



Nardin Academy

President Search
Information for Candidates

Buffalo, New York

July 1, 2025



OVERVIEW

Nardin Academy is a highly rated independent Catholic school serving 714 students in grades PK, K-12 in Buffalo, NY. Its four divisions consist of coed Montessori, Lower, and Middle Schools, and an all-girls college preparatory Upper School. Nardin Academy was founded in 1857 as the first Catholic Academy in Western New York by the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary (DHM). Throughout Nardin's history the Daughters have permeated campus life serving on the staff and providing guidance on the Board of Trustees. Following this example, Nardin Academy students develop their talents and cultivate their intellect, character, and courage so that they too can make a difference through significant contributions to their school, their communities, and the world.

Nardin Academy is located on two campuses in the historic [Elmwood Village](#) neighborhood of Buffalo. Students hail from 32 districts across Western New York and Southern Ontario, Canada. The Academy provides students with the highest standards of excellence in academics, athletics, and the arts while upholding a deep commitment to service in the tradition of the DHM. True to Nardin's core value of embracing all, the school supports the well-being of each student and promotes educating the whole child. With world-class facilities, including a new gymnasium, outdoor athletic fields, and robust spaces for the arts, students discover their passions and all that Nardin Academy has to offer to reach their true potential.



Click [here](#) for more on the history of Nardin Academy and [here](#) for more about the DHMs.

Nardin At A Glance

- Founded: 1857 by the Daughters of the Heart of Mary (DHM)
- Enrollment: 714, PK (18 mos) - Grade 12
- 18 mos - Grade 3 (Montessori): 121, coed
- Grades K-4 (Lower School): 111, coed
- Grades 5-8 (Middle School): 145, coed
- Grades 9-12 (Upper School): 337, all girls
- Annual Budget: \$16million
- Endowment and Undesignated Funds: \$10.2million
- Tuition: \$7,700-\$17,950 (2023-2024 Variable Tuition Ranges)
- Tuition Assistance: 29% of student body
- Accrediting bodies: NY State Department of Education, Middle States Association of Schools and College, and The American Montessori Society (AMS)
- www.nardin.org

MISSION & CORE VALUES

Mission Statement

Inspiring hearts and minds to do amazing things for the world through faith, character, academic excellence and service.



Core Values

- Embracing All – Recognizing, welcoming and celebrating all.
- Nurturing Talent – Supporting the development of our God-given talents and gifts.
- Fostering Connection – Cultivating connection with each other, our communities and God.
- Living & Serving Through Faith – Striving to live and serve our world with dignity, humbleness and compassion.
- Igniting Possibilities– Sparking intellectual curiosity, inspiring imagination and encouraging exploration.

LOCATION OF THE SCHOOL—BUFFALO, NY

Zillow has recently named Buffalo, NY as the hottest housing market for 2024. [It's true!](#) Named by Niche.com as the #10 Most Diverse of 228 American cities, Buffalo is a half hour's drive from Niagara Falls and is experiencing a revitalization in many directions. This city of just under 300,000 residents boasts some beautiful green spaces, including several designed by Frederick Law Olmstead, and architectural gems such as Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House and Graycliff Estate and a stunning music hall designed by Eero Saarinen. Many homes in the city's residential neighborhoods add to Buffalo's architectural interest.

The Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens, Buffalo and Erie County Naval and Military Park, Buffalo AKG Art Museum, several theaters, a ballet, and a philharmonic all add to Buffalo's rich cultural life. The University of Buffalo, the largest public university in New York State, can also be found in this busy city.

Watersports are popular on the Buffalo River, as is the city's bike share capability. Those brave enough can even zipline across the city's grain silos. And of course, Buffalo is the founding city to [Buffalo wings](#) and other popular regional dishes. There are many fine and fun places to eat and shop, including an international food and retail bazaar.

The Campus

As mentioned above, Nardin Academy is situated on two locations in the beautiful Elmwood Village neighborhood of Buffalo. Next to the Montessori House on West Ferry Street is Nardin House, the original home of the Nardin-associated Daughters of the Heart of Mary. The other academic buildings (Main Campus) are around the corner on Cleveland Avenue.

In September 2020, the 20,000 square foot state-of-the-art Gymnasium and Wellness Center opened at the Main Campus, complete with a regulation sized gym, workout room, and space for yoga and meditation. Two miles from the Main Campus the [Kevin T. Keane Sports Park](#) features two multi-use turf fields and a softball diamond. The adjacent Nardin Academy Athletic Center offers an indoor facility housing seven international squash courts, an indoor turf field, lockers, and a meeting space. When not being used by the Academy, these facilities provide rental income.



ACADEMICS

Montessori

Nardin Academy's [Montessori program](#) began in 1963. Toddler (18-36 months) and Early Childhood (age 3-K) programs reside in a stately but cozy home on the West Ferry Street campus, while the Montessori Elementary classroom (grades 1-3) is on the Cleveland Avenue campus. Founded by a DHM, this special program for young children has been a popular choice for area families, most of whom transition into the Lower School grade 4 program when they complete their time in Montessori. Hallmarks of Montessori include focus on the whole child and the development of competence, confidence and independence through experiential and, to a large extent, self-directed learning.

The Academy's Montessori program is based on the [AMS](#) (American Montessori Society) model, with instruction delivered in multi-year, "prepared environment" classrooms. The Toddler program enrolls children on a 2, 3, 4, or 5-day basis, while Early Childhood offers full - or half-day instruction 3 or 5 days a week.

Students in the Montessori Elementary program (grades 1-3) are enrolled full-day, 5 days a week. New experiences and responsibilities at this level include caring for animals; planning, shopping for, and preparing lunch for classmates; gardening; and field trips. Special efforts are made to prepare the older children to enter 4th grade in the Academy's Lower School in order to effect a smooth transition.



Lower School

[Lower School](#) students may begin in Kindergarten and stay through grade 4. Though not a Montessori program, the Lower School is also experiential in its approach, striving to provide the boys and girls with a supportive, academically inspiring, and respectful environment that meets the needs and readiness of each child.

The Lower School is a strong community where mindfulness is part of the schedule, homeroom morning meeting is daily, and a monthly Lower School community morning meeting takes place where students and faculty have a time to connect as a whole K-4 community to share curricular updates, enjoy a pep squad performance, and listen to musical selections.

The Lower School schedule operates on a 5-day, Monday - Friday rotation. Core classes are taught in ELA, Math, Social Studies, Science, World Language (French or Spanish), and Religion. World language instruction begins in Kindergarten. There is a strong SEL component to the Lower School. Responsive Classroom techniques and tenets are present daily, and the character education program, "Fly Five," is a part of the Center of Responsive Classroom programming.

Music lessons, pep squad, and ballet are offered all year after school, and students may elect to do track and/or swimming as an entry into athletics. Families may opt to enroll their children in an optional one-hour per session, parent paid, after-school program, offering 6-week "electives" that meet the varying interests of the students. Examples include topics such as *Lego Club*, *Let's Make Art*, *Roblox (coding) Workshop*, and *Sports Clinic*. The Lower School K-4 community has a Christmas performance in December. The Pep Squad and ballerinas perform at various events throughout the year.

Middle School

The coed [Middle School](#) serves boys and girls in grades 5-8. The Middle School teachers' collective goal is to "empower students to exceed their own expectations." The "specials" that began in the earlier years are continued, and Middle School students begin following a cascading schedule. The number of times or hours per week for core classes increases, and students' course load grows to include Health. Students with documented need for learning support may take advantage of the trained teachers assigned to work in small pull-out groups, starting in 5th grade.

Middle School students may also participate in multiple sports offerings and after-school clubs. Clubs this year include *Middle School Mentoring*, *Girls Who Code*, *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Art*, and *STEM*. Sports offered at this level are baseball, soccer, basketball, squash, ice hockey, track and field, lacrosse, and softball.

Upper School

Nardin Academy's all-girls [Upper School](#) covers grades 9-12, with a 9:1 student-to-teacher ratio. Boys who have attended Nardin through 8th grade tend to move on to area public schools and other area private school options, including the nearby all-boys Canisius High School, which serves informally as a brother school to Nardin's Upper School.



All Upper School students are required to take four years of English, social studies, religious studies, physical education; three years of mathematics, science, and a single world language; one semester of health, computer science; and six semesters of electives. A recent addition is a required Freshman Seminar for first year students. Athletics (as opposed to PE) are optional, though many Upper School students participate.

The Academy exercises a policy of open enrollment in AP courses with the requirement for any student enrolled to sit for the spring exam. 110 Nardin Academy sophomores, juniors and seniors sat for 199 AP exams in May 2023, with 72% scoring a 3 or above. Upper School students must also fulfill an eighty-hour community service commitment. The Upper School is on an eight-day, rotating, cascading block schedule.

Winter Experience is a week-long Upper School opportunity for intensive study or study/service trips. Some of the 2024 course offerings include *The Great Nardin Bake-off*; *Local, State and Federal Government* (with Homeland Security); *Robot Rumble*; and *We're Talking Proud: Buffalo History*. This year's winter trips include *Adventure to Iceland*; *Experience the Arts: NYC*; and *Service Immersion Trip to New Orleans*.

Upper School students are assigned to one of four multigrade “House teams” upon arrival and stay on that team for the duration of their tenure at the Academy. Fun competitions among Houses take place throughout the year, all in a race for the coveted Gator Cup at year’s end.

The [Counseling Office](#) houses the Director of Guidance, Ninth Grade Guidance Counselor, Upper School Guidance Counselor, and the Upper School Learning Specialist. This office serves as the liaison to all Upper School parents, offering programming at each high school grade level to support students through their four-year trajectory toward college acceptance and matriculation. Learning support and mental health support can be found here as well. A list of recent college acceptances, reflecting acceptance of 100% of the senior class, may be found [here](#).

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION AND CAMPUS MINISTRY

[Religious instruction](#) begins with the youngest children in the Montessori program and builds into a full-credit course each year of high school. Given the religious diversity of the student body, religion courses, taught by the Religious Studies Department, are designed to be relevant to all, though monthly Catholic masses are held to maintain the Catholic identity of the Academy.

The Director of Campus Ministry oversees the Chapel schedule and use, as well as the religious and spiritual formation for students. He also plans and runs all retreat experiences, including the very popular Kairos retreats for juniors.

TECHNOLOGY

Nardin Academy’s infrastructure and academic technology are robust and are supported by a Chief Technology Officer, Director of Innovation and Educational Technology, a Data Analyst/Coordinator, a Senior IT Technician, and an IT Technician. Technology has been thoughtfully integrated into the Academy’s teaching and learning, evidenced by initiatives such as interactive tools, collaborative content creation, and apps that foster critical thinking. You may learn more about the department’s work [here](#).



ATHLETICS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Nardin Academy has both an [Athletics Department](#), offering optional sports team experiences starting in Kindergarten, and a PE Department, providing required lifelong skills in physical health and well-being at all grade levels. Starting in Middle School, students may opt out of PE if they are participating in an athletic offering.

The Athletics Department boasts 19 sports and takes advantage of Nardin's robust athletic facilities. Most Middle and Upper School students opt to play at least one sport. Since 2016 Nardin teams have won 53 championships across ten different sports.



STUDENT LIFE

[Student Life](#) programs at Nardin Academy include over 40 clubs and activities, service programs, ongoing efforts to embed DEI into the fabric of the community, health and wellness support through Student Services, and more.

[Nardin's Food Service program](#), noted in the region for its commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility, is worth highlighting here. Led by a Nardin alumna, this program provides all scratch-cooked snacks and meals and, this year, an 89% waste diversion rate. Efforts are made to invest in local food sources, and students learn to think about responsible consumption every time they eat at Nardin.

ADMINISTRATION

The Senior Administrative Team is led by the President and includes the four Principals (Montessori, Lower School, Middle School, Upper School), the Vice President of Finance and Operations, Executive Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Community Engagement, Director of Strategic Advancement and Communications, Montessori/Lower School/Middle School Director of Admissions, Upper School Director of Admissions, and the Marketing and Communications Manager. Full team meetings occur every other week, and smaller group or individual meetings occur as needed with the President. She also meets regularly with the Director of Athletics and the Director of IT.

FACULTY

Each division of the school has its own dedicated faculty, with very few overlaps. All-school faculty meetings happen at the start and end of the year; more frequent faculty meetings happen by division and are led by the respective Principal. Academic departments are also unique to each division, though there have been recent efforts to coordinate the long arc of K-12 scope and sequence more intentionally.

FINANCE (INCLUDING ENDOWMENT)

The Academy runs on a budget of approximately \$16 million. After navigating a few years of a deficit budget, projections call for the school to be debt free by March 1, 2025. Revenue derives from tuition and fees, investment and rental income, and fundraising efforts.

The endowment, as reported in the most recent audit, sits at \$6.4million. In addition, there is \$3.8 million of undesignated funds that the board can allocate.

Nardin has recently received a grant from the Mother Cabrini Foundation to continue to support the Academy's ability to respond to the individual needs of students, both educationally and spiritually, as well as concentrate on their social and emotional needs. This funding will support the new position of a Director of Support Services to serve the entire Academy.

DEVELOPMENT / ADVANCEMENT

The Advancement Office includes the Executive Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Community Engagement, Director of Strategic Advancement and Communications, the Advancement Services Coordinator, Nardin Fund and Special Events Manager, and Alumni Relations Manager. The office oversees the major annual fundraising efforts: the Nardin Fund, an annual gala, and Golfing for Gators, which directly supports the athletics program. The annual gala has raised over \$5 million since 1991 to sustain the curriculum and support student experience. This year the Academy is on track to exceed its fundraising goals.

Called to Connect: the Campaign for Nardin Academy was launched in 2017 with the goal to raise \$19.5 million. To date, \$19.3 million has been raised. This goal, too, is expected to be exceeded by June 30, 2024.



ENROLLMENT

There are two admissions directors, the Director of Montessori, Lower and Middle Schools Admissions and the Director of Upper School Admissions. 32 different school districts transport students to Nardin Academy.

2023-2024 Enrollment By Grade:

2023-2024			
Student grade level	Total	Female	Male
Toddler	21	11	10
Early Childhood 3	30	15	15
Early Childhood 4	30	16	14
Early Childhood 5	12	6	6
Montessori Elementary 1	13	8	5
Montessori Elementary 2	6	2	4
Montessori Elementary 3	10	5	5
Kindergarten	15	4	11
1st Grade	14	9	5
2nd Grade	20	14	6
3rd Grade	23	15	8
4th Grade	39	24	15
5th Grade	31	21	10
6th Grade	35	23	12
7th Grade	35	20	15
8th Grade	45	30	15
9th Grade	73		
10th Grade	86		
11th Grade	87		
12th Grade	91		
	716		

Variable Tuition Ranges for Montessori - Grade 12 (2023-2024)

Montessori Full Time
EC4 - Grade 3
\$7,700 - \$16,490

Grades K - 4
\$7,600 - \$16,180

Grades 5 - 8
\$7,900 - \$16,900

Grades 9 - 12
\$8,400 - \$17,950

Diversity in Student Body:

2023-2024								
Ethnicity by school	Mont	%	Lower	%	Middle	%	Upper	%
Asian	5	4%	8	7%	13	9%	9	3%
Black or African American	1	1%	4	4%	10	7%	35	10%
Hispanic or Latino	1	1%	2	2%	3	2%	7	2%
Native American or Alaska Native	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Two or more races	9	7%	5	5%	12	8%	10	3%
White (Not Hispanic or Latino)	82	67%	84	76%	98	67%	260	77%
I do not wish to disclose	5	4%	5	5%	5	3%	9	3%
Blank	19	16%	3	3%	5	3%	5	1%

GOVERNANCE

There are currently 15 members of the Nardin Academy Board of Trustees, led by Marsha Sullivan, a former parent and former President of the Academy. Standing committees include Executive, Finance/Audit, Trustees, Governance, and other committees and/or task forces as deemed necessary on an annual basis. This year the Board has included committees on *Mission Integration and DHM Legacy and Marketing and Enrollment*. There are four meetings per year, including the Annual Meeting held each spring. The Provincial, the President, and the Chair sit as ex-officio members of every committee.

The Bylaws call for three to five DHMs to be appointed to the Nardin Academy Board. Elections of new and renewing trustees take place at the Annual Meeting. Trustees are elected to a three-year term, renewable once and again, for a third term, if allowed by a vote of the full Board. Officers are elected annually to one-year terms that may repeat from year to year.



STRATEGIC PLAN

Nardin Academy's strategic plan was created in 2017, interrupted by COVID in 2020, and is back in focus, though it had been scheduled to be completed in 2022. The school has been working on three principal areas:

Create a dynamic Nardin community

- Strengthen relationships with Nardin parents
- Strengthen alumni engagement
- Integrate a common faculty culture across the divisions
- Enrich the health and wellness of the Nardin community

Engage students in the world

- Support students as they live the Daughters of the Heart of Mary Catholic experience
- Ensure that the students build cultural competencies

Maximize student potential

- Ensure that students graduate from each of our three schools prepared to be successful in a changing world
- Ensure that our faculty is known as the most effective and caring faculty in our market
- Support students' passions through an enriched curriculum and enhanced facilities.

FUTURE LEADERSHIP OF NARDIN ACADEMY

As Nardin Academy builds on its extraordinary 167-year history, the Board of Trustees has launched a search to identify a new President for July 1, 2025. To that end, and to assist the Board in clarifying the goals and opportunities the new Head will face, Joan Beauregard and Sally Mixsell of Educators Collaborative have solicited input from members of the school community during an on-campus visit and by means of an electronic survey. Those interviewed and surveyed included faculty, students, administrators, staff, parents, trustees, alumnae(i) and community members. Based on this input, the following represents a summary of Nardin's strengths, the challenges and opportunities it faces in the next three to five years, and the personal and professional qualities the trustees and the school seek in the next President.

This is a fantastic opportunity for a person who enjoys the complexities of a large, multifaceted Catholic school with an important mission and presence in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls metropolitan area.

Strengths

- Academic Program Excellence
- Quality of the teaching / Excellent teachers
- Strong sense of community; everyone LOVES this school and connections are multi-generational
- Core values of faith, service, character, and courage
- Meaningful teacher-student relationships
- Strong college placement
- Small class sizes
- A resilient and hardworking Board, eager to partner with the Academy's new President
- A balanced budget; the Academy is debt-free with an endowment
- Excellent facilities



Challenges / Opportunities

- Guiding the healing of a community that has been through much change and transition – building trust among community members
- Improving protocols for communication within the school community and to external constituents
- Continuing to further academic excellence in all divisions, and attending to the emotional and developmental needs of each student, including character and values development
- Assuring financial stability and sound management of resources, balanced with affordable costs for families
- Recruiting, retaining, and compensating high quality faculty and staff, as well as supporting their professional development
- Furthering policies and programs that promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging on all levels - faculty, staff, student body, and the Board
- Maintaining and strengthening Nardin's strong, supportive community and school spirit
- Understanding Nardin Academy's identity as a Catholic school in an ever-changing world



Desired Characteristics and Skills in Nardin Academy's next President

The next President will be a practicing Catholic who will promote the Catholic identity of the Academy and be committed to its mission and core values. With experience in independent schools an ideal candidate will reflect:

- The ability to partner well with the Board and the DHMs
- A solid understanding of best practices in independent Catholic schools and the ability to build systems and protocols for effective and efficient operations
- Attributes expected in a great leader, including: self-awareness; integrity, empathy, intellectual curiosity, positive energy, humility, a sense of humor, ability to stay strong in the face of challenge, honesty, approachability, a collaborative nature, and an engaging personality
- Skills as a systems thinker, able to see connections among the four divisions to support a "one school" alignment
- Vision and conviction to keep the school dynamic and evolving, while honoring its longstanding values and history
- Experience in (or a plan to learn about) financial management, fundraising, and marketing, and a willingness to play a critical role in all
- Patience to understand the school and work collaboratively with its leadership to create a courageous plan for moving forward into a continued strong and sustainable future
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion that resonates with [Nardin's work in this area](#)
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills that feel clear and authentic to stakeholders
- Commitment to being visible during the school day and at school events with a genuine desire to engage at every level with the school community
- An interest in encouraging and developing growth in adults
- Capacity to listen with an open mind and make decisions based on, when appropriate, input from others and, always, thoughtful reflection



- Ability to manage change effectively and create buy-in toward a shared vision
- Management skills that are tried and true, reflecting ability to delegate and hold others accountable with fairness and clarity
- Demonstrated capacity to solve problems creatively, especially as concerns enrollment and revenue production
- Minimum requirement of a master's degree in a relevant discipline
- Familiarity with Western NY, Buffalo, and/or Nardin Academy, a plus

TO APPLY

A preliminary conversation is encouraged with Joan Beauregard and/or Sally Mixsell (see below) of Educators Collaborative to learn more about this opportunity. Those interested are asked to submit the following materials, in the order listed, in a Single Merged Document:

- EC Candidate Summary Sheet (contact consultants below for this documents)
- Letter of Interest, addressed to the Search Committee
- Current résumé
- Statement of Educational Leadership
- A list of five or more references with contact information (including phone numbers and email addresses)
- EC Disclosure Form (contact consultants below for this document)

Please Address Inquiries to:

Sally Mixsell, Partner, Educators Collaborative
smixsell@educatorscollaborative.com - (203) 824-3653
and/or

Joan Beauregard, Partner, Educators Collaborative
jbeau@comcast.net or jbeauregard@educatorscollaborative.com - (206) 851-6616

Nardin Academy is committed to providing an environment of mutual respect where equal employment opportunities are available to all applicants and employees without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, military and veteran status, and any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Nardin Academy believes that diversity and inclusion among their employees is critical to their success as an educational institution, and seeks to recruit, develop and retain the most talented people from a diverse candidate pool. They strongly encourage people from underrepresented groups to apply.

