



Bridgeport, Connecticut

Senior Director of Mission Advancement

Search Prospectus

January 2027



"FORMING SCHOLARS. FORMING SAINTS."



**325
STUDENTS**



**15:1 STUDENT-TO-
FACULTY RATIO**



**13 YRS. AVG.
FACULTY TENURE**



**100% GRADUATION
RATE**



**100% COLLEGE
ACCEPTANCE RATE**



**12 VARSITY
SPORTS**



**\$9,500 INVESTED PER
STUDENT PER IN THE BRIDGE
TO SUCCESS INTERSHIP
PROGRAM**



FOUNDED IN 1976



**ACCREDITED BY NEASC AND
CT DEPT. OF EDU.**



School Overview

Kolbe Cathedral Preparatory School is a Catholic, co-educational, college-preparatory high school of the Diocese of Bridgeport, located at 33 Calhoun Place in Bridgeport, Connecticut. A close community of about 325 students in grades 9–12, Kolbe Cathedral has been forming scholars and saints since 1976.

Kolbe Boys' High School opened in 1963, staffed by the Franciscans, the order of the school's patron, St. Maximilian Kolbe. Cathedral Girls' High School opened in 1964, staffed by the Daughters of the Holy Spirit, in the heart of Bridgeport. In 1976, under Bishop Walter Curtis, the two schools merged to become Kolbe Cathedral. In October 2026, alumni, staff and friends gathered to celebrate the school's 50th anniversary.



Kolbe Cathedral serves a talented, high-achieving student body drawn largely from families facing significant economic challenges. Students come from across Fairfield and New Haven Counties, and the school community is approximately 45% Black, 43% Hispanic and 12% Asian and White, a diversity the school describes as a reflection of Bridgeport itself and a strength. Kolbe Cathedral welcomes students of all faiths and backgrounds. One hundred percent of its students graduate, and one hundred percent are accepted to college.



Mission Statement

Kolbe Cathedral is a Catholic, co-educational, four-year college-preparatory school of the Diocese of Bridgeport. We form young people of intellectual competence, deep faith, and strength of character.

Graduates care for others in the spirit of Christ and dare to make a difference by living the Gospel message: scholars and saints prepared for college, career, and a life of purpose.

Catholic Identity

The school is named for St. Maximilian Kolbe, the Polish Franciscan friar who voluntarily took the place of a stranger condemned to die at Auschwitz and was canonized as a martyr of charity. His witness of sacrifice anchors the school's identity. Every student studies religion in each of the four years, and the life of the school includes Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and retreats for freshmen through seniors. Service is woven into student life, and formation is directed to the whole person: academic, spiritual, social, emotional, and physical.



Community Engagement

Through the Bridge to Success internship program, students spend four days in the classroom and one day in the field each week, working in professional settings that include hospitals, law firms, manufacturing facilities, architecture firms, and universities. Kolbe Cathedral invests \$9,500 per student each year in the program, covering summer workforce-readiness training, transportation to partner sites, and safety and liability coverage. Full-time program directors vet applicants, match students with mentors, and coach them throughout each partnership.

Kolbe Cathedral describes itself as one of Connecticut's most affordable private high schools, and most families pay below full tuition through scholarships and aid. Support includes merit scholarships, need-based aid, full sponsorships for qualifying students through Shepherds, Inc., the O'Malley Scholarship for children of healthcare workers and first responders, and diocesan assistance. Donors support the school through the Annual Harvest Fund, scholarship funds, sponsorship of Bridge to Success, and community events including the Kolbe Cathedral Cup golf tournament and the Kolbe Conversations breakfast series. Families stay connected through the "Chat and Chew" parent support series.



Academics

Kolbe Cathedral offers a rigorous, four-year college-preparatory curriculum with a 15:1 student-to-faculty ratio and a faculty whose tenure at the school averages 13 years. The academic day is built on four 80-minute blocks, allowing students to take eight courses per year. Advanced pathways include a placement-based Honors Program, Advanced Placement courses, and the Seal of Bi-Literacy.

Graduation requires a minimum of 30 credits, including four credits each in religion, English, mathematics, science, and social science. Recent college acceptances include Yale, Cornell, Boston College, Wesleyan, Williams, Fairfield, The Catholic University of America, UC Berkeley, Clark, and Emerson.

Extracurricular

Afternoons at Kolbe Cathedral are dedicated to athletics, clubs, councils, and college preparation. Clubs and activities form around student interest each year and include Student Council, National Honor Society, Campus Ministry, performing arts, yearbook, multicultural clubs, STEM, and service organizations.

Athletics

The Kolbe Cathedral Cougars compete in navy and gold in the South-West Conference (SWC) under the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC). The school fields 12 varsity sports across three seasons, including cross country, soccer, volleyball, cheerleading, basketball, bowling, track and field, baseball, and softball. Girls flag football, founded in the spring of 2026, is the school's newest program. Athletics is a hub of school identity, and nearly every student who wants to compete finds a home on a Cougars roster.



Job Overview

Kolbe Cathedral Preparatory School is seeking its first Senior Director of Mission Advancement. Employed by the Catholic Community Foundation of Fairfield County and focused primarily on Kolbe Cathedral, the Senior Director will serve as the senior executive responsible for advancing the school's long-term growth, external engagement, and strategic direction. The Senior Director reports to the President of the Catholic Community Foundation of Fairfield County and works closely with the Kolbe Cathedral Principal, the Kolbe Board, Foundation leadership, Diocesan leadership, and Diocesan Development to align strategy, relationships, and resources around Kolbe's long-term priorities. This is a full-time, exempt position.

The role functions at an executive level in matters of mission advancement and board-level strategic planning, while remaining separate from the school's day-to-day academic and operational leadership.

Philanthropic support for Kolbe Cathedral will be raised through the Catholic Community Foundation of Fairfield County for the benefit of the school. The Senior Director will therefore lead Kolbe-focused advancement within the Foundation's broader major gift and development platform, rather than operate a separate fundraising function within the school.

Strategic Leadership

The role extends beyond traditional school development. The Senior Director will connect philanthropy, student body growth, marketing and positioning, strategic partnerships, and long-term institutional planning into one coordinated growth strategy. The successful candidate will be equally comfortable presenting to a board, cultivating a major donor, evaluating enrollment trends, developing a corporate partnership, and assessing the financial implications of strategic choices.



Essential Duties & Responsibilities

Executive Strategy and Board Collaboration

- Partner with the Kolbe Board, Principal, Foundation leadership, and Diocesan leadership to define and advance Kolbe’s annual and multi-year strategic priorities.
- Translate Kolbe’s mission and long-term goals into a coordinated growth strategy across philanthropy, enrollment, marketing, partnerships, and financial sustainability.
- Provide board-level analysis, recommendations, and reporting on opportunities, risks, progress, and decisions required to advance the school’s long-term position.
- Help establish measurable institutional priorities and maintain accountability for progress against agreed-upon goals.
- Support long-range planning, including evaluation of revenue models, strategic investments, growth opportunities, and institutional sustainability.
- Serve as a senior external representative of Kolbe in partnership with school, Foundation, and Diocesan leadership.

Fundraising and Philanthropic Growth

- Lead Kolbe-focused philanthropic strategy through the Catholic Community Foundation of Fairfield County, with funds raised by the Foundation for the benefit of Kolbe Cathedral.
- Grow support from major donors, alumni, foundations, corporations, and community partners.
- Build and manage a portfolio of leadership-level prospects and donors, while coordinating Kolbe priorities within the Foundation’s broader major gift strategy.
- Lead cultivation, solicitation, stewardship, annual giving, and campaign activity in partnership with the Foundation and Diocesan Development.
- Develop compelling cases for support tied to scholarships, student success, programs, facilities, strategic initiatives, and long-term institutional priorities.
- Engage Kolbe, Foundation, Board, and Diocesan leadership strategically in key donor relationships and solicitations.
- Ensure donor intent, stewardship expectations, and Kolbe priorities are effectively coordinated through the Foundation’s philanthropic platform.

Student Body Growth, Market Position and Partnerships

- Partner with school leadership to strengthen student body growth, recruitment, retention, and Kolbe's competitive market position.
- Evaluate enrollment trends, market opportunities, and barriers to growth, and incorporate those findings into broader institutional strategy.
- Build relationships with parishes, schools, colleges, employers, foundations, corporations, and community organizations.
- Develop partnerships that expand opportunity for students, strengthen Kolbe's external network, and support institutional growth.
- Connect enrollment, philanthropy, marketing, and external engagement into a coordinated growth strategy.

Marketing, Brand and External Engagement

- Work with the Foundation's marketing resources, Kolbe leadership, and Diocesan communications to strengthen Kolbe's brand, positioning, and external visibility.
- Guide strategic messaging to donors, families, alumni, community partners, and prospective students.
- Ensure Kolbe's mission, outcomes, student experience, and value proposition are communicated clearly and consistently.
- Align donor communications, proposals, impact reporting, campaign materials, enrollment messaging, and broader brand activity with institutional priorities.
- Help identify opportunities to expand Kolbe's reach and reputation throughout Fairfield County and beyond.

Advancement Leadership and Shared Services

- Work through the Foundation's centralized development infrastructure for gift processing, acknowledgments, donor records, database support, annual appeals, reporting, and related advancement operations.
- Coordinate closely with Kolbe's on-site donor and alumni stewardship function to connect school-based engagement with the Foundation's broader advancement strategy.
- Work with the Foundation's marketing and other shared resources to plan and execute Kolbe marketing, fundraising, event, print, mail, and digital initiatives.
- Develop budgets, forecasts, performance measures, and reporting required to evaluate advancement activity and long-term return on investment.
- Direct assigned staff, consultants, and vendors as appropriate within the mission advancement function.
- Maintain compliance with Foundation, Diocesan, school, legal, donor, and ethical standards.



Opportunities

This is a new position, and the first Senior Director of Mission Advancement will have the opportunity to build as Kolbe Cathedral begins its second half-century. To support its long-term success and viability, Kolbe must significantly expand its mission advancement capacity. Its next phase will require:

- Deeper philanthropic support.
- Stronger enrollment and market positioning.
- Expanded institutional and community partnerships.
- More coordinated marketing.
- A sustainable long-term financial model capable of extending Kolbe's impact to more students.





Professional & Personal Qualifications

The successful candidate will combine the relationship-building and fundraising ability of a senior advancement leader with the strategic judgment, financial literacy, and board presence of an institutional executive. The strongest candidate may come from advancement, business development, finance, consulting, higher education, nonprofit leadership, independent schools, or another field requiring strategic growth, executive judgment, and relationship development. Direct school advancement experience is valuable but not required.

- Practicing Catholic in good standing who embraces the mission of Catholic education and adheres to the mission and values of the Catholic Church and Catholic education.
- Bachelor's degree required. Advanced degree preferred.
- At least seven years of progressively responsible experience in advancement, business development, fundraising, finance, consulting, education, nonprofit leadership, or a related field.
- Demonstrated success building revenue, securing major commitments, developing strategic partnerships, or leading organizational growth.
- Experience developing and executing multi-functional growth or institutional strategies.
- Strong financial literacy and the ability to evaluate budgets, revenue opportunities, business models, strategic investments, and long-term sustainability.
- Proven ability to work effectively with executive leaders, boards, major donors, community partners, and internal teams.
- Strong executive communication, presentation, judgment, and relationship-management skills.
- Experience in Catholic education, independent schools, higher education, or mission-driven organizations preferred.



About the Area

Kolbe Cathedral is located in Bridgeport, in Fairfield County, Connecticut, and serves students from across Fairfield and New Haven Counties.

The Diocese of Bridgeport, established in 1953 and led by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, encompasses all of Fairfield County. The Diocese includes 74 parishes, 22 regional Catholic elementary schools, one school for special needs, and five diocesan high schools, with nearly 10,000 students in its Catholic school system. Fairfield County is also home to two Catholic universities, Fairfield University and Sacred Heart University.





Application Procedure

To apply, please submit the following materials in a single PDF attachment. Name the file attachment using the following template: LAST NAME, KOLBE, SDMA.

- Cover letter that aligns your experiences and skills with the school's current needs as you understand them.
- Current resume with all appropriate dates included.
- Statement of Catholic educational leadership philosophy.
- List of five references with names, physical addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. No references will be contacted without your knowledge and approval.



APPLY NOW

The search committee is on an accelerated timeline to identify and secure the first Senior Director of Mission Advancement. All inquiries and applications will be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality and with the greatest respect. Candidates are expected to be available to assume the responsibilities of the position in January 2027 or sooner.



Interested in this opportunity? Contact:

Kyle Pietrantonio, Senior Partner

kpietrantonio@partnersinmission.com

Partners in Mission

(202) 390-0230

partnersinmission.com/search-and-recruitment