BENILDE-ST. MARGARET’S SCHOOL
St. Louis Park, Minnesota

DIRECTOR OF EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING
Start Date: July 2021
bsmschool.org
OVERVIEW

Benilde-St. Margaret’s School (BSM) is one of Minnesota’s top Catholic, independent, college preparatory schools for students in grades 7-12. Located in St. Louis Park, just outside Minneapolis, BSM takes a rigorous and holistic approach to education and is focused on helping every student reach their highest potential for a successful future.

Rooted in the vibrant traditions of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, the Christian Brothers, and the Order of St. Benedict, BSM offers a 21st-century curriculum, leading-edge learning experiences, extensive co-curricular opportunities, faith formation, and a robust service-learning program. The school is also deeply committed to fostering a genuine sense of belonging for all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, or ability.

Benilde-St. Margaret’s seeks a Director of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EIB) starting July 1, 2021. The Director of EIB will help refine and implement the school’s strategic EIB plan. This work includes creating, implementing, and managing programs designed to foster a culture of inclusion and a sense of belonging among students, faculty, and staff; partnering with the administration team to develop a culturally-relevant curriculum; identifying EIB strategies for the recruitment, hiring, and retention of faculty and staff; and developing and implementing faculty and staff training to enhance employee cultural understanding and competency. The Director of EIB is a full-time, academic administrative position, part of the executive leadership team, reporting directly to the President.
SCHOOL HISTORY

In 1907, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet founded St. Margaret’s Academy in Minneapolis. For over a half century, this all-girls School ran independently. In 1956, the Christian Brothers found Benilde High School, an all-boys school, in the Minneapolis suburb of St. Louis Park. In the 1970s, with enrollments shrinking at both schools, they joined together to officially form Benilde-St. Margaret’s School. The newly combined school grew steadily through the late 20th century and was named a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education. A capital campaign in the early 2000s led to the school’s state-of-the-art expansion, including a new chapel, library, classroom wing, performing arts center, administrative office spaces, and athletic facilities.

THE SCHOOL

BSM has a strong reputation for its focus on holistic education in the Catholic tradition. Throughout the 7-12 program, the school attends to the intellectual, physical, emotional, interpersonal, and spiritual well-being of students, ensuring they are prepared to reach their highest potential.

Lead by experienced faculty, the school believes students learn best by actively participating in meaningful, challenging activities in a safe environment that is conducive to success and that fosters critical thinking and creativity. BSM also believes that diversity and multicultural education are essential components of students’ lives as they prepare to live and work in an ever-evolving, complex society.
Teachers, staff, and coaches — partnering with parents — take seriously the responsibility to provide quality instruction, model conscientious behavior, and assist students in learning to make good decisions based on Christian values.

The BSM Board of Directors recently adopted a five-year strategic plan that establishes a formal vision for the school. The 2025 strategic plan, *Rich History. Radiant Future*, is built on four core pillars: Exceptional Academics, Being Catholic in the World, Vibrant Community, and Investing in the Future. A key element of the strategic plan is to establish a student body that reflects racial, economic, and academic diversity and to foster a culture of inclusion and a sense of belonging among students, faculty, and staff.

### DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The BSM community welcomes and celebrates the histories, experiences, and identities of each of its members, and believes that shared experiences — formal and informal — within a diverse community foster authentic human relationships and growth. The school also supports community members in their journey toward greater human understanding and personal development through a variety of courses and topics studied throughout the curriculum and through programming, student organizations, leadership development, student and parent affinity groups, and professional development opportunities.

The school’s core values and strategic plan guide the community’s work of supporting each student and developing an inclusive culture comprising students and faculty of different backgrounds. During the 2020-21 school year, BSM worked closely with a consultant to assess and improve its organizational approach to DEI. The results of this study greatly informed the development of a multi-year plan to ensure DEI strategies become part of the school’s everyday approach to building meaningful community.
ACADEMICS

The BSM curriculum is designed to prepare students for the dynamic and ever-changing world in which they’ll study, live, and work.

The Junior High School offers a comprehensive curriculum with a strong emphasis on the development of language arts skills. Core courses include English, mathematics, science, social studies, world languages, religious studies, and the arts. In the Junior High program, each student is provided a laptop for daily academic use. Technology is integrated into all areas of the curriculum.

The Senior High School curriculum includes core courses in English, mathematics, science, social studies, world languages, religious studies, and the arts. The program offers numerous honors courses and 20 Advanced Placement courses. Students can also take a wide range of electives. Signature programs include Research, Engineering, and Design (RED) and Explore, Partnership, Inspire, and Connect (EPIC) — both designed to engage students in real-world professional experiences.

BSM’s recent strategic plan includes further adapting the academic program to the changing needs of students and society by providing innovative and authentic learning experiences and ensuring effective instructional approaches to promote enduring skills of creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. The strategic plan also outlines a goal to expand opportunities for students to earn college credit throughout the academic program.
ARTS AND ATHLETICS

The visual arts program provides students with the opportunity for developing creativity, imagination, and effective visual expression, with a link to cultural history. Working in a collaborative peer-learning environment, students develop creative problem-solving skills, self-expression, and visual literacy. The music department nurtures an appreciation for composition and music and recognizes the important role music plays in developing a student’s self-esteem. Outside of formal course offerings, students may take part in extracurricular groups in band, orchestra, jazz, and choir. The drama department offers three performance opportunities annually, two in the Senior High and one in the Junior High.

BSM offers more than 20 different athletic programs across all three seasons — including varsity and junior varsity teams in football, soccer, cross-country, swimming, diving, tennis, volleyball, dance, alpine and Nordic skiing, hockey, basketball, wrestling, baseball, golf, softball, tennis, and track and field.
SCHOOL LIFE

BSM offers a wide range of extracurricular programs — including athletic teams, clubs, faith and service activities, and opportunities in fine arts — and more than 90% of the student body participates in at least one of these offerings.

Clubs include academic-focused activities such as robotics, world languages, the student newspaper, creative writing, National Honors Society, business, and more. Students can also take part in recreational skiing, the Chess Club, and other popular after-school activities.

The school’s focus on supporting the spiritual development of students includes a range of opportunities to engage in academic religion classes, liturgies, prayer services, community service, and international mission trips.

Homerooms convene weekly for academic advisory, activities, and special interest meetings. Relevant issues such as peer pressure, decision-making, self-esteem, diversity, and healthy social relationships are also addressed.
CAMPUS

Benilde-St. Margaret’s sits on 32 acres in the Twin Cities suburb of St. Louis Park. The attractive mid-20th-century school building has been steadily updated over the years. In 2019, the school completed a 10,000-square-foot renovation and created state-of-the-art science labs and a multi-purpose teaching, meeting and performance space called the Atrium. In 2021, another 10,000 square feet of learning space was added to promote student creativity, curiosity, and collaboration. The technology infrastructure and the ventilation systems underwent large-scale renovations to support school operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Soon, BSM will create a thinktank space devoted to entrepreneurial pursuits and a prototyping lab. Also, a new fitness center will be built to promote the importance of student health and wellness.

The campus also includes state-of-the-art classrooms, a college and career center, a chapel, a modern library, a full-service gymnasium, a performing arts center, and athletic fields.

ST. LOUIS PARK, MINNESOTA

St. Louis Park, a city with a population around 49,000, is located just west of Minneapolis. The community balances the energy of the city and the quiet, down-to-earth feel of a smaller town, and there are many fun and diverse options for dining, shopping, and community and leisure activities. It is part of the inner-ring of suburbs around the Twin Cities metro area. The international Minneapolis-St. Paul airport is only 20 minutes away and the area’s hospital, Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital, has been recognized as a top 100 hospital.
A 15-minute drive to the east gets you to the heart of the downtown Minneapolis and easy access to the central business district, entertainment, and many excellent restaurants, as well as all of the major employers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area, which is home to Target, Hennepin Healthcare, Wells Fargo, Ameriprise, U.S. Bank, and Xcel Energy, among others. Take a short drive for the same amount of time to the west and you’ll arrive at Lake Minnetonka, one of the ten largest lakes in the state. But you don’t have to go even that far to find a spot by the water—Westwood Lake and Meadowbrook Lake are right in St. Louis Park, and popular Bde Maka Ska (formerly known as Lake Calhoun) is just past the eastern edge.

True to its name, St. Louis Park offers a number of green spaces for its residents, and outdoor activities include trail hiking and skating. The town also shares Minnesota’s love of sports. Locals cheer for the Minnesota Vikings NFL team, the Twins MLB team, and the Wild in the NHL. As to college sports, the Minnesota Golden Gophers reign supreme.

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

- Embrace the school’s Catholic identity in the articulation of DEI work.
- Unite constituencies from urban and suburban Minneapolis toward common goals and understandings of DEI initiatives.
- Move the BSM community from a programmatic to strategic approach to DEI work.
- Develop a practice for EIB work that moves beyond individual persons toward a community commitment.
- Serve as a strategic thought partner to the president of the school.
- Lead change management alongside other senior-level administrators.
- Deepen the work of EIB in a community that has a demonstrated commitment to the work.
- Develop a unique professional footprint for EIB work in a school community with an appetite for the work.
RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging will report to the President of the school, serve on the President’s Leadership Team, and serve as a peer and colleague to the Principal, CFO, Director of Admissions and other senior-level administrators.

• Refine and implement BSM’s strategic EIB plan in conjunction with BSM’s Catholic education rooted in Lasallian, Benedictine, and the Sisters of St. Joseph spiritual traditions.
• Collaborate with school leadership and theology leaders to create, implement, and manage programs designed to foster a culture of inclusion and a sense of belonging among students, faculty, and staff.
• Develop key performance indicators to track the progress of inclusion strategies; report progress.
• Lead BSM’s EIB team.
• Develop and implement faculty and staff training to enhance employee understanding of inclusion issues and promote cultural understanding and competency.
• Partner with the administration team to develop a culturally relevant curriculum.
• Identify EIB strategies for the recruitment, hiring, and retention of faculty and staff.
• Report progress of EIB initiatives.
• Provide thought leadership.
• Partner with the communications team to provide updates on initiatives, events, and progress internally and externally.
• Identify, build, and sustain key community partnerships.
• Lead student affinity groups and identify potential for additional opportunities.
• Lead parent affinity groups.
• Serve as a resource for students, faculty, and staff.
• Support curricular and co-curricular programs in the areas of inclusion and cultural competence.
• Represent school leadership on the Board of Directors’ EIB Committee.
DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

• Demonstrated leadership experience in equity and inclusion work.
• A strong desire to lead strategic organizational change related to equity and inclusion.
• A willingness to couple equity work with a faith-based mission.
• A patient teacher.
• A natural collaborator.
• An appreciation for the mid-western region of the country.
• Bachelor’s degree required. Master’s degree preferred. Eight or more years of consulting work or employment around diversity, equity, and inclusion in schools.
• Ability to assess needs, collaborate, and deliver practical solutions with excellent follow-through that drive results.
• Demonstrated professional presence and leadership ability.
• Proactive with a positive attitude.
• Superb oral and written communication skills.
• Ability to build consensus, resolve difficult issues, and foster community.

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:

• A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
• A current résumé;
• A 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) to:

Lawrence Alexander
Search Consultant
lawrence.alexander@carneysandoe.com

Seliat Dairo
Associate
seliat.dairo@carneysandoe.com

Brandon Jacobs
Associate
brandan.jacobs@carneysandoe.com