaking or engage in fieldwork in Environmental Sciences or study the social ethics of war and peace. They can immerse themselves in classical and modern languages, including Mandarin Chinese, and study the fundamentals of economics or psychology.

While the academic program has long served students well, St. Joseph’s Prep is always interested in growing and evolving its program. To that end, the school is now working to foster greater interdepartmental and grade-level collaboration among the faculty and establish best practices for use in the classroom. At every turn, the teachers strive to instill in students a lifelong love of learning. This evolving work offers a great opportunity for the next Principal to help shape and guide the school’s 21st century curriculum.

While the academic program is second to none, the Prep also aims to encourage its students to discover God and their best selves through serious and prayerful reflection and to demonstrate a clear responsibility to share their gifts working with, and for, their fellow human beings.
The philosophy of *mens sana in corpore sano* — “a healthy mind in a healthy body” — has long been a part of a Prep education. To that end, the school offers numerous varsity, JV, and freshmen sports teams each season. Prep teams have had tremendous success in their league over the years — including state and national titles — and many of their athletes go on to compete at the collegiate level. But the members of the coaching staff will tell you that while success in competition is important, they also endeavor to instill the qualities of leadership, loyalty, and sportsmanship. Teams include baseball, basketball, bowling, crew, cross country, football, golf, ice hockey, lacrosse, rugby, soccer, squash, swimming, tennis, track, Ultimate frisbee, volleyball, and wrestling.

**JESUIT MISSION**

At the Prep, the Mission & Ministry team brings Christian values alive through the school’s mission in a variety of ways. By living the Gospel Message, the Mission & Ministry Department strives to meet students and adults where they are through its work to create in them sustainable, faith-filled, contemplative, and active relationships with others and Jesus Christ.

Through newly created Summer Service Learning Courses, St. Joseph’s Prep offers the opportunity for students to analyze the complexities of the challenges facing the City of Philadelphia and advocate for change. The Ignatian Service Program facilitates opportunities for students, as well as faculty and staff, to serve the needs of others in the immediate community and beyond. During their four years at the school, students will complete a minimum of 75 hours of community service. Weeklong immersion trips take place over spring break and during the summer for juniors and seniors. These programs expose students to people of faith in need both locally and intercontinentally and challenge
them to grow in depth and character through service, prayer, and community. The retreat program strives to bring continued development, spiritual growth, and the Ignatian ideal of *Cura Personalis* — care for the whole person — to students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Students in each grade have opportunities to participate in retreats. The Mission & Ministry Offices works to teach and experience Catholic principles but also offers a variety of liturgical and spiritual opportunities to help all feel welcome at the Prep.

**STUDENT LIFE**

Students at the Prep are involved and engaged. At all grade levels, they are encouraged to take part in a vast array of clubs and activities that build body, mind, and spirit, as well as brotherhood and community. To that end the school offers 13 academic clubs, from Forensics to Model UN to the Writing Lab, as well as eight Cultural Clubs, including the Asian Club and the Black and Latino Club. The school offers eight clubs in the visual and performing arts, four service clubs, and more than a dozen special interest clubs, from Anime to Fishing to Robotics. Students also help run various school-related publications and participate in a wide array of intermural sports, from mountain biking to ping pong.

**CAMPUS**

In 1868, the Prep established 17th and Girard in North Philadelphia as its home. Following the fire of 1966, the Jesuits re-committed to the city of Philadelphia and chose to rebuild here rather than move to a suburban location. The main Prep building became the center of the rebuild and remains the focal space for the school’s mission of developing the minds, hearts, souls, and characters of young men.
Today, school leaders are re-committing once again to their urban campus. The recent strategic plan calls for updating, improving, and adding to the existing campus. This project includes modernizing all classrooms, building a state-of-the-art Learning Commons, rejuvenating the school’s theater, adding a Welcome and Admission Center, and building an additional nearby athletic field.

The Church of the Gesu, a remarkable Victorian Cathedralesque Basilica built in 1882, became St. Joseph’s Prep’s official chapel in the 1990s — and continues to serve as the school’s spiritual center. This church connects the alumni of past generations to the lifeblood of the present school as a place where all can encounter God in prayer and community.

For many students, one of the main attractions of the Prep’s campus is its access to the City of Philadelphia and all of its remarkable cultural offerings. Indeed, the school considers the city a central part of the curriculum and an important extension of its campus.

**Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

Philadelphia. Philly. The City of Brotherly Love. There are few locations in the United States with a more storied history and dynamic present. Founded by English Quaker William Penn in 1682, the city has served an instrumental role in the American Revolution and is the site of the signing of both the *Declaration of Independence* and the *U.S. Constitution*. Over the years, the city has been home to many U.S. firsts, including the first library, hospital, medical school, nation’s capital, and stock exchange.

Today, the Philadelphia metropolitan area is the eighth largest in the United States. As a thriving economic center, it is home to some major U.S. corporations, including Comcast, Cigna Insurance, Aramark food service, GlaxoSmithKline, Urban Outfitters, and others. The city is also growing as a
center for biotechnology and information technology. Of course, Philadelphia’s historic and cultural sites make it one of the nation’s major tourist destinations. In 2017, it attracted more than 41 million visitors.

On the cultural front, museums include the Franklin Institute, the Museum of the American Revolution, the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, the Philadelphia Museum of Art (with the now-famous Rocky steps), and the impressive Barnes Foundation, which promotes the advancement of education and appreciation for the fine arts. With its historic neighborhoods, parks, and remarkable building murals, Philadelphia is a wonderful city for walking. It’s also a great city for dining out, with 300-plus bring-your-own-bottle (BYOB) restaurants and lots of sidewalk seating reminiscent of European cities.

In education, the metropolitan area is home to some of the oldest independent schools in the country and has the nation’s third largest concentration of college students across 88 institutions of higher learning — including at the University of Pennsylvania, Saint Joseph’s University, Villanova University, Temple University, and Drexel University.

**Opportunities and Challenges**

The Prep is a high performing school in every respect, and its academic and extracurricular programs are exceptional. The school’s stated goal is to graduate young men marked by the following characteristics of a Jesuit education: “open to growth, intellectually competent, religious, loving, and committed to doing justice.” In order to accomplish this goal, the entire school community must continue to embrace its Jesuit mission and the vision that the leadership articulates for success and development in its students.
Much has been accomplished in recent years, and there is a buzz of anticipation on campus concerning the current leadership search. In 2017, Fr. Swope and the Board of Trustees, with extensive community involvement and discussion, launched a comprehensive strategic plan designed to provide the resources and priorities needed to shape an education of the highest quality, and to position the school for even more prominence and significance. The plan consists of four main pillars:

- Live our Catholic and Jesuit Mission.
- Enhance Academic Excellence.
- Strengthen our Environment of Involvement, Respect, and Connection.
- Sustain the Prep Mission through Enhanced Revenue Strategies.

At this exciting moment in the life of the school, the Prep’s next President will have the opportunity to complete the execution of this plan and bring the community together around a new vision for the future.

Launched as part of the strategic plan, a capital campaign is showing great promise and generating substantial resources for scholarship endowment and the renewal of campus facilities. The Prep’s campus is historic and certainly impressive, but campus facilities need to be improved and modernized to create a 21st-century environment for learning and to make sure that the Prep is competitive with other leading schools in the Philadelphia area. Part of this upgrade will involve significant enhancement of the technological resources made available to the Prep community. Providing wholehearted and dynamic leadership to this vital Capital Campaign, including successful hands-on fundraising, will be a key element in the institution building priorities expected of the new President.
Admissions has been steady, but metropolitan Philadelphia is one of the most crowded and relentlessly competitive private school markets in the country. Making sure that the Prep remains the school of choice for young men in the Delaware Valley and that enrollment management is first-rate will be a vital priority. Continuing to grow the endowment is key to ensuring the Prep experience will remain within reach of families from all tier of the economy. Affordability is a growing concern even among the wealthiest families, who are becoming accustomed to tuition-free public elementary schools as the Philadelphia parochial school system has contracted.

For a school of its size and stature, the Prep’s endowment is relatively modest and will need the focused attention of the next President. Fundraising will therefore be a key responsibility along with building a sustainable and adaptable business model capable of accommodating the community’s high aspirations for the school.

The St. Joseph’s Prep community is genuinely committed to its ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The achievement of these goals will require the active leadership of the President in a process of continuous improvement to ensure that the sense of true Ignatian “Brotherhood” continues to be a warm and welcoming reality. The Prep’s dedicated pursuit of these ideals plus its longstanding commitment to enhancing the quality of life and opening up new pathways of opportunity for its fellow citizens in Philadelphia give the school a chance to serve as a credible national model for addressing societal inequalities.

And, finally, the repercussions of the coronavirus pandemic continue to play out in a variety of complex, unexpected, and challenging ways. The wisdom, foresight, and problem-solving skills of the President will be key to helping St. Joseph’s Prep navigate these uncharted waters as successfully as possible.
**Desired Qualities and Qualifications**

As mentioned earlier in this document, St. Joseph’s Prep operates in the President/Principal Leadership Model. In this model, the President needs to be a fundamentally collaborative leader and partner to the Principal while also serving as a bold and accountable CEO, championing the vision and driving the agenda and aspirations of the school. The President is also required to be an effective fundraiser and friend-raiser and to secure all necessary resources to enable the school to thrive and achieve all institutional plans and priorities.

This is truly an outstanding leadership opportunity, and members of the Board welcome candidates from varied career backgrounds who share their ambitions for the school and can meet the core requirements for the position. In addition to possessing academic credentials appropriate to the leadership of an institution of such reputation, the Board seeks candidates who have the following qualities and qualifications:

- A practicing Catholic in good standing who can embody and exemplify Ignatian values and demonstrate their power and purpose in his/her daily leadership practice.
- An outstanding communicator with poise, presence, and conviction who can raise the profile of the school in the community and articulate its extraordinary value proposition.
- An entrepreneurial, servant leader with keen managerial and financial management skills who can build on the school’s tradition of excellence, shape an uplifting vision for the Prep in our time, and deliver on tangible transformational results.
- A strategic thinker possessing strong financial acumen who can envision and implement a sustainable financial model for the school.
- An engaging and charismatic advocate for the Prep whose understanding and passion for the school’s mission results in the creation of personal relationships with donors and inspires significant contributions.

Finally, while knowledge of education and school operations is preferred, other qualities and experiences are also valued, especially passion for Jesuit education, as well as the ability to inspire, lead a high performing team, and create demand for the unique gifts of a St. Joseph’s Prep education. This is one of the finest Catholic school leadership opportunities in the country.

**To Apply**

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically in one email and as separate documents (preferably PDFs) the following materials:

- A thoughtful cover letter expressing interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- A one-page statement of educational or leadership philosophy and practice;
- A list of five professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted until or unless a serious mutual interest is established, and not without the candidate’s permission) to:

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