



# SOUTHLAKE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY



## HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

Position starts July 1, 2025  
Huntersville, North Carolina



**EDUCATORS COLLABORATIVE**  
EXPERTS IN SEARCH, TRANSITION & STRATEGY



## A Thriving Christian School in an Idyllic Setting

Located in the scenic and thriving Lake Norman, North Carolina area, just 20 miles from Charlotte, SouthLake Christian Academy is one of the country's foremost Christian schools. Having experienced considerable growth in its enrollment and programs under the effective leadership of Dr. Matthew Kerlin for the past six years, SLCA is ready to welcome its next Head of School, who will guide this thriving school with vision, diplomacy, transparency, and an abiding dedication to the school's Christian mission.

The area around SouthLake Christian is dominated by Lake Norman, the largest man-made lake in the state, which provides unparalleled opportunities for recreation – boating, hiking, swimming, and fishing. In the words of one SouthLake student, “we are always out on the lake.” The area's attractions include fine dining establishments, shopping, and the bustling metropolis of Charlotte. To learn more about the Lake Norman area, click [here](#).

## The Mission of SouthLake Christian Academy

**SouthLake Christian Academy exists for the sake of God's glory and mission, proclaiming the gospel and discipling the whole person in all aspects of God's reality.**





## SLCA AT A GLANCE

- Founded: 1994
- Number of students: 650
- Upper School students: 226
- Middle School students: 196
- Lower School students: 227
- Students of color: 18%
- Teachers, administrators, and staff: 150
- Average tenure of SLCA teachers: 12.5 years
- Annual operating budget: \$10 million
- Annual operating budget allocated to financial aid and remission: approximately 10%

## Celebrating 30 years of growth and success

SouthLake Christian Academy was founded in 1994 as a ministry of SouthLake Presbyterian (PCA) Church. The school started with just 23 students in grades K-3, and now enrolls 650 students in junior kindergarten through 12th grade.

SLCA's 30-acre campus and facilities have expanded over the years to accommodate the growth of its community. The well-maintained facilities include three academic buildings, a gymnasium, a field house (with weightlifting, classroom and training rooms), a baseball complex, a cross country course, and a turf athletic field for soccer, lacrosse and football. A new arts building is expected to be completed in 2025 and an additional turf field and track is currently in the design phase.



The Academy has recovered impressively following an embezzlement fraud discovered ten years ago. While deeply painful for the school and church, SLCA responded admirably by instituting stronger financial controls and spearheading impressive growth in both its enrollment and facilities. The past decade of success at the Academy provides strong evidence of its resilience and the loyalty of its community.





## ACADEMICS

SouthLake Christian emphasizes academic rigor utilizing a college-preparatory, biblically-integrated curriculum. Through academic challenge, experiential learning, and extracurricular opportunities, students' minds are inspired and their creativity nurtured.

### A Steadfast Yet Innovative Learning Environment

The school promotes an engaging and exceptional learning environment through the use of curriculum, technology, and individual teaching methods. Of note is the fact that SouthLake Christian's faculty and staff members are deeply loyal to the school, with an average tenure of over 12 years at the school. While the faculty is known for its continuity, teachers continue to innovate instruction, curriculum and assessments, often using technology integration to enhance the students' depth of learning. Upon graduation, SLCA students are prepared to be successful in college and life, pursuing excellence in service of the school's mission.

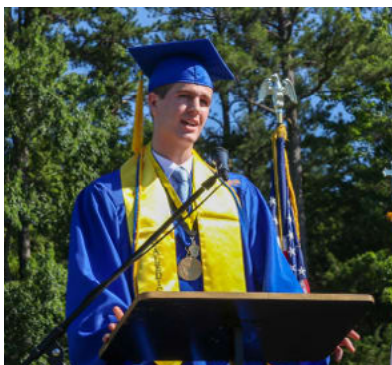


*"I like that it is a smaller school – people know who my kids are and who I am. That's important."*

–a SouthLake parent

### Thoughtful Technology Integration

Technology is incorporated into all classrooms at SLCA. Every classroom features cutting-edge touch screen flat panels or smart boards. Technology continues to expand throughout the campus and into the curricula with STEM and Explore, Productivity, and Media Labs. The Upper School operates on a 1:1 device program with students receiving a MacBook Air laptop to use for the duration of their time at SouthLake Christian.







## LOWER SCHOOL

### Introducing Curious and Creative Young Minds to Active Learning

A child's academic and spiritual journey at SouthLake Christian begins in the Lower School, which serves grades JK through 4. The outstanding reputation of the Lower School program is evidenced in its growing enrollment. Simply put, families understand the value of SLCA and are eager to enroll their children at a young age.

Lower School classes are limited to approximately 18 students, staffed with a teacher and full-time assistant. SLCA's Lower School is deeply committed to an early focus on academics and experiential learning. With encouragement and guidance from teachers, Junior Kindergarten students identify their areas of interest, follow their inquiry, and learn by doing. In Kindergarten, students continue to be supported in their open inquiry and independent thinking, an approach that fosters curiosity, openness to differing perspectives, and the desire to keep learning. Activities include launching boats that they constructed with their 3rd grade "buddies" and the end-of-year celebration, known as the Kindergarten Olympics. Additionally, every Kindergarten student is paired with a high school senior buddy who stays with them throughout the year, forging strong bonds that continue through their SouthLake experience.

For students in grades 1-4, SLCA focuses its program on traditional academic skill building while supplementing these studies with curriculum-focused nature walks, personal writing projects, and the creation of a conservation park on campus. Studies in math and problem-solving are reinforced with hands-on constructivist projects related to real-world scenarios. As part of their studies, students learn from experts, engage in cross-disciplinary projects and simulations, and take part in off-campus class trips to study specific topics out in the field.

Once a week, students attend Chapel services. A Biblical worldview is woven into the regular curriculum in addition to a daily Bible class. You can learn more about the Lower School program [here](#).





*"What sealed the deal when we were considering SouthLake for our child was being in the Middle School hallway and seeing teachers sitting with students and communing with them"*

– a SouthLake parent

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

### An Environment that is Welcoming, Safe, Encouraging and Inspired

At SouthLake Christian Academy's Middle School, students are divided into two distinct groups — the Intermediate School (Grades 5 and 6) and the Junior High (Grades 7 and 8). At each grade level, the schedule, class structure, and curriculum are thoughtfully and intentionally designed to help students effectively transition from the self-contained classrooms of Lower School to the independent learning style required of a successful Upper School student. Students in the Intermediate School have fewer classes and several structured breaks throughout their day including a 30-minute lunch and 30-minute recess. Once promoted into Junior High, the day includes more classes, more teachers, and more rigor while still allowing students the room to grow and mature into the learner God has uniquely designed them to be. Click [here](#) to explore the Middle School program at SLCA.

## UPPER SCHOOL

### A Sense of Purpose

SouthLake Christian's Upper School is purposefully designed to develop critical thinkers who learn with and from each other and their teachers. It is a place where students in grades 9-12 collaborate in intellectual, artistic, athletic, and entrepreneurial pursuits within a framework of inquiry and care.

SLCA offers 14 different AP courses, which students can begin to take during their junior year. In addition, the school offers a variety of innovative elective classes, including Forensics, the Philosophy of Film, Engineering, and Cybersecurity. As a Christian school, each teacher practices biblical integration of their subject matter in which they weave God's truth into their lessons organically to help students





better understand the nature and character of God. In addition, students take at least two years of religious study, and choose among courses that include Apologetics, Systematic Theology, and Christian Ethics.

The extracurricular life of an upper school student can be full and rich. Besides its arts and sports opportunities, SLCA offers a wide variety of clubs and organizations for students. The school's most robust club, Student Mission Fellowship, offers service opportunities, weekly Bible studies and social events. Leadership Council, the student government organization, offers participating students opportunities for growth. SLCA has grade-level Bible studies led by teachers, and clubs around specific interests such as the medical profession, Spanish, and robotics. Learn more about SLCA's upper school program click [here](#).

## SPECIALIZED ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Recognizing that SouthLake Christian Academy's program is rigorous, the school offers a wide variety of learning programs for students who need additional assistance. The school's academic development center provides Math and Language Enrichment Groups, a tutorial study hall, speech and occupational therapists, mental health counseling, and resources from the National Institute of Learning Development and the Search & Teach program. All of these resources assist students who require various levels of educational resources and support. Explore the depth and breadth of SLCA's resources by clicking [here](#).

*"We moved during Covid. It was a blessing, and we decided to stay. Our kids are thriving at SouthLake"*  
- a SouthLake parent







*"The Christian piece has worked out well. We came when my kids were little – we have been there for 10 years. Their faith is really strong because of SoutLake."*

– a SouthLake parent



## SERVING THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF STUDENTS

As a Christian school, SouthLake Christian Academy serves the spiritual needs of its students throughout its program. The school aims to fulfill its mission to educate and disciple students while pursuing three main objectives. First, the school desires all of its students to have a growing and vibrant relationship with Christ, as well as a caring relationship with their parents, teachers, and peers. Second, the school seeks to develop in SLCA students a worldview that enables them to think Christianly, sifting all decisions through the grid of Scripture, thus inspiring the formation of inner convictions and values. Third, SCLA desires that its students develop a genuine and heartfelt attitude of service that results in living for God and living for others, realizing that the ultimate goal of God's grace is conformity to the image of Christ.

To meet these goals, SCLA prioritizes worship through weekly chapel meetings, emphasizes relationships and provides myriad opportunities for students to take part in local and global outreach. Upper School students enjoy an annual three-day Fall Retreat to Young Life's Windy Gap in Weaverville, North Carolina to foster relationships and build class camaraderie through class competitions, skits from student government, refreshing times of worship and challenging messages from a guest speaker. Students in grades 7 and 8 also attend a retreat at Windy Gap, engaging in outdoor activities, times of praise and worship, and a guest speaker. Students in grades JK-6 embark on a number of day trips to the Billy Graham Library. To learn more about how SouthLake Christian Academy serves the spiritual needs of its students, click [here](#).





## COLLEGE AND CAREER COUNSELING

### A Comprehensive Program of Support

SouthLake Christian Academy's College Counseling support is well regarded by both parents and students. Working closely with teachers, grade counselors, advisors, coaches, and parents, SLCA's college counselor helps students identify and apply to colleges and universities that are best suited to their own interests, abilities, and aspirations. The experienced college counselor builds honest and thoughtful relationships with students, encouraging and empowering them to identify and express their unique talents and experiences. The result is that each student finds their own best fit for the next leg in their life-long learning journey. Over the past four years, SLCA graduates have continued their education at a wide variety of colleges and universities, including the University of North Carolina, Liberty, Roanoke, Berry, William & Mary, Rhodes, Duke, and Johns Hopkins. Click [here](#) to know more about College and Career Counseling at SLCA.

## ATHLETICS: WORK HARD, PLAY HARD, PRAY HARD

SouthLake Christian views athletics as a unique opportunity to teach self-discipline, teamwork, obedience, compassion, and Christ-like character on the field of competition. The athletic program seeks to develop these spiritual characteristics while also training the physical body in a competitive environment. SLCA teams have enjoyed success by winning five team state championships (NCISAA) and 20 individual state championships in baseball, cross country, football, swimming, volleyball and wrestling.

The Academy offers a broad range of athletic opportunities, and has enjoyed significant success in a range of programs. Eighteen student athletes from SCLA are currently participating on Division I, Division II, and Division III college sports teams in soccer, lacrosse, baseball, basketball, football, tennis, volleyball, and gymnastics.

The Academy's athletic facilities include a turf field (with an additional turf field in the planning stages), a field house, a baseball field, a cross country course and a fitness center — all added to the campus in the last ten years. Middle School students take advantage of athletic fields and facilities in the local area for practices and games. Click [here](#) to learn more about Athletics at SLCA.



## PURSUING EXCELLENCE THROUGH THE ARTS



SouthLake Christian seeks to develop in each of its students an appreciation of the arts. To this end, art and music classes are an important part of the curriculum throughout all grades. Students attend both art and music classes each week in the Lower and Middle Schools, and perform in Christmas and end-of-the-year programs. In Upper School, students can choose from a variety of Fine Arts electives to meet their graduation requirements.

Upper school students can also be involved in the annual drama production, choir, orchestra, concert band, and ACSI Fine Arts competitions. Each year the Upper School drama production features musicals such as Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Oklahoma!*, *Seussical*, *Sound of Music*, and *Peter Pan*. SLCA's Upper School theater productions have garnered acclaim from the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center's Blumey Awards.



Middle and Upper School students perform at venues around the Charlotte area and compete in music festivals at Carowinds and the annual ACSI Fine Arts Festival. The school's plans for a new Arts Building are well underway, with a goal of completing this new complex in 2025. The addition of this facility clearly reflects the school's deep commitment to arts education.

Click [here](#) to know more about the Arts program at SLCA.







## LEADERSHIP PROFILE

SouthLake Christian Academy seeks a leader who enthusiastically embraces and champions the school's mission, which is grounded in the Christian faith while providing a strong academic program that prepares students for continued educational success in college and in life.

The successful candidate will be distinguished by a warm, welcoming, and inclusive personal manner, exceptional verbal and written communication skills, a personal commitment to the Academy's Christian mission, and a love for students. They will also bring the skills, vision, fundraising capabilities, initiative, and drive to help further realize a compelling, and sustainable future for the future of the school.

The Board of Trustees of SouthLake Christian Academy is conducting a national search to identify its next Head of School. Search consultants Tracy Bennett and George Sanderson of Educators Collaborative solicited input from all stakeholders during on-campus visits and gathered additional input from stakeholders through an online survey. Based on this input, impressions of the consultants, and feedback from the Head of School Search Committee, the following represents a summary of the school's strengths, challenges and opportunities, and the skills and attributes desired in the next Head of School of SouthLake Christian Academy.



## Strengths of The School

- SouthLake Christian Academy has earned an excellent reputation in North Carolina and nationwide. It is well respected for its consistent commitment to Christian education, its strong academic programs, and emphasis on nurturing the character of its students.
- SouthLake Christian Academy's enrollment has grown considerably over the past ten years, with waiting lists for admission in many grades. The robust interest in SLCA affirms its outstanding reputation in the area and distinct identity.
- Families often say that they choose SouthLake because it retains the atmosphere of a small school, while offering the breadth and depth of program of a larger institution. The warmth of relationships among parents, teachers, and students is clear and powerful to visitors.
- The SouthLake Christian Academy community is impressively engaged in, and supportive of, the school. Parent volunteerism is strong and the well-functioning Board of Trustees is deeply committed and forward-thinking in its approach to governance.
- The faculty and staff at SouthLake Christian are deeply loyal to, and proud of, their school. Most teachers have served for over a decade and the retention of faculty is considered a strength.
- The leadership team at SouthLake Christian is experienced, highly competent, and professional. The school benefits from their knowledgeable perspective and close working relationships.
- SouthLake Christian Academy is located in a thriving, scenic area of North Carolina and the growth of this area supports the long-term sustainability of the school.
- SLCA continues to ensure that its program and community is responsive to, and relevant in, an ever-changing world while remaining steadfast in its dedication to its Christian mission.
- During the 2024-2025 academic year, SLCA will benefit from the leadership of an experienced Interim Head of School who is deeply familiar with the culture and mission of the school.

## Opportunities and Challenges

### ***Continue to recruit and retain mission-aligned, passionate, accomplished teachers, supporting their wellness and professional growth***

Committed, talented faculty are at the heart of SouthLake Christian Academy and continuing to invest in their morale, growth, and development is key to successful teacher recruitment and retention. The next Head of School will lead the school's work in attracting and retaining quality educators committed to the mission of the school.

### ***Maintain and cultivate the Christian mission of the school***

A primary factor in families choosing SLCA for their children is the school's Christian identity. It will be important for the next Head of School to be clear about their commitment to Christian theology and its central place in the ethos of the school in their communication and interactions with all members of the school community.







***Thoughtfully explore the “right size” of SouthLake Christian Academy in light of its recent growth***  
Since its founding 30 years ago, the enrollment at SLCA has grown significantly. Even after this growth, the school is in the enviable position of receiving more admission applications from qualified students than it can enroll. The next Head of School will have the opportunity to strategically consider the implications of this growth, with a sensitivity to the culture of the school and its facilities.

***Develop the next Strategic Plan and a campus master plan***  
SLCA’s considerable growth presents the next Head of School with an opportunity to strategically plan for the school’s future. The existing space addresses the school’s current programmatic needs, but students could be better served by additional and athletic facilities and the school’s growth has produced the need for more classroom space. The next Head of School will provide the vision necessary to guide the Academy’s future and implement priorities identified in the planning process.

***Nurture the relationship with the Church***  
In late 2023, the Academy reached an agreement with SouthLake Church that separated the operations of the two entities. Notwithstanding this new arrangement, the Church remains integral to the success of the school and the next Head of School will need to continue to foster a positive, healthy working relationship between the two organizations.

***Partner with the Director of Advancement to strengthen SouthLake Christian Academy’s long term fundraising capabilities***  
The future capital needs of SouthLake Christian will require raising additional funds from donors. The next Head of School will need to develop trusting relationships with potential donors and steward relationships with current parents and alumni, working closely with the Director of Advancement to build a deeper culture of philanthropy at the school.

***Maintain the school’s strong position in market***  
As the area around SLCA has grown, the educational landscape is evolving, with new school options for families opening up. It will be important for SouthLake and its next Head of School to be responsive to this additional competition in order to maintain its dominance among schools in the area while maintaining the school’s strong sense of community, small school feel, and reasonable tuition.



## Skills and Attributes of the Next Head of School

SouthLake Christian Academy seeks a visionary leader and passionate educator to step into the challenging role of Head of School. The school takes great pride in nurturing a vision in which Christ is preeminent in all things. An individual who brings a deep commitment to Christian education, energy, integrity, intellect, and a visionary spirit will thrive and experience success in the SouthLake Christian Academy community.

**The ideal candidates will possess many of the following skills and attributes:**

- A demonstrated commitment to Christian education and a strong faith background.
- A confident leadership style that includes delegating responsibility, empowering and inspiring others, working in partnership, and holding people accountable in ways that support continued professional and personal growth.
- Proficient understanding of strategic financial sustainability, budget development, fundraising, student and faculty recruitment and retention, and enrollment management.
- Demonstrated success in the classroom and in leadership roles in independent school settings, as well as an ability to recognize and appreciate outstanding classroom instruction.
- The capacity to facilitate inclusive dialogue, make difficult decisions, have courageous conversations, and build trust in the community.
- Thoughtful, respectful words and actions that reflect a depth of self-knowledge, faith, humility, and commitment to the mission of the school.
- A deep love for students, an earnest belief in rigorous and joyful learning, and unbridled enthusiasm for the school's compelling mission of guiding students to serve God and be their best.
- An inspiring and clear communicator who is highly visible, warm, personable, transparent, and approachable and who listens deeply to all community members while taking the time to understand the culture of SouthLake Christian Academy.
- A visionary builder who can think strategically in partnership with a strong Board. The next Head of School will be an individual who can identify needed change, develop the vision and supporting plan to achieve such change, and effectively lead and capably execute plans to bring initiatives to fruition, while managing community expectations and the impact of change.
- Charismatic and skilled in building relationships within and beyond the SouthLake Christian Academy community, generating excitement about and support for the school's mission.





## SUMMARY OF THE SEARCH PROCESS

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials in a single merged pdf file to Tracy Bennett or George Sanderson as soon as possible. The deadline for submission of materials is **July 31, 2024**. Dossiers will be reviewed upon receipt.

- EC Summary Sheet (contact Tracy Bennett or George Sanderson for this document)
- Letter of Interest addressed to the Search Committee
- Current Resume
- Statement of Educational Leadership Philosophy
- A list of five or more references with contact information (name, relationship to candidate, phone and email address); references will not be contacted without permission from the candidate until a candidate is considered for the finalist round of the search process
- Disclosure Statement (contact Tracy Bennett or George Sanderson for this document)

The compensation for this position is commensurate with experience and includes a comprehensive benefits package, including tuition remission for children of employees.

### Send application materials via email to:

Tracy Bennett, Partner, Educators Collaborative  
Email: [tbennett@educatorscollaborative.com](mailto:tbennett@educatorscollaborative.com)

George Sanderson, Partner, Educators Collaborative  
Email: [gsanderson@educatorscollaborative.com](mailto:gsanderson@educatorscollaborative.com)

