



SISTERS ACADEMY OF BALTIMORE

Baltimore, Maryland

PRESIDENT
Start Date: July 2023
sistersacademy.org



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES



Sisters Academy of Baltimore

Mission

Sisters Academy of Baltimore, a Catholic, community-centered middle school, educates girls of different races, ethnic groups, and religions, from families of limited economic means, particularly those in southwest Baltimore. The Academy empowers its students to become agents of transformation in their families, communities, and society.

Vision

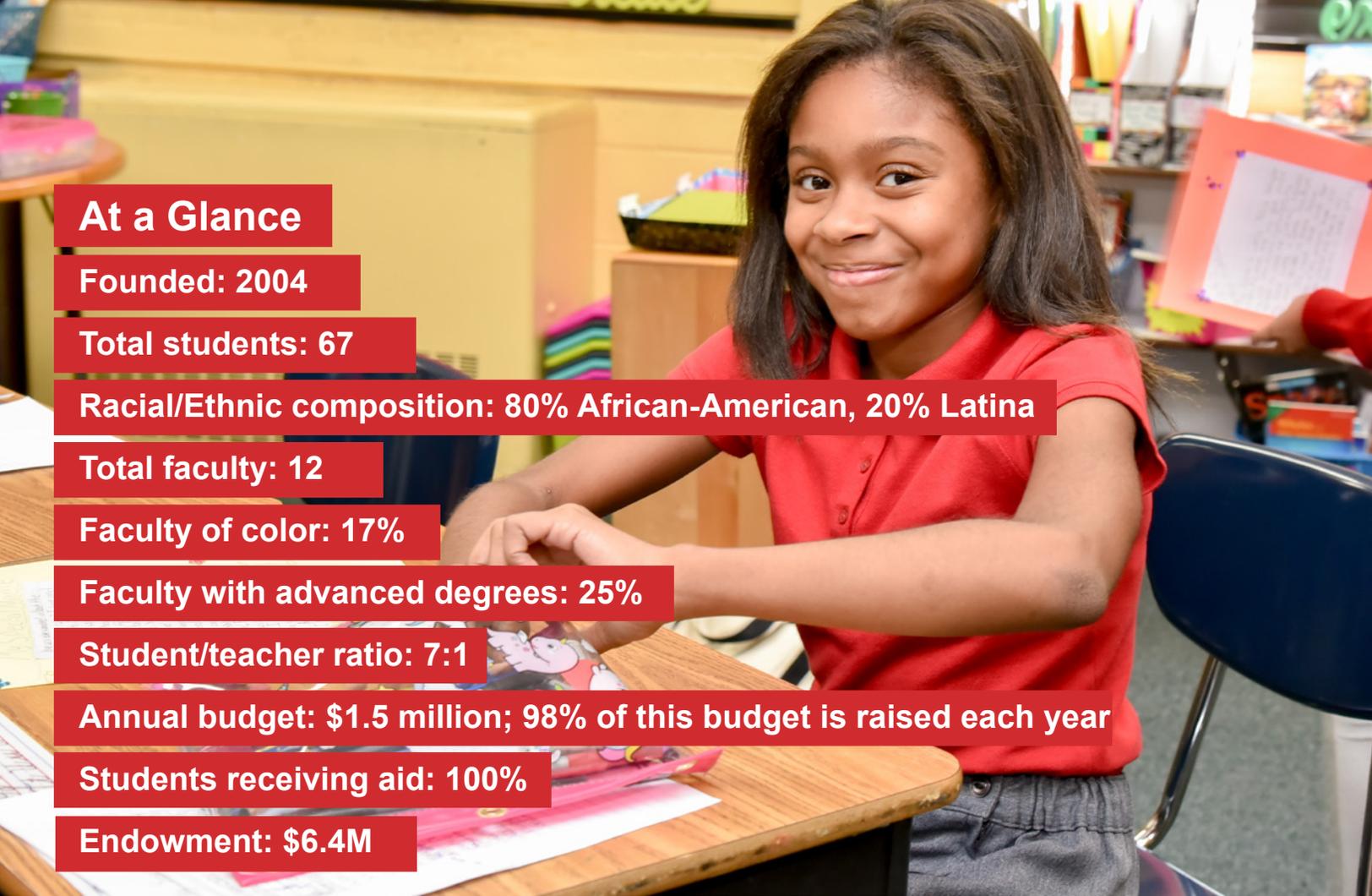
Our vision is that graduates of Sisters Academy will demonstrate the skills of logical thinking, perceptive reading, competent writing, and effective problem solving. They will be well-educated, self-assured, spiritual, and committed young women who are so needed in our community, our nation, and our world. They will be leaders who make a difference.

OVERVIEW

Founded by four congregations of religious sisters, Sisters Academy of Baltimore is an independent school for girls in grades 5-8. Established in 2004, the school's goal has remained constant for nearly two decades: *to provide academically talented and motivated middle school girls with limited economic resources an excellent education and a launching pad for success in high school and beyond.* Sisters Academy offers a rigorous curriculum and holistic academic program steeped in the Catholic tradition that encourages each student's intellectual, social, physical, and spiritual development.

Revolutionary in urban education, Sisters Academy is the only faith-based middle school of its kind for girls in Maryland. The school offers an exceptional, tuition-free education exclusively for girls from low-income families and intentionally designed to meet the developmental needs of young women.

Sisters Academy seeks a dynamic, visionary, and faith-filled academic leader to serve as its next President effective July 2023. The successful candidate will be a thought leader, community builder, and skilled communicator who visibly celebrates and models the mission of the school. The President will report to the Board of Trustees and is expected to provide leadership across the student experience, including spiritual growth. Sisters Academy is seeking an individual who is inspiring, relatable, accessible, and able to connect joyfully with students, faculty and staff, parents, alumnae, donors, sponsors, religious communities, and the broader community.



At a Glance

Founded: 2004

Total students: 67

Racial/Ethnic composition: 80% African-American, 20% Latina

Total faculty: 12

Faculty of color: 17%

Faculty with advanced degrees: 25%

Student/teacher ratio: 7:1

Annual budget: \$1.5 million; 98% of this budget is raised each year

Students receiving aid: 100%

Endowment: \$6.4M

SCHOOL HISTORY

Understanding the important role education plays in breaking the cycle of poverty and transforming lives, a small group of educators, parents, and community leaders came together to envision a school that would provide critical intervention in the lives of their middle school children. In August 2002, four religious congregations: the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Sisters of Bon Secours, Sisters of Mercy, and Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, decided to conduct a school feasibility study that would involve reviewing demographic data of census tracts in southwest Baltimore, conducting focus groups with parents in the area, and interviewing neighborhood organizations.

By April 2003, all four congregations had committed to working together to create a new middle school for girls. The school opened in September 2004 with the fifth grade and consecutively added a new grade each fall. For the 2007-2008 school year, Sisters Academy enrolled students in all four grades – 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th – for the first time. The first class of eighth graders graduated from Sisters Academy on June 4, 2008, completing the four-year foundational phase of the school.

The four founding and sponsoring congregations of religious sisters remain involved in Sisters Academy. Throughout its history, the school has embraced a two-tier governance structure. One tier is the Board of Members, which consists of one representative from each of the four congregations. The leader of each congregation appoints these individuals. The second tier is the Board of Directors, which consists of individuals appointed by the Board of Members. This organizational structure ensures that the founding and sponsoring religious congregations maintain appropriate oversight of the school's mission.



From the start, Sisters Academy intentionally chose the NativityMiguel model of education. NativityMiguel schools provide quality, faith-based middle school education to low-income children in underserved communities across the United States. Initially, Sisters Academy was part of the NativityMiguel Network, which dissolved in 2012. Soon after, NativityMiguel school leaders gathered and reformed the organization with a new name, the NativityMiguel Coalition. Sisters Academy is an active participant in this Coalition, which shares information and ideas about how schools may thrive while educating underserved children.

As a NativityMiguel school, Sisters Academy educates students in a holistic way, with attention to social, emotional, physical, academic, and spiritual growth. Additionally, the school is explicitly faith-based, offers small classes, provides an extended day and year, supports graduates beyond graduation, emphasizes parental involvement, and employs an independent governance structure with effective leadership.

THE SCHOOL

Today, Sisters Academy of Baltimore welcomes students who previously attended 30 different public schools in some of the most under-resourced neighborhoods in Baltimore. One hundred percent of the Sisters Academy families identify as people of color, with a large African American population. Students' families are all low-income, with over ninety percent qualifying for the federal free or reduced meals program. Although Sisters Academy is a middle school in the Catholic tradition, most of the school's students are non-Catholic and many state no religious affiliation. At Sisters Academy, students work hard, set goals for themselves, and take on leadership roles.

Sisters Academy is driven by its mission of education for transformation. The school has a proven record of student success, sound fiscal management, and an ambitious development strategy. The President raises most of the annual budget, but relies primarily on a longstanding, reliable donor base. Under the leadership of a dedicated Board of Directors and administrators, Sisters Academy of Baltimore is positioned well to become even more effective in preparing young women for leadership, service, and excellence in high school and beyond. The Association of Independent Maryland & DC Schools (AIMS) accredits the school.



FUNDING

As a tuition-free school, the sponsoring religious communities, class sponsors, and student scholarship sponsors provide the heart of funding for Sisters Academy each year. Sisters Academy also seeks donors through annual giving, grants from local foundations, and more.

ACADEMICS

Gaining knowledge through a top-notch curriculum is the foundation of each girl's experience at Sisters Academy of Baltimore. The school offers a rigorous and holistic middle school program that emphasizes moral and spiritual values along with character development. Core curriculum includes reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and religion. In addition to academics, students experience the arts, participate in sports, study life skills, and develop technology skills. Sisters Academy has recently enhanced its general music program. Students are learning choral singing, handbells, ethnomusicology, music through the ages, drums, keyboarding, bells, guitar, and more. Small class sizes ensure personal attention, allowing each girl to be recognized as an individual within the nurturing community. Students exit Sisters Academy well-educated, self-assured, spiritual, and committed young women prepared to make a positive difference in the community.

A distinguishing characteristic of Sisters Academy is the Graduate Support Program. The Director of Graduate Support works with every girl and her family to help guide them in the high school application, selection, and enrollment process. The Director also remains in contact with each graduate by monitoring grades, standardized test scores, co-curricular activities, and summer work or enrichment activities. Additionally, the Director assists the graduates and their parents with the process of applying for college, scholarship funds, and financial aid. As of June 2022, a total of 199 young women have graduated from Sisters Academy of Baltimore.

Beginning with the first graduating class of 2008, one hundred percent of graduates have now earned their high school diploma or are currently enrolled in high school, the majority of which attend private, Catholic, or selective public high schools. Ninety percent of the alumnae attend college, postsecondary school, or serve in the military.



HIGH SCHOOL MATRICULATION

Alumnae from the Classes of 2019 through 2022 are attending the following high schools in the Baltimore area:

Archbishop Spalding High School
Bard High School Early College
Baltimore City College
Baltimore Polytechnic Institute
The Bryn Mawr School
The Catholic High School of Baltimore
Cristo Rey Jesuit High School
Episcopal High School
Friends School of Baltimore
Lansdowne High School
Mercy High School
Mount de Sales Academy
Notre Dame Preparatory School
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School
Roland Park Country School
St. Vincent Pallotti High School
Western High School

COLLEGE MATRICULATION

Alumnae from the Classes of 2008 through 2014 have graduated from the following colleges and universities, among others:

Bowie State University
Frostburg State University
Howard University
Loyola University Maryland
Marymount University
Morgan State University
Mount St. Mary's University
Pratt Institute
Rider University
Russell Sage College
Salem College
St. John's University
St. Joseph's University
St. Lawrence University
Stevenson University
Towson University
University of Baltimore
University of Harrisburg
University of Maryland College Park
University of Maryland, Eastern Shore
University of Tampa
Wheeling Jesuit University



SCHOOL LIFE

Extracurricular programs and traditions play a significant role in the development of Sisters Academy students. The school offers events and field trips throughout the year to complement the academic curriculum, to enhance the learning experience, and to simply have fun!

The first school-wide event of the academic year is the Student Blessing and Investiture. During this ceremony, the 5th grade is officially welcomed into the school as 6th, 7th, and 8th graders deliver greetings through song, dance, and speech. Each 5th grader receives a stole, specifically made for that class, from the President. The stole is worn at special events during the time the student attends Sisters Academy and becomes hers to keep on her graduation day four years later.

Seventh and eighth grade students enjoy an Outward Bound experience where they begin to test their independence and acquire new insights and skills to share. Eighth grade students participate in a week-long program and seventh graders spend a day at the Outward Bound facility where they overcome challenging situations and learn the value of teamwork, compassion for others, and the pursuit of excellence. Eighth graders also have a designated retreat and spend a day of reflection offsite before their graduation in June. Venues have included the Bon Secours Retreat Center in Marriottsville and Notre Dame of Maryland University in Baltimore.

Students continue to learn outside of the classroom. The school has developed and implemented the ExCEL Program (Exploring, Creating, Expanding, Learning), which offers students a wide range of opportunities, including volleyball, chess, “Shark Tank,” sketching, service, culinary arts, yearbook, liturgical dance, introduction to Italian, hand chimes, hand sewing, and outdoor activities. ExCEL allows students to explore new interests and deepen relationships with their peers and caring adults.

Community service enables students to give back to the community. Sixth graders enjoy fellowship with the residents of a Catholic Charities Senior Community – often with a small program of entertainment or crafts. Seventh graders help to serve lunch to guests at a local soup kitchen. Students also participate in a homeless day resource program that serves 300 people daily with meals, healthcare, showers, laundry, and employment services.



CAMPUS

Sisters Academy of Baltimore is located just southwest of Baltimore City in Lansdowne. The campus includes a 25,000 square foot building, which the school owns. This building houses classrooms, music and art facilities, science and computer labs, a library, and multiple gathering spaces. A separate 10,000 square foot building contains a gymnasium with a full-size institutional kitchen. Thoughtful renovations have created a spacious school environment, where students are comfortable and safe.

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

With an urban population of approximately 610,000 and a greater metropolitan area population of nearly 2.8 million, Baltimore is the largest city in the state of Maryland. Dubbed “Charm City,” Baltimore is known for its beautiful harbor, diverse neighborhoods, and famous blue crabs.

Many of the neighborhoods in Baltimore have rich histories. In fact, Baltimore is home to some of the earliest National Register Historic Districts in the nation, including Fell’s Point, Federal Hill, and Mount Vernon. Nearly one third of the city’s buildings (over 65,000) are designated as historic in the National Register, which is more than any other U.S. city.

Economically, Baltimore is supported by a range of industries — including tourism, technology, shipping, healthcare, and education. A major employer is Johns Hopkins University and the Johns Hopkins University Hospital. Other top businesses include Under Armour, Legg Mason, McCormick & Company, and T. Rowe Price. Baltimore Harbor is a one of the nation’s busiest international ports, while the Inner Harbor is a popular tourist and recreation destination. Baltimore is also home to 12 colleges and universities, providing an abundance of intellectual and workforce talent.

Baltimore also offers easy access to Washington D.C. and surrounding areas. The city itself also offers a wide range of cultural activities and institutions — including the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and the Peabody Institute, the oldest conservatory of music in the nation.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Statistics prove that Sisters Academy has a successful model for educating and nurturing the spirit of its young students. The new President's greatest challenges will be to: (1) lead the Sisters Academy community through the process to create the next strategic plan, and (2) replace a co-founder President who is actively engaged in multiple and key operational areas. The new President must be innovative, energetic, enthusiastic, and possess a clear vision for the future.

Specific Opportunities and Challenges are:

- Assessing the development area to identify appropriate staffing and comprehensive nonprofit software;
- Assessing and planning for future staff and teacher salaries that attract and retain talent;
- Continuing to maintain and grow the endowment for future sustainability;
- Engaging the alumnae in events on and off campus;
- Improving the marketing/communications and social media presence;
- Building on the successful academic model that SAB has created;
- Bringing greater awareness of the school and its mission to the greater community.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The school operates in the President/Principal Leadership Model. In this leadership structure, the Principal reports to the President and is responsible for excellence in the educational program. The President leads the school and focuses primarily on external relationships and fiscal matters.

The next President should be a charismatic, Catholic, mission-oriented leader who will joyfully engage with all constituents. The President should seek to understand the Baltimore community and the need to sustain a strong sense of school and community. The future of Sisters Academy is promising; the vision and the strategic decisions that the President will supply will be critical to the future of this amazing school.



Specific Qualities and Characteristics include:

- Possesses strong planning and communication skills;
- Has a knowledge of the mission and charism of the four sponsoring congregations;
- Embraces the NativityMiguel model;
- Is able to see the big picture while also being attentive to detail;
- Is business savvy and has strong financial acumen, including the ability to set and meet a budget;
- Is a strong relationship-builder, focusing especially on relationships with current and potential Board members;
- Is a confident, competent, and transparent leader;
- Is committed to academic excellence;
- Embraces diversity, social justice, and inclusion;
- Demonstrates cultural competence;
- Is a strong fundraiser/friend-raiser who is relatable, approachable, and will serve as a public champion for the school;
- Holds a Master's degree in a relevant field.

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 statement of leadership philosophy;
- A completed Candidate Questionnaire (to be supplied by the consultants) to:

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