THE BISHOP JOHN T. WALKER SCHOOL FOR BOYS

is a tuition-free Episcopal school for children from traditionally underserved communities in Washington, DC. BWS nurtures the spiritual, intellectual, social-emotional, artistic, and physical development of its students in a Christian community of learners that welcomes boys of all faiths and beliefs. Working in close partnership with students and families, BWS strives to create an environment where each boy is challenged to reach his full academic potential and receives the structured support necessary to develop his unique gifts. BWS seeks to foster a love of learning, intellectual curiosity, spiritual foundation, and moral character that each boy will need as a student, as a citizen, and as a child of God.

Named after Bishop John T. Walker, the first African American Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington and a beloved figure to this day at numerous institutions, BWS is a diocesan day school serving boys primarily from the Southeast area of Washington D.C and Prince George's County Maryland. In 2008, the first operating year, BWS was located in the basement of St. Philips Episcopal Church in Anacostia and had an enrollment of 13 Junior Kindergarten students. Eleven years later, BWS has an enrollment of 85 students in Kindergarten - Fifth Grade with aspirations of eventually continuing to Eighth Grade. Since its founding, BWS has been a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. The mission of the School, to focus on altering the trajectory of children from traditionally underserved communities and preparing them for lives of leadership and service beyond the School, is aspirational and empowering for the students it serves.

Unique in its commitment to creating life-changing opportunities for boys from Washington’s underserved communities, the School strives to offer a wide range of support and social services to both its students and their families that enhances the school’s sense of community and its students’ chances for success in school and beyond.

“It is better to build a boy than repair a man.”

Frederick Douglass
THE RIGHT REVEREND JOHN THOMAS WALKER

Bishop John Walker, the first African American Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, left a powerful legacy within the Diocese, the Episcopal Church in America, and certainly at the School that bears his name. Bishop Walker was a teacher, pastor, builder, urban missionary, relief worker, statesman, civil rights leader, and pioneer in social justice. He was particularly prominent in the fight against South African apartheid and became close to The Most Reverend Desmond M. Tutu, who is the Honorary Chair of the School’s Advisory Committee. At the core of his life and ministry was the belief that education was the door to opportunity. He was the first African American seminarian at Virginia Theological Seminary and also the first African American teacher at St. Paul’s School in Concord, New Hampshire, where he ministered to the children of the world’s elite as well as to children who might have been most easily forgotten. As an Episcopal priest, he dedicated himself to assuring that future generations of African American children would find the doors of every educational institution open to them. In its mission and core values, The Bishop John T. Walker School mirrors this vision that Bishop Walker had for the future of the world’s children.

THE POSITION

As BWS entered into its 10th operating year, Executive Director James Woody announced his plan to retire at the end of the 2019-20 school year. The next school leader will be known as the Head of School. This intentional change in role and title is a reflection of the evolution of BWS in its development. In view of the School’s need to fundraise to meet its annual operating expenses, it is essential for the next Head to be skilled in fundraising, school promotion, and school finances. However, the School also requires a leader who will balance this external focus with the oversight and development of staff and the academic program.

The demands of this position - attending to the needs and development of the whole child in a faith-based school environment, working with boys from primarily underserved communities and their families in an urban setting, securing funding for a tuition-free model, and overseeing the continuing development of the school’s instructional staff and academic program - will require wide-ranging experiences and competencies in the next BWS leader. Given the complexity of this role, the Head of School must also have an understanding of the demographics of the area and the ability to build and sustain excitement with donors and within the Diocese of Washington. The Head will be charged with supporting the close-knit community while acquainting regional and national constituents with the School. Finally, the School seeks a Head who will assist in helping realize its strategic goal of expanding to the Eighth Grade.

“Bishop Walker cared about so many of God’s children. The Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys will be a point of light for young boys in a part of our world that so desperately needs it.”

Most Reverend Desmond Tutu
FACULTY & ADMINISTRATION

BWS is proud of its dedicated faculty and administrative staff and an academic program that seeks to prepare students for challenges in the next grade and education beyond BWS. Great care is taken to hire teachers who believe in the mission of the School and in providing an excellent education to each student. BWS teachers model a love of learning for their students because they too are lifelong learners who crave professional development opportunities. Teachers at BWS are committed to creating a safe learning environment where small classes and a student-centered curriculum allow for individual needs to be taken into account and students to feel valued and known. Close attention to the social-emotional needs, as well as to the intellectual growth, of students is especially important given the challenging circumstances present in underserved communities. In their relationships, their actions, and their expectations, BWS staff model for their young charges the qualities essential to the development of good character.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Bishop John T. Walker believed that education opens the door to opportunity, and at BWS this means having an academic program where high expectations are set in support of students reaching their highest potential. Together with the pillars of Episcopal faith and tradition, a commitment to serving others, and pride in oneself and one’s community, the academic experience at BWS aspires to create a solid foundation that leads to lasting change in the lives of its students.

At its core, the academic program is progressive, experiential, developmentally appropriate, and child-centered. Learning experiences seek to feed students’ intellectual curiosity and reinforce students’ sense of self-worth. Regular field trips connect boys to real world learning experiences. Small classes averaging 16
students, skilled and innovative teachers, and differentiated instruction make it possible to meet the needs of a broad range of learners. The Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies programs are supplemented by instruction in Art, Music, and Movement. The curriculum comprises research-based programs including Math in Focus and the Teachers College Reading and Writing units of study. The academic program is designed to develop strong skills in reading and writing, critical thinking, and numbers sense. It introduces culturally relevant topics so that students can see themselves in the context of the larger world. An emphasis has been placed on creative expression and the development of motor skills and coordination. Faculty recognize the importance of fostering a sense of belonging, significance, and emotional safety consistent with the school’s emphasis on developing character and meeting the needs of the whole child. Internal and external assessment tools are becoming an essential part of academic life at the School so that rigor may be appropriately incorporated into students’ learning.

Most BWS students are first-generation independent school students who may face unique challenges at home and in their readiness for school. BWS recognizes the need to provide a range of support services for its students and their families to help support academic success. The School provides an extended day program, after-school activities, and summer learning opportunities so that there is programming for the boys eleven months out of the year, and three nutritious meals daily. The School also facilitates children’s health services, including hearing, speech, language, dental, and mental health screenings. Parental engagement is essential at BWS. Parents are required to volunteer at the School monthly and some go well beyond what is expected of them in support of the School and their children. The Parents Association and School co-sponsor discussion groups and speakers on a number of topics relevant to all parents and especially to those served by BWS. This shared sense of involvement and responsibility, by parents and School staff, enhances the sense of community at BWS and helps to ensure student success.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

BWS is a school and a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. It values highly its role as an Episcopal school, one where the development of the whole child - morally, spiritually, intellectually, socially and physically - is at the heart of all that they do. As an Episcopal school, BWS embraces a life of faith and welcomes all students, whatever the faith traditions of its students and their families may be. The School’s Episcopal identity is an essential part of its educational mission. Through weekly chapel worship, religion classes, and throughout the academic program, core values of honesty, respect, responsibility, and perseverance central to the life and legacy of Bishop Walker are developed.

Grant O Lord,
That in all the joys of life, We may never forget to be kind.
Help us to be unselfish in friendship,
Thoughtful of those less happy than ourselves,
And eager to bear the burdens of others;
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen
School Prayer
SCHOOL FINANCE AND FUNDRAISING

In its service to an underserved urban population drawn primarily from the surrounding neighborhoods, BWS has both a unique mission and challenge in terms of generating the revenue needed to operate under a tuition-free model. BWS relies on external sources of funding to meet its annual operating expenses and has achieved an impressive level of community support for its mission among its large donor and volunteer base, some 2,500 in number, trustees and school leadership, Episcopal parishes, foundations and corporations, and BWS parents. The School is completing a capital campaign - Securing Their Future - having raised approximately $5.5 million of the targeted $6.5 million. Upon its completion, the campaign will have made possible the move into a new facility at THEARC complex, retiring the debt on the Holy Communion site that is being leased, and the creation of $1 million in operating reserves. The campaign is expected to draw to a close prior to the arrival of the next Head of School.

THE CAMPUS

In 2012, the Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus (THEARC), east of the Anacostia River in southeast Washington, DC., chose the Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys as its preferred partner to provide education for boys on its 16.5-acre campus. In January 2018, the School was relocated from its Douglas Road and Holy Communion/Congress Heights sites to its new home at THEARC. THEARC owns the building, but the School occupies the space under a long-term lease agreement. The facilities are impressive and were built to the School’s exact specifications. This partnership has enabled students to enjoy a wide array of resources available at THEARC including a gymnasium, state-of-the-art theater, the Levine School of Music, the Washington Ballet, the Boys and Girls Club, the Children’s National Medical Center, and the Washington School for Girls. The campus also boasts a small garden and a community playground that are available for use by BWS.
Bishop Walker School | Head of School

Opportunities & Challenges

- The continuing challenge of sustaining the financial health of a first-rate educational program while operating under a tuition-free model
- Attends to the needs and development of the whole child, spiritually, morally and ethically, academically and socially
- Values its Episcopal identity and its strong ties to the Episcopal Diocese of Washington
- Developing and expanding upon a wide range of support and social services to both its students and their families that enhance the School’s sense of community
- A parent body committed to the School’s mission who contribute through service hours and participate in parenting classes, fundraising, and forums
- A dedicated and engaged board of governors who want to ensure the school’s fiscal health and the success of the school’s leaders
- “A BWS student both values and embodies respect, caring, trustworthiness, fairness, citizenship and responsibility.”
- Pillars of the BWS Social Curriculum

Bishop Walker School by the Numbers

School Statistics

- 85 Students
- 25 Faculty & Staff
- K-5 Grades Served
- 16 Average Class Size

Capital Campaign Goal $6.5 Million

- The average cost to educate a BWS student is $28,000 per year.
- Operating Budget $3.1 Million
- Amount Raised $5.5 Million 83%
- Amount Needed $1 Million 17%
GENERAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Model, reinforce, promote, and ensure compliance with the mission of the School.
- As a member ex-officio, maintain a strong working relationship with the Board of Governors. This includes working with the Board in developing and carrying out School policies, attending Board meetings, keeping trustees informed about all aspects of School operations, and engaging with the Board in strategic conversations and planning about the future of the School.
- While providing administrative staff an appropriate degree of autonomy, oversee and accept ultimate responsibility for all operational matters at the School, including staffing, program, School finances and budget creation/management, student recruitment, retention and outplacement, student discipline, fundraising, facilities management, parent and alumni relations, and health and safety.
- Serve as the spiritual leader of the School by modeling a life of faith and by articulating and affirming the essential elements of the School's Episcopal identity.
- Represent the School within the BWS community, at the diocesan level, in the larger community, and with governmental agencies, educational associations and accrediting bodies.

QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS SOUGHT IN HEAD OF SCHOOL

Professional

- Having worked as an educator (teacher and administrator) and, promoting excellence and accountability, is able to oversee staff and program assessment and development
- Having had experience and success in school promotion and fundraising, as well as with school finances
- Experience working with an underserved population, especially with African American boys and their families, as well as having had experience working at a faith-based or Episcopal school
- Possessing strong management and organizational skills and, having not only experience with daily school operations and in multiple management roles, is also skilled as a strategic thinker and long-range planner
- Experience building a strong sense of community among all school constituencies
- Experience working with an independent/diocesan school Board of Trustees

Personal

- A person with an ability to inspire, motivate and communicate effectively with others
- A person with a passion for working with elementary-age children, especially African American boys
- A person who views this opportunity as a calling, a unique, mission-driven commitment to selflessly serving this population and modeling this form of servant leadership
- Someone who is warm, approachable and kind, firm yet fair and consistent, open to new ideas, of the highest moral fiber, and a person of faith
- Someone who is innovative and open to new ideas, adaptable, able to multi-task, and be responsive to multiple constituents
- Someone with cultural competence and an ability to understand and respond to the profound needs of and circumstances facing the families the School serves and also build strong relationships in the community