



St. Anselm's Abbey School

Washington, D.C.

Headmaster

for July 2020

St. Anselm's Abbey School is a Grade 6-12, all boys, independent Catholic school currently serving 257 boys. Founded in 1942 by Benedictine monks, St. Anselm's remains a Benedictine school and shares a beautiful, peaceful 42-acre wooded campus with the monks of St. Anselm's Abbey. The search for peace in wisdom, a love of learning, and a respect for the dignity of all, has helped to define the Benedictine tradition for 1,500 years.

St. Anselm's Abbey is located in the developing and vibrant neighborhood of Brookland, a section of Northeast Washington, situated near two major universities, and approximately 4 miles from Capitol Hill and downtown Washington. The school draws highly academically capable boys from all around the greater D.C. area, including Maryland and Northern Virginia. It offers a classical, rigorous academic program steeped in the liberal arts. The school engenders strong loyalty in its alumni who are highly appreciative of the school's impact on them as students and as men. The school is seeking an outstanding educational leader to serve as headmaster beginning July 1, 2020.

Mission, Vision, and Motto

Mission Statement: St. Anselm's Abbey School is a Catholic, Benedictine community that nurtures the spiritual, intellectual, and physical development of young men with demonstrated academic achievement. Rigorous study of the liberal arts and sciences prepares students for the challenges of college and for a life of learning and service.

Vision: *Where Bright Boys become Exceptional Men*

Mottos: *Always we begin again (a time honored Benedictine adage)*
Pax in Sapientia (peace in understanding)

Hallmarks of Benedictine Education

The Benedictine ethos is at the core of the school's identity. The following *Hallmarks of Benedictine Education*, originally developed by the Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities, are at the heart of what it means to be a Benedictine school in the 21st Century.

- **Love of Christ and Neighbor:** Call to support others as a community, impelled by the love for Christ above all things.
- **Prayer:** Participation in the Benedictine liturgy, *lectio*, and personal prayer to grow mindful of God's eternal presence and open to the movement of the Spirit.
- **Stability:** Committing oneself to a place for a lifetime through prayer and work, cultivating lasting relationships among confreres, faculty, students, and parents.

- **Conversatio Morum:** Conversion of self, by daily commitment to Christ rather than self-centered preoccupations, getting up again after one falls, and letting oneself be transformed to give glory to the Lord.
- **Obedience:** Listening to one another with mercy, working to understand and anticipate the needs of others, and acting to serve those needs, which may be different than one's own.
- **Discipline:** A daily dedication to begin again in facing responsibilities, stretching beyond one's comfort level to master complex practices and ideas.
- **Humility:** Walking in true knowledge of self in relation to God, others and creation; recognizing limitations without losing hope, and accepting gifts without becoming arrogant.
- **Stewardship:** Revering all of creation in its beauty and proper use, recognizing it as a gift from God, and using what we have for the sake of all people.
- **Hospitality:** An acceptance of others, offering a place in which persons and ideas feel "at home" where each can be transformed by one another on a common journey.
- **Community:** Embracing a shared life in the classroom and in extracurricular activities, through prayer and academic work for the common good of self and each other for today, tomorrow and forever.

Student Body

Drawing academically capable boys primarily from the greater D.C. area, representing 50+ zip codes, St. Anselm's students test in the top 20% of their peers; those who enroll for high school are primarily in the top 10%. Working with an agency, the school typically has ten international students from China, Mongolia, and Macau enrolled in the upper school. Utilizing "Form" terminology rather than Grades, the middle school—Form A: Grade 6, Form I: Grade 7, Form II: Grade 8—enrolls approximately 90 students, with the high school, Forms III-Form IV, enrolling 167 students. 60-65% of the student body is Catholic, and 38% identify as students of color. 36% of students receive financial assistance.

St. Anselm's graduates regularly take ten or more Advanced Placement courses during their high school years (6 are required of all students). The 37 students in the class of 2020 have already taken 189 AP exams; 65% of scores are 4 or 5, and 92% of the class has earned AP Scholar standing or higher.

Students spoke with great appreciation for their faculty and for the culture where they are academically challenged, encouraged, and supported. They shared that the small size of each class promotes strong bonds between classmates and friendships across Forms. A number of boys noted that they appreciate being able to participate on athletic teams despite not being great athletes—while others would not mind seeing St. Anselm's a bit more competitive in this arena. In conversations with students, it is clear that the Benedictine values are very present and seemingly positively embraced; middle school students spoke of the importance of community, putting others before self, picking one's self up after "falling," and most specifically of Hospitality—acceptance of others.

Staffing

St. Anselm's currently operates with a president/headmaster model. The president, a Benedictine monk, Father Peter Weigand, has been connected with the school for almost 50 years; he is responsible for fundraising, alumni and public relations, and ensuring the Benedictine values remain

a strong, infused presence throughout the school community. The headmaster is most directly responsible for day-to-day operations of the school. In addition to the headmaster, the school's administration includes middle and upper school heads, and directors of admissions, athletics, communications, and finance & operations. There is an assistant to the president who supports the school's fundraising activities, including its current capital campaign.

Sixty five faculty and staff support the student body. There are 10 alumni on staff and many faculty members have long tenures at St. Anselm's. Faculty spoke of a strong, collegial culture and an appreciation for working with motivated and academically talented students.

Program

As noted, St. Anselm's academic program is classical and traditional, deeply steeped in the liberal arts. Living out its mission, St. Anselm's focuses on nurturing the personal and spiritual formation of its students, while helping them build skills and habits they will carry with them throughout their lives. The culture of rigor and high expectations is balanced with an emphasis on the Benedictine values of community and humility, enabling students to build the confidence to reach beyond their comfort zones and use their God-given talents to enrich the lives of those around them. The program is designed to prepare students for success in their future endeavors by consistently engaging them in analytical thinking, logical reasoning, creative problem solving, and effective written and oral communication in a supportive environment of teamwork and mutual respect.

Middle school boys take a standard set of courses, building their skills and the academic foundation to prepare them for the upper school. Classes include math, English, science, social studies, Latin, computing, arts, and religion. In the upper school, students in Forms III and IV pursue the same broad program of studies, further building an academic foundation that supports them as they move into Forms V and VI where the curriculum begins to offer more flexibility and choice in the way they fulfill the goals of a liberal arts education. As students find their path through the many electives and options offered in their final two years of high school, they have the opportunity to begin concentrating on individual areas of interest within a comprehensive program. In the upper school, in addition to continuing their study of Latin, students add a modern language—Arabic, French, or Spanish. Candidates are encouraged to explore the school's website to gain a more complete understanding of academic and extracurricular offerings.

The daily schedule includes eight 40-minute periods, a 60-minute lunch/recess and a 30-minute flex period that is used for school and class meetings, clubs or advisory. Students in Forms A-IV take physical education classes, while students in Forms V-VI, are required to participate on one athletic team each year.

Upon entering St. Anselm's, each student becomes a member of one of four houses named for important figures in the school's history. The **House System** was established in the mid-1980s. House assignments are announced each September in a "House Draft" on House Day, led by the senior class, and it is traditional for members of the same family to be placed in the same house. Each house is led by two members of the VI Form and is made up of students in all Forms. The four houses compete each year for the House Cup, winning points for their performance in intramural athletics, academic achievement, and participation in extracurricular and community service activities.

St. Anselm's **Athletic Program** offers its students opportunities to compete in soccer, cross-country, basketball, wrestling, swimming, baseball, tennis, track & field, fencing, golf and lacrosse. While students in Forms V-VI are required to participate on one athletic team during each of these two years, over 70% of students typically participate in the athletic program each year.

The **Performing Arts** offer boys opportunities to take ensemble classes in choral and instrumental music in the middle school, and chorus and a cappella in the upper school. Extracurricular opportunities in the arts include orchestra and jazz band, drama productions and an annual musical theater production.

An active and diverse set of **Clubs** offer students in each division a range of extra-curricular offerings that include Model UN, Quiz Bowl, Math Counts, Chess, Robotics, *The Panther* - the middle school newspaper - and *Priory Press* - the upper school newspaper.

Campus

As noted, the school shares a 42-acre wooded campus with St. Anselm's Abbey and monastic community. The school is housed in two buildings. The academic building, where most classes are held, was renovated in 2008 to update the science and computer labs, art studio, lecture hall, and library. This building also houses most of the administrative offices. Opened in 2003, the Athletic Complex & Devine Performing Arts Center includes a few classrooms, offices and meeting spaces, a theater, a multi-purpose space, snack bar, and a spacious, light-filled gymnasium. Also on campus is the monastery, which is currently home to 12 monks and includes a beautiful chapel.

The school is engaged in a capital campaign to raise funds for the Benedictine Learning Center. Envisioned and situated on campus as a literal and figurative link between the abbey and the school, the Learning Center will include a library, technology center, and provide open, flexible space that can be utilized for numerous purposes, including as a retreat center. It will serve both the school and the abbey.

Governance and Accreditation

The school has 21 trustees, one-third of whom are appointed by the Monastic Council of St. Anselm's Abbey, and the remainder of whom are elected by the Board itself and include alumni and past parents. No current parents are Board members. Both the headmaster and president serve on the Board in an *ex-officio* capacity.

Prior to 2007, the Monastic Council ran the school. The school and abbey, amiably, became two separate legal corporations in 2007.

The school is a member of the National Catholic Education Association, the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington, the Association of Independent Maryland Schools and the National Association of Independent Schools. The school is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and completed its most recent reaccreditation through the Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools in the fall of 2017.

Strategic Plan and Opportunities

In 2018, the Board of Trustees completed a strategic plan that charts a course for the school through 2023—while noting the importance of it being dynamic and responsive. This plan drew on recommendations from the Middle States reaccreditation report as well as input from stakeholders. While the plan identifies specific areas of focus, a new headmaster will have opportunities to bring vision and energy to the realization of the plan’s objectives. A successful headmaster will find the following description of purpose compelling and inspiring:

The Board of Trustees is committed to maintaining a Catholic, Benedictine school for young men that is forward-looking, accessible, and financially sound. Through a rigorous college preparatory curriculum and instruction by outstanding, dedicated educators, the school teaches our students to think, question, and analyze, inspiring in them a lifelong love of learning. St. Anselm’s will continue to be “a school for the Lord’s service,” designed to prepare young men for college and beyond, developing in them a desire for peace in wisdom, respect for the dignity of all, and an appreciation for their responsibilities in the world.

The overarching foci of this plan are captured as follows:

Maintaining our Benedictine identity; enhancing our world-class academic standards and faculty; strengthening our strong financial position; assuring that the education we provide remains accessible to qualified students of all financial backgrounds; implementing a facilities master plan that will meet the ever-growing needs of our students; and constantly evaluating our information technology to assure it meets the needs of our community.

“The preservation of the school’s Benedictine character must be paramount.”

The strategic plan emphasizes that the school’s Benedictine identity is its most enduring strength. With fewer monks residing at St. Anselm’s Abbey, and many of them in their eighth decade of life, the historical strong presence of monks in the day-to-day life of the school is not assured as the school looks forward. The Board is committed to reviewing the leadership structure regularly in order to ensure the flourishing of the school and the perpetuation of its Benedictine identity. The school’s next headmaster will need to embrace the Benedictine values and be authentically comfortable speaking to them and ensuring their guiding presence in the life of the school.

Throughout its history, St. Anselm’s Abbey School has been blessed with prudent leadership that has operated the school debt-free with a balanced budget, supported by healthy enrollments, and a growing endowment. The school currently has an \$11M endowment. It has had recent success strengthening the scholarship endowment, and a stated goal of the strategic plan is to fund financial assistance in perpetuity. While the headmaster does not oversee fundraising within the current leadership structure, the successful candidate will be an individual who is comfortable serving as an enthusiastic ambassador and fully supporting the strategic plan’s goals of:

- Accessibility and Affordability
- Financial Stewardship
- Fundraising and Endowment

It is an ongoing challenge for St. Anselm's to ensure it is well and accurately known in its very competitive marketplace. St. Anselm's at full enrollment could serve 280 boys, with 40 students per class—although it has traditionally sought to enroll smaller middle school classes, thus allowing for growth into the upper school. Ensuring strong and stable enrollment, doing so with mission-appropriate young men who will thrive under the school's traditions of rigor and balance is an important goal in achieving continued financial strength. St. Anselm's next headmaster needs to be enthusiastic about actively supporting enrollment and marketing efforts to attract a diverse, academically capable student body.

The strategic plan specifically recognizes the importance of a strong faculty, and a headmaster who highly values, actively supports, and builds authentic rapport with faculty and staff in this community. The plan notes that St. Anselm's wishes to "[ensure] that it provides faculty salaries and benefits that are competitive in the marketplace." A new headmaster will have the opportunity to provide the board and the president with comparable data and guide efforts to achieve the competitive levels of compensation the plan seeks. As well-earned retirements occur, the next headmaster will have the responsibility and opportunity to hire faculty to replace a number of long-tenured faculty members. Many stakeholders encourage leadership to prioritize diversifying the faculty, particularly in light of the school's highly diverse student body.

The plan also recognizes the importance of supporting faculty's professional development, and a headmaster who inspires faculty members to continue to strengthen their craft and prioritizes securing funding to support this. Additionally, while numerous faculty positively cited the individual freedom they have to establish curriculum and manage their classrooms, a new headmaster will have opportunities to engage faculty in efforts to promote a unified vision of educational goals, standards of achievement, and teaching strategies.

In 2015, architects were hired to develop a master plan for the physical plant of St. Anselm's Abbey and School. This plan provides a framework for future facilities development that allows for sequencing of construction and renovation projects according to school and abbey priorities. As noted earlier, the school is engaged in a campaign to fund the building of a Benedictine Learning Center. The hope is that 2021 will see a groundbreaking on this exciting project, so the new headmaster will be involved in the realization and opening of this building as appropriate. Another plan underway worth noting is the implementation of the Comprehensive Technology Plan developed through the recent re-accreditation process. Numerous stakeholders would underscore the need for the school to strengthen its technology both from an infrastructure standpoint as well as appropriate integration into educational practices.

Finally, faculty will appreciate a headmaster who leads an effort to structure and firmly communicate the school's expectations for student behavior, with the goal of ensuring consistency when responding to students who need support in this arena.

Leadership Needs

The successful candidate will be an individual who is an experienced educational leader deeply aligned with the school's values and mission and who:

- Is authentically enthusiastic about the intellectual ethos of the school

- Has strong personal and communication skills with the ability to build authentic relationships and respectful connections with a wide range of individuals as well as the ability to be an inspiring, engaging spokesperson for the school
- Possesses astute leadership skills, is both confident and humble, understands when to be decisive and lead from the front, knows when to encourage collaboration, and when to tap the wisdom of others
- Has a successful track record in coalescing others in the achievement of strategic initiatives
- Will bring a disposition marked by positivity and flexibility – important attributes for leading effectively in a small school community
- Possesses the needed financial skills to support continued financial prudence to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the school
- Ideally has experience in, and an appreciation for, all-boys education, genuinely enjoying adolescent boys and is enthusiastic about the opportunity to be engaged, accessible, and very present in the day-to-day life of the school
- Has a successful track record as an inspiring team builder, and a supportive manager and mentor of adults in a school community

The headmaster of St. Anselm’s Abbey School is, in a sense, the chief operating officer of the school. The organizational chart presents the president and headmaster as two equals with both individuals reporting to the Board. The president, Father Peter Weigand, served the school as headmaster or second master for over 34 years and one other former headmaster, Father Michael Hall, is on the faculty, alongside numerous other long-tenured faculty. Thus, the next headmaster, along with possessing strong leadership abilities, needs to possess the Benedictine ethos of humility—appreciating the strength of community and the wisdom present in it—understanding the value of observing, listening, and learning the school’s deep culture.

For Consideration

Please forward electronically a resume, letter of interest and a personal statement and/or a statement of educational philosophy to:

Jane Armstrong and/or Bill Lyons
 Independent Thinking
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 617.332.3131

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