



OPPORTUNITY PROFILE

Head of School

Traverse City Christian School

TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN





The School

In 1995, a group of parents felt called to offer Christian education to families in the Grand Traverse County area, forming the Traverse City Christian School Association and establishing a school for grades 7–12. Following a 2010 merger that brought its elementary and secondary programs onto one campus, TC Christian remains the region's only independent Christian school, today serving approximately 250 students from a variety of church traditions across more than 30 local congregations.

TC Christian is now beginning an important season of leadership transition, seeking its next Head of School to serve as the school's Chief Executive Officer and lead its Christ-centered mission forward through spiritual, academic, operational, and strategic leadership. Reporting to the Board of Trustees, this leader will cultivate a thriving Christian community that integrates faith and learning while strengthening enrollment, financial health, and philanthropic growth. This work builds directly on a strategic plan the Board adopted in 2024, which named financial stability, philanthropy, facilities, and enriched educational offerings as TC Christian's priorities for the years ahead — the very areas the next Head of School will be entrusted to advance.



● EST. 1995 · PRESCHOOL–12TH · ONE CAMPUS



MISSION

Glorifying God, partnering with parents, and equipping students to transform the world for Jesus Christ.

VISION

TC Christian students will impact the world, both near and far, for Jesus Christ.

Core Values

01

Biblical
Worldview

02

Academic
Excellence

03

Authentic
Biblical
Community

04

Christ-Like
Character
Development

05

Whole-
Child
Emphasis

TC Christian At-A-Glance



1995

FOUNDED

250

ENROLLMENT
(PRESCHOOL-12TH)

30+

CHURCHES
REPRESENTED

29

INSTRUCTIONAL
STAFF



Portrait of a Sabre

At the heart of TC Christian's culture is the Portrait of a Sabre — a framework built on the acronym S.A.B.R.E. that names exactly the kind of graduate the school is forming: someone who is a Solution Finder, Academically Engaged, Biblically Rooted, Respectful Team Player, and Effective Communicator, each trait anchored in Scripture. This is far more than a poster on a wall. Teachers bring it to life daily, publicly recognizing students who embody it in front of their classmates and reinforcing it as a shared, living standard the whole community holds itself to. Faculty across all four divisions point to it as one of the school's clearest wins — a common language that unites every grade around the same picture of Christ-like character. The next Head of School inherits a genuine head start here: a values framework the community already knows, already loves, and is eager to see carried even further into every corner of school life.

S Solution Finder	A Academically Engaged	B Biblically Rooted	R Respectful Team Player	E Effective Communicator
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Academics



TC Christian delivers a comprehensive Preschool–12th grade academic program built around a cohesive curricular framework that promotes continuity and growth across a student's entire educational journey. Faith is woven into every subject — mathematics, literature, science, and history alike — so that students learn to view the world through a lens of faith and apply their learning with compassion, integrity, and purpose.

Micah 6:8

The school's "Throughlines" further shape this experience: discipleship habits and practices, inspired by Micah 6:8, that guide students to see their learning as part of God's larger story. Teachers have flexibility to use a variety of curricula best suited to their students while maintaining this strong Biblical worldview, and the school extends learning beyond its own classrooms through dual enrollment with Northwestern Michigan College and hands-on trade training through the Career Tech Center.

PROGRAM

Preschool–12th
Grade

DUAL ENROLLMENT

Northwestern
Michigan College

TRADE TRAINING

Career Tech Center



Fine Arts



The arts are a powerful way for TC Christian students to explore their creative talents and express their faith. Through hands-on experiences, dedicated mentorship, and regular performance opportunities, students unlock their distinct, God-given gifts across a range of disciplines including painting, photography, and music. Through the efforts of some generous donors, TC Christian is working to bring back the once-thriving theater program it has had in the past.

Instructors approach the arts not simply as an elective but as a calling: passionate mentors offer guidance and inspiration for artistic growth, helping students develop technical skill alongside creative confidence. Central to this is the conviction that art itself is a form of worship — a way for students to reflect the Creator's own creativity back to Him — so that whether a student is on the stage or behind a canvas, their work becomes an extension of their faith.

Painting

Photography

Music



Athletics

THE SABRES

TC Christian Athletics gives student-athletes a place to develop spiritually, emotionally, cognitively, and physically to fulfill their God-given athletic potential and to glorify God, individually and as a team, guided by four principles of sportsmanship: Competing, Encouraging, Humility, and Training. TC Christian emphasizes a Christ-centered culture in which coaches and student-athletes develop both athletic ability and character on and off the field.

Competing

Encouraging

Humility

Training

That vision is already taking hold. Coming off back-to-back district championships and an undefeated 2025–26 regular season, the boys basketball program enters this season poised for another great year of excellence, hard work, and success. Girls volleyball is currently ranked among the state's best, bowling has earned more state titles than any other TC Christian sport, and a new Athletic Director has brought fresh energy to the program — building genuine relationships with student-athletes and coaches while keeping character and faith formation at the center of competition. The next Head of School inherits a program with real momentum and a coaching staff eager to build on it.



SABRE ATHLETICS FIELDS TEAMS IN

Basketball • Baseball • Bowling • Cross Country • Golf •
Soccer • Softball • Volleyball



Student Life

TC Christian integrates spiritual formation and leadership development throughout the student experience. Weekly chapel and worship, a Biblically grounded curriculum, and mentorship from teachers and staff nurture students' faith, while leadership opportunities — Student Council, the high school Worship Team, and the Buddy Program — give every student a place to lead.

SERVICE IS WOVEN THROUGHOUT EACH DIVISION

Elementary

Students support Project Feed the Kids and local assisted living residents

Middle School

Students serve through small group service projects, the All School Service Day, and Christmas kit packing

High School

Students serve through small group service projects, volunteer at blood drives, and take part in senior mission trips to destinations such as Belize and Jamaica

Traditions like Spirit Week, the Christmas Cruncher, and the Elementary Sand Dunes Trip round out a school year full of shared experiences, alongside class trips including the 8th Grade Trip and 9th Grade Washington, D.C. Trip.





SPOTLIGHT

The Buddy Program



Few programs at TC Christian generate the kind of spontaneous enthusiasm as the Buddy Program. By pairing middle and high school students with younger mentees, it gives older students a real, ongoing opportunity to lead and mentor, while younger students gain an admired role model who makes the whole campus feel like family. Parents consistently name it as a highlight of their child's experience, and alumni and long-time supporters still speak of it fondly years later. That enthusiasm points forward, too! Members of the community have already asked whether the same spirit of mentorship could extend into athletics and other parts of school life. The next Head of School steps into a school that already knows how to build cross-age relationships that shape character, and a community eager to see that model grow.

Governance

TC Christian is governed by a Board of Trustees elected by the TC Christian Association, a body of parents and friends of the school. The school is autonomous and non-denominational, grounded in its own Statement of Faith and Mission Statement rather than any specific ecclesiastical body. TC Christian is affiliated with Christian Schools International (CSI).





Finances and Fundraising

TC Christian operates on an annual budget of just over \$3 million, driven primarily by tuition revenue across its four divisions and supplemented by a long-standing foundation partner that contributes significantly annually to the operating budget. The school does not currently maintain an endowment; the Philanthropy Committee will start one this year, with several major donors already expressing interest in providing significant seed funding.

Annual giving is anchored by the Sabre Fund, launched in fall 2025 around specific, tangible priorities rather than a general year-end appeal. The new approach has already generated more than \$300,000 against a \$200,000 goal, funding priorities that include school transportation vans, playground equipment, and financial aid.

ANNUAL BUDGET

\$3M+

SABRE FUND · LAUNCHED FALL 2025

\$300K+ raised against a \$200K goal





The Opportunity

TC Christian's next Head of School steps into a school with a strong foundation, a beloved community, and real momentum for growth. The qualifications, experience, and character outlined below reflect what the Board considers essential for the leader who will carry TC Christian's mission into its next chapter. This section is best read as a portrait of the whole person TC Christian is seeking, more than a checklist to be matched item by item; character, calling, and fit matter as much as credentials.

QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE, AND CHARACTERISTICS

Spiritual life and character

- A true servant-leader at heart and in practice, whose strength shows up as humility and a heart for service.
- A vibrant, growing, and authentic relationship with Christ; full alignment with TC Christian's Statement of Faith and its stated purpose of glorifying God, partnering with parents, and equipping students to transform the world for Jesus Christ.
- Faithful, active membership in a local church whose doctrine and practice align with TC Christian's Statement of Faith.
- Character and spiritual credibility weighed at least as heavily as resume credentials.
- Wisdom-driven discernment and decision-making grounded in Biblical truth, paired with the courage to make difficult calls, including personnel decisions, with conviction and grace.

Leadership and relational qualities

- Trustworthy and transparent; a leader who proactively and consistently communicates with the Board, staff, and families.
- Visibly present and relationally engaged; known by name, walking the halls, able to interact authentically with students, parents, faculty, and staff.
- An effective communicator and an encourager who builds people up, fosters unity, and builds trust.
- Able to unify and empower a leadership team and earn staff and family confidence.
- A shepherd to the adults in the building as much as the students — intentionally discipling, spiritually investing in, and casting vision for faculty and staff.



QUALIFICATIONS, CONTINUED

Professional experience and track record

01

A Master's degree in education or a related field preferred.

02

Executive leadership experience in a school, or comparable senior leadership role in a similar setting.

03

A demonstrated, specific track record recruiting, developing, and retaining faculty and staff.

04

A proven record building and sustaining a strong, healthy organizational culture.

05

Strategic planning and implementation experience, including the ability to help a Board establish and advance a vision for effectiveness.

06

Financial management experience with long-term sustainability, including disciplined, transparent budgeting.

07

Relationship-building experience with families, alumni, donors, and supporting churches; advancement, philanthropic, or capital-campaign experience is a plus.

08

Enrollment management experience focused on retention and long-term affordability for families.

09

A demonstrated pattern of putting hard-won professional skill and experience to work in service of others and the mission, above personal platform-building.



The Charge

The next Head of School is being called to lead one unified Preschool–12th grade school, on one campus, under a single coherent vision. This is, first and foremost, a call to servant leadership — the same posture of humility and service Christ modeled, carried out through each of the following commitments rather than through personal strength alone.

That calling takes shape across the six commitments identified below. Running through all of it is that same spirit of service, expressed practically as a commitment to the close, family-like relationships that already define TC Christian at every grade level — preserving what matters most about this community as it grows, so every family's experience deepens continuously from a child's earliest year through graduation.



1 Instill trust through presence, communication, and steady leadership

- Be visible and known — walk the halls, greet students, parents, and staff by name, and be a consistent presence across all four divisions.
- Treat communication with the Board, staff, and families as a standing leadership discipline.
- Maintain an open-door, listening ear, and a teachable spirit — offering calm confidence without pretending to have every answer.



2 Cast vision and unify the team

- Articulate a clear, Spirit-led vision for where TC Christian is headed — shaped by genuinely listening to the community first, substantive and grounded enough that people can meaningfully say yes and become aligned with it.
 - Lead in a way that empowers the principals and staff to execute the mission of the school.
 - Build a collaborative spirit among leaders, faculty, and staff so that everyone can meaningfully engage in the work of the school.
 - Make faculty and staff recruitment, development, and retention an operational priority.
 - Build clear, consistent standards and accountability rooted in relationship and trust — leading people who want to follow because they trust the relationship. Celebrate wins and appropriately address areas of concern for immediate improvement.
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3 Commit to TC Christian's Biblical worldview and spiritual formation

- Affirm that a Biblical worldview is woven through every subject and every relationship.
 - Lead spiritually first: spiritually engage in daily community life, model discipleship, and ensure chapel, extracurricular programs, and mission and service opportunities are all expressing a coherent Biblical worldview.
 - Personally disciple faculty and staff alongside students — treating spiritual growth as something the adults in the building need as much as the children do.
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4 Strengthen academic rigor and program breadth

- Elevate academic rigor across every division, with a clear runway toward expanded Advanced Placement offerings and strong college and career preparation.
 - Invest deliberately in fine arts as a growth priority, building programming and visibility on par with the school's academic and athletic strengths.
 - Partner with the Athletic Director to build a program culture and set of standards that reflect TC Christian's mission, sustaining momentum across academics, arts, and athletics together.
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THE CHARGE, CONTINUED

5

Practice disciplined, transparent financial stewardship

- Approach the school's resources with the humility and discipline of a steward entrusted with someone else's investment.
- Lead with a long-term, mission-aligned view of school finances, so every spending decision strengthens the institution for years to come.
- Champion affordability as a strategic priority, ensuring TC Christian remains accessible to as many families as possible.
- Partner with the Board to advance near-term facilities investment as part of the school's 2024 strategic plan, ensuring the physical campus keeps pace with TC Christian's growth.
- Partner closely with the Business Office and Board Finance Committee on budgeting and tuition strategy, and lead donor engagement in partnership with the Philanthropy Committee as an integrated part of the school's financial health.

6

Partner transparently with the Board and the Community

- Communicate proactively and consistently with the Board, helping to keep the Board fully equipped to govern well.
- Champion strong and healthy governance by leading up and to the Board, and also accepting their wisdom, discernment, and guidance.
- Bring clear recommendations to the Board and lead the school in full support of the Board's decisions once made.
- Be available to parents and the broader community for listening and opportunities to foster shared understanding and advancement together.

THE HEART OF THE CHARGE

First and foremost, a call to servant leadership — the same posture of humility and service Christ modeled.



Location

Set at the head of Grand Traverse Bay on Lake Michigan, Traverse City is a town of about 16,000 residents with the amenities of a much larger regional hub. It ranks #1 in Grand Traverse County for both Best Places to Live and Best Places to Raise a Family (Niche, 2026), and AreaVibes places it #4 among Michigan cities for livability. Families come for the water, the trails, and a close-knit downtown, and they stay for the community.



#1

Sleeping Bear Dunes, voted “Most Beautiful Place in America” by Good Morning America

38%

Of the nation’s tart cherries grow in northwest Michigan, the Cherry Capital of the World

60+

Miles of TART Trails for walking, biking, skiing, and commuting

19

Nonstop routes from Cherry Capital Airport, Michigan’s third-largest

Four seasons outdoors

Sleeping Bear Dunes offers 65 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline and 26 inland lakes. Summer brings swimming and paddling on the bay; winter brings cross-country skiing and snowshoeing on the Vasa Pathway, all within about a half-hour drive.

A place for families

Tree-lined neighborhoods sit steps from a walkable downtown, beaches, and parks. The National Cherry Festival, which marked its 100th year in 2026, draws about 500,000 visitors each July for eight days of parades, concerts, and fireworks.

Connected and growing

Traverse City is the hub of northern Michigan, with a thriving downtown of local shops, restaurants, and arts venues, and a strong community of churches and ministries. Cherry Capital Airport broke ground on a \$120 million terminal expansion in April 2026.



The Search

The TC Christian search is underway to appoint the school's next Head of School. TC Christian has appointed a Search Committee and has engaged NextEd to provide support. Compensation will be competitive with comparable 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:

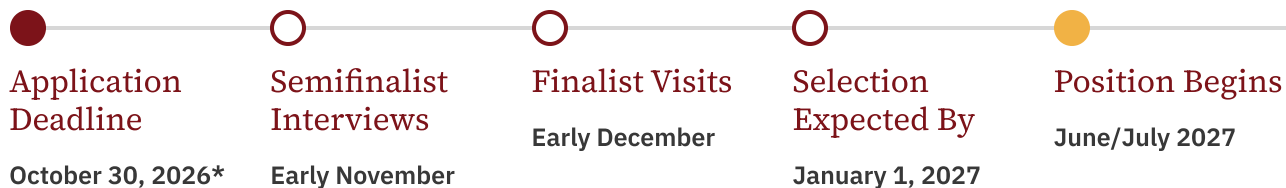
Interest cover letter

Resume

Statement of Christian faith

Candidates who are invited to continue in the process as semifinalists will have a second round of data collection to include essay responses, a video recording, and other information deemed important to the search.

Search Process & Timeline



**Candidates may be considered on a rolling basis at the discretion of the Search Committee and NextEd.*

Communication

Please direct all inquiries and nominations in confidence to:

Kurt Unruh

SEARCH CONSULTANT

303.319.3335

kurt@next-ed.com

DEADLINE · OCTOBER 30, 2026

APPLY NOW

