

ASSOCIATE HEAD OF SCHOOL FOR ADVANCEMENT

GRACE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

TYLER, TEXAS

INTRODUCTION

Grace Community School (Grace) is a private, Christ-centered, college-preparatory school in Tyler, Texas, committed to assisting Christian families in educating, equipping, and encouraging their children to influence the world for Christ. Founded in 1973, Grace serves students from early education through twelfth grade and has grown to become the largest private school in East Texas, integrating academic excellence with spiritual formation through a biblical worldview.

Grace Community School is now searching for its next Associate Head of School for Advancement to unify and lead the school's enrollment, fundraising, and brand efforts under a single, coordinated vision. Reporting directly to the Head of School and serving as a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the incoming Associate Head of School for Advancement will join a growing, high-performing school at a pivotal moment — with the opportunity to shape a unified Advancement strategy that will carry Grace through its next chapter of growth.





MISSION STATEMENT

"To assist Christian families in educating, equipping, and encouraging their children to influence the world for Christ."

CORE VALUES

Redemptive Community

Redemptive community — community that is God-glorifying and Spirit-breathed — is the catalyst, the medium through which great Christian education happens, through which great living happens.

Educational Sanctification

Educational sanctification is the idea that God's Word — the written, revealed Word and the Word made flesh through Jesus Christ — is the foundation of everything Grace does as a school. The goal is for students to understand God's Word and His perspective on all of life and all of creation.

Life as Worship

Every conversation, presentation, chapel service, teachers' conference, parent seminar, newsletter, or update is an opportunity to focus hearts and minds, identity, on relationship with Christ.

GRACE AT A GLANCE

Founded: 1973	Enrollment 1,500+
Faculty (FT/PT/STAFF): 229	Student:Faculty Ratio: 12:1
College Acceptance Rate: 100%	2025 TAPPS Henderson Cup CHAMPIONS
Faculty w/advanced degrees: 49	Community service hours (annually): 4400+

ACADEMICS

A primary goal of Grace is to provide an outstanding academic education taught from a biblical worldview, with core subjects taught with rigor as students grow in wisdom, knowledge, and character. The academic program spans Early Education, Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten, Elementary (1st–4th), Middle School (5th–8th), and High School (9th–12th), along with Grace University, a hybrid K–8 program that partners with parents as co-teachers. High School offers a college-preparatory program with Honors, AP, and dual-enrollment opportunities.

The Grace high school and elementary school have both been recognized as Blue Ribbon Exemplary Schools by the U.S. Department of Education. Grace is a relationship-based school, and teachers model Christ to students, building long-term mentoring friendships that often extend well beyond the classroom and a student's years at Grace.

FINE ARTS



The Fine Arts program at Grace is one of the top programs in the state of Texas, having won more state championships and accolades in the past decade than any other program in its interscholastic league. The programs are built around the school's mission to educate, equip, and encourage young people to influence the world for Christ, with a goal of teaching students to practice their art with excellence as an act of worship.

From art and music in the elementary grades through band, choir, orchestra, drama, and drumline in Middle and High School, students grow in skill and creativity while competing in TAPPS fine arts competition and local performances.

ATHLETICS - THE COUGARS



At Grace, athletics is not viewed as an end in itself, but as a means to develop Christ-like character qualities such as integrity, sportsmanship, service, discipline, and a commitment to excellence. Athletics is intentionally integrated into the curriculum as a tool for spiritual, mental, and physical formation, guided by a "people first, performance second" philosophy that prioritizes discipleship over win-loss records.

Despite its emphasis on discipleship, the Grace athletic program has won the all-around state championship more times than any school in its division, and was named by USA Today as one of the top 25 athletic programs, public or private, in Texas. Grace fields 56 teams in 20 different sports, including:

ATHLETIC OFFERINGS

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cheer
- Cougarettes
- Cross Country
- Football
- Golf
- Soccer
- Softball
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Track & Field
- Volleyball

SPIRITUAL LIFE AND SERVICE

Grace partners with the local body of Christ to form students whose lives are shaped by the truth of the gospel. Through Bible classes, chapel, and the intentional integration of a biblical worldview across all areas of learning, students are invited to grow in wisdom, worship, and faithful obedience. Grace also encourages students to extend their learning beyond the classroom through meaningful service — local, national, and global — guided to view service as a natural response to God's grace.

FACULTY AND LEADERSHIP

Grace is a relationship-based school that partners closely with parents for the success of each student. Grace faculty are gifted teachers who demonstrate deep mastery of their subjects while continually refining their ability to communicate effectively with students. Beyond academics, teachers minister to students, pray with them, hold them accountable, sponsor clubs, lead trips, and coach teams.

Since 2003, Head of School Jay Ferguson, alongside a dedicated leadership team, has provided steady, mission-driven leadership, fostering unity across the school and ensuring Grace remains faithful to its calling to educate, equip, and encourage students to influence the world for Christ.







GOVERNANCE AND ACCREDITATION



Grace Community School is governed by a Board of Trustees that provides fiduciary oversight, strategic direction, and accountability to ensure the school remains faithful to its Christ-centered mission. Working in partnership with the Head of School and leadership team, the Board is responsible for policy, long-range planning, and institutional sustainability while supporting excellence in academics and operations.

Grace holds accreditation through the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and Cognia, and was recognized as one of only two schools nationwide to receive exemplary accreditation in its inaugural year with ACSI. The school is also a member of the Council on Educational Standards and Accountability (CESA) and the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS), participating fully in professional development, accountability structures, and statewide academic, athletic, and fine arts programs.



FINANCE AND FUNDRAISING

Grace has built strong fundraising momentum, securing more than $11 million over the past five fiscal years for operating support and enhancement projects. Over time, the school has also completed multiple campaigns to build and expand its high school, construct athletic facilities, and address other priority needs. The school's Annual Fund goal has grown from several hundred thousand dollars to $1.2 million, and came in closer to $1.5 million in the most recent fiscal year. With a comprehensive facilities master plan now in place, Grace is preparing for a large-scale, multi-phased campaign that will ultimately unify its K–12 operations on one property and create a more cohesive, welcoming, and inspiring campus for students and families, laying the foundation for additional facilities expansion in the future.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Grace Community School seeks a strategic, mission-driven Associate Head of School for Advancement to unify and lead the school's enrollment, fundraising, and brand efforts under a single, coordinated vision. Reporting directly to the Head of School and serving as a member of the Senior Leadership Team, this role provides direct oversight of the Admissions, Development, and Marketing & Communications departments, aligning inquiry generation, donor engagement, and storytelling into one integrated Advancement function.

This leader will be responsible for improving on an already-healthy, high-performing Advancement division that grows enrollment, deepens philanthropic investment, and protects and elevates the Grace brand of "Teaching Jesus–Living Grace" in service of the school's Christ-centered mission. The ideal candidate will blend strategic and relational leadership with a track record of managing directors, budgets, and cross-functional teams, and will offer sound judgment to the Head of School, the Board, and the Advancement team regarding how and where each should lead.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Leadership of the Advancement Division

- Serve as the unifying leader for Admissions, Development, and Marketing & Communications, ensuring the three functions operate from a shared enrollment and revenue strategy, with shared goals, dashboards, and a common calendar rather than in silos.
- Directly supervise, coach, and evaluate the Directors of Admissions, the Chief Development Officer, and the Director of Marketing & Communications, and manage an integrated Advancement budget across all three functions.
- Represent Advancement on the Senior Leadership Team and serve as a key advisor to the Head of School on enrollment and philanthropic strategy.

Development & Fundraising Oversight

- Partner with the Chief Development Officer to set and reach Annual Fund, capital, and major gift goals, building a sustainable culture of giving and overseeing the school's major capital campaign initiatives alongside the Head of School.
- Cultivate and steward relationships with key donors, board members, and volunteers, participating directly in cultivation and solicitation, and ensure donor communications and stewardship remain consistent with the Grace brand and mission.
- Provide the Board and Development Committee with regular, accurate reporting on fundraising progress toward goals.

Enrollment Management & Admissions Oversight

- Partner with the Directors of Admissions to set and achieve enrollment, retention, and yield goals aligned with the strategic plan, overseeing the family journey from inquiry through enrollment and retention with a consistent, mission-aligned experience.

- Use enrollment data and market analysis to guide tuition strategy, financial aid deployment, and recruitment priorities in collaboration with the Business Office, ensuring Admissions and Marketing share one inquiry-to-enrollment funnel.

Marketing, Communications & Brand Stewardship

- Ensure marketing and communications strategy serves enrollment and fundraising goals, protecting a consistent Grace brand voice and visual identity across all school-wide communications.
- Oversee the translation of the Grace mission into compelling storytelling — featuring students, families, alumni, and donors — and maintain the Advancement division's "sources of truth" (mission, vision, key messaging, brand standards).

Systems, Data & Innovation

- Establish shared CRM and data practices across Admissions and Development for a single, accurate view of each family and donor relationship, including unified marketing analytics and attribution reporting tied to enrollment outcomes.
- Leverage AI and emerging tools to increase efficiency and build institutional memory that outlasts any one staff member, without replacing human relationship-building, and monitor market and giving trends to identify growth opportunities and risks.

KEY COMPETENCIES

- **Strategic Leadership** — Sees the interplay between admissions, development, and marketing; builds systems and goals that align all three toward shared enrollment and revenue outcomes.
- **Fundraising Acumen** — Builds authentic, lasting relationships with donors, families, and volunteers; comfortable making direct, personal asks.
- **Enrollment & Revenue Fluency** — Reads enrollment and giving data fluently; translates trends into a strategy for tuition, recruitment, and fundraising priorities.
- **Creative & Brand Oversight** — Strong editorial instincts and an eye for design; ensures every touchpoint reflects the Grace mission and brand with excellence.
- **Organizational Discipline** — Manages multiple directors, budgets, and campaigns simultaneously without losing sight of priorities or deadlines.
- **Collaborative Leadership** — Leads three distinct teams as one; builds trust across departments and with the Head of School, Board, and faculty.
- **Mission Alignment** — Demonstrates a growing, mature faith in Jesus, emotional intelligence, and wholehearted alignment with Grace's spiritual and educational mission.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree preferred, in a relevant field such as nonprofit management, business, marketing, or education.
- Preferred progressive leadership experience across admissions, development/advancement, or marketing — preferably in independent or Christian schools, higher education, or mission-driven nonprofits.
- Preferred demonstrated success in setting and achieving enrollment and/or fundraising goals as a senior leader, not solely as an individual contributor.
- Proven experience supervising, coaching, and developing director-level staff and managing a multi-department budget.
- Comfortable representing the school to donors, prospective families, the Board, and the broader community, including public presentations and direct solicitation.
- A cohesive understanding of brand management, enrollment funnels, and donor cultivation, with an eye for high-quality execution across all three.
- Familiarity with CRM/database systems and AI tools, and their application to admissions and development workflows.
- A growing, mature Christian faith and wholehearted commitment to the mission and doctrinal statement of Grace Community School.



THE CHARGE

This is not a typical advancement role. Grace Community School is asking one leader to unify Admissions, Development, and Marketing & Communications into a single, coordinated Advancement function, and to do so in service of a school that is growing quickly. The following charges outline what this person will tackle over the next few years.

1. Protect Mission Integrity While Scaling Growth and Visibility.

- Ensure that Grace's rapid growth in enrollment, giving, and public visibility strengthens its Christian mission.

2. Build and Align a Unified Leadership Team Across Three Departments.

- Unify the Directors of Admissions, Development, and Marketing & Communications into a single, coordinated team with shared goals.

3. Build a Sustainable Major & Planned Giving Culture.

- Design, launch, and oversee a major- and planned-giving program that turns Grace's fundraising into a durable, ongoing strength rather than a single campaign.

4. Lead the Upcoming Capital Campaign to Completion.

- Help build the case for support and work with the Head of School to cultivate the donor pipeline needed to fully fund Grace's master plan.

5. Tell Grace's Story With the Boldness Grace Lives.

- Build a consistent brand voice and storytelling strategy that reflects the authenticity families and faculty already experience at Grace.

6. Scale Enrollment Growth Without Losing the Personal, Known Experience Families Love.

- Build the systems and structure needed to manage accelerating enrollment growth while preserving the individualized admissions experience families cite as the reason they chose Grace.

7. Build the Data and Systems Backbone to Strengthen Advancement.

- Ensure a single, shared CRM and attribution system so admissions, development, and marketing/communications use the same numbers.

8. Build a Lifetime Engagement Model for Alumni.

- Strengthen the alumni engagement program to transform this important constituency into a lasting source of advocacy, referrals, and giving.

9. Modernize Advancement Through AI Without Losing the Human Touch.

- Leverage AI and modern systems to increase efficiency and build institutional memory that outlasts any single staff member, without replacing genuine human relationship-building.

10. Expand Strategic Enrollment Pipelines, Including International Student Growth.

- Identify and build new enrollment pipelines, including expanding Grace's international student program to become a meaningful source of enrollment and diversity.



SEARCH PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The Grace Community School search is underway to appoint a new Associate Head of School for Advancement. The hiring decision will be made by the Head of School. Grace has engaged NextEd to provide support. Compensation will be competitive with comparable private schools in the area.

All candidates will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and discretion. Interested candidates should apply online through NextEd's website. The online application will include specific personal information and the following required uploaded documents:

- Interest cover letter
- Resume
- Statement of personal Christian faith

Candidates who are invited to continue in the process as semifinalists will have a second round of data collection to include other information deemed important to the search. Semifinalists will also participate in a one-way recorded video interview.

Search Process and Timeline

- **Application Deadline** – October 15, 2026
- **Semifinalist Interviews** – October–November 2026
- **Finalist Interviews** – November–December 2026
- **Appointment** – January 2027
- **Start Date** - Summer 2027

COMMUNICATION

Please direct all inquiries and nominations in confidence to:

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CLICK HERE TO APPLY