



AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School

Head of School

Canoga Park, CA



About AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School

AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School (AGBU MDS) is a Pre-K through 12th grade Armenian educational community committed to preparing students for college and beyond. For over 45 years, AGBU MDS has proudly served the large Armenian community of the San Fernando Valley, producing more than 1,500 successful alumni.

AGBU MDS was founded in 1976 as St. Peter-AGBU School with an enrollment of 19 students and a staff of three teachers. Today, on its well-equipped 6.5-acre campus, the school serves 968 students in three divisions, offering a comprehensive educational experience that includes rigorous academics and a broad array of enrichment offerings. Daily instruction is offered in the Armenian language within a unique school atmosphere abundant in Armenian history, culture, and traditions.

The school belongs to an international network of educational institutions owned and operated by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), a philanthropic, educational, and cultural organization headquartered in New York City.

For a position to begin in July 1, 2023 or when the successful candidate is identified, AGBU MDS is seeking an experienced educational leader who is committed to the school's inspiring mission and eager to guide it to new levels of excellence.

Manoogian-Demirdjian School at a Glance

Mission

AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School is an Armenian educational community committed to challenging and supporting our students to excel in academic, athletic, and artistic realms. Each student is encouraged to become a caring and responsible global citizen who values collaboration, innovation, and critical thinking to impact our community and the world.

Schoolwide Learning Outcomes

The Schoolwide Learner Outcomes (SLOs) for AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School are as follows:

- I. **Become academically-skilled learners and independent thinkers who:**
 - Acquire a strong interdisciplinary knowledge base;
 - Develop collaboration skills, effective study habits, and self-discipline;
 - Solve problems critically and analytically;
 - Demonstrate effective communication through verbal, written, artistic, and technological modes of expression.

- II. Become individuals aware of their Armenian cultural heritage who:
 - Acquire knowledge of Armenian language, literature, and history;
 - Develop an appreciation for Armenian culture;
 - Contribute to the Armenian community and its homeland;
 - Value their Armenian American identity.
- III. Become socially developed and productive future citizens who:
 - Understand civic responsibilities and democratic principles;
 - Embrace individual and cultural differences;
 - Exhibit positive character in everyday life;
 - Contribute time, skills, and talents to improve the community at large.

Facts and Figures



2021-22 Enrollment: 968 students, including 181 in Preschool; 411 in Elementary School (grades K-5); 174 in Middle School (grades 6-8); and 202 in High School (grades 9-12)

Student:Teacher Ratio: 12:1

Average Class Size: 18

2021-22 Tuition: \$10,400 (K-5) – \$10,600 (6-12)

Financial Aid: \$680,000 to 25% of the student body

2021-22 Operating Budget: \$12.8 Million

Net Funds Raised, 2021-21: \$68,800

Total Employees: 130, including 91 faculty members

Accreditation: Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Member: Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU)

An Introduction to AGBU Manoogian-Demirdijan School

Dedicated to the development of the next generation of Armenian leaders who will leave the world better than they found it, AGBU MDS offers a close-knit community in which students are encouraged to excel in academics, the arts, athletics, and service to others. The family-oriented environment, devotion to the Armenian cultural heritage, and commitment to excellence make AGBU MDS a premier destination for families seeking a private Armenian school education.

AGBU (www.agbu.org) maintains an active presence in 31 countries and 74 cities, addressing the needs of Armenians with traditional and progressive programs worldwide — from schools, scouts, camps, and support for the arts to internships, virtual learning, and young professional networks. AGBU MDS is one of 11 elementary/secondary schools operating under the AGBU umbrella.

Students and Families

AGBU MDS draws most of its students from the San Fernando Valley, home to one of the largest populations of Armenians outside of Armenia. Most parents are professionals in the public and private sectors, including small business owners, craftspeople, and salaried employees. The school is composed of mostly second-generation Armenian-American families. About one-fifth of the students come from mixed marriages (one parent of Armenian heritage and one non-Armenian parent). Nearly all of the students were born in the United States.

Throughout its history, AGBU MDS has achieved a 100 percent graduation rate, with 1,500 graduates to date. Over the past 10 years, 80 percent of the school's graduates attended four-year universities. Twenty percent opted for two-year colleges, with most of those students later transferring to universities. The Class of 2022 includes 47 seniors.

Faculty, Staff, Administration, and Board of Trustees

The dedicated and caring faculty, many of whom are former students, constitute a signature strength of AGBU MDS. Two-thirds of the middle and high school faculty hold advanced degrees, as do one-quarter of the elementary school teachers. Ongoing professional development is a school priority. During the COVID-impacted 2020-21 school year, weekly

virtual webinars on topics including technology and standards-based instruction were offered to assist faculty in the adjustment to online learning. In addition to professional development, the administration also evaluates teachers regularly.

Upon the resignation of the former Principal in December 2021, the Board of Trustees reconfigured and retitled the position to encompass the broader responsibilities of a Head of School. While the Head search is being conducted, the school is being guided by the administrative leadership team, which includes the three division heads (Preschool Director, Elementary Vice-Principal, and Middle/High School Vice Principal); the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Innovation; and the Chief Financial Officer. The team is working closely with the Board, which serves on behalf of AGBU MDS community stakeholders and is accountable to the AGBU Central Board. The Board, consisting of seven to 13 members, meets monthly as a full body and accomplishes much of its work through committees. Members may serve up to two, two-year terms.



An Active Parent Association contributes to the strong sense of community by sponsoring a variety of celebrations and fundraising events throughout the year.

Campus and Facilities

Since 1986, AGBU MDS has been located in a former public school in Canoga Park. Throughout the intervening years, a series of major capital improvement projects have expanded and enhanced the 6.5-acre campus. The facilities now include an administration building, the Mardiros Oruncakci Library and Media Center, and a kitchen and cafeteria. The 65 classrooms include two science labs, a creative makers space, and a multimedia computer lab equipped with a 3D printer and a drone. The Visual & Performing Arts Center provides separate studio spaces for visual art, music, and dance. The Agajanian Auditorium features theatre-style seating and a stage.

Athletic and recreational facilities include the Nazarian Sports Gymnasium, equipped with a full basketball court, two locker rooms, new bleachers, and electronic scoreboards; an artificial soccer turf field; a rock wall; and attractive playgrounds.

Highlights of the Educational Program

AGBU MDS offers a comprehensive Pre-K through grade 12 college preparatory curriculum to help students meet the challenges of college, career, and life in today's global economy.

Daily instruction in the Armenian language begins in preschool and continues throughout the three divisions, culminating in the Honors IV level in high school. The school observes Armenian holidays including Armenian Independence Day, Armenian Christmas on January 6, Vartanantz (the anniversary of a 5th Century battle in defense of the Christian faith), and the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.



The well-staffed counseling department provides support for students in all three divisions. Both individual and group counseling are offered. Overseen by a department head who holds a doctoral degree and license in clinical psychology, the staff also includes a school counselor, a college counselor, and two resource specialists who collectively specialize in providing school-based intervention and resource support to students presenting with a wide range of academic, behavioral, developmental, and social-emotional needs. The comprehensive college counseling program begins in the ninth grade.

The educational program is divided into three divisions:

Artemis Nazarian Preschool (ANP)

The ANP program strives to promote the development of the whole child, encouraging them to be creative thinkers and problem solvers. Through an emphasis on community spirit, students acquire a sense of belonging, respect, and an understanding of cultural values and morals. They develop skills in art, language, oral expression, and pre-reading and writing (both in Armenian and English) for a smooth transition to kindergarten. Musical activities, creative movements, and drama are incorporated into the program, and Health is taught through lessons in nutrition, exercise, and safety. The preschool program also instills in children an awareness of their own Armenian culture, as well as cultures around the world, through literature, music, and art.

Marie Manoogian Elementary School (MMS)

The elementary program utilizes Common Core State Standards, innovative instructional strategies, and ongoing assessment to provide students with a well-rounded learning experience. In addition to core instruction in English language arts, math, science, and social studies, students receive daily instruction in Armenian language and culture. Creative outlets include music, art, physical education, and chess. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is incorporated through weekly lessons on mindfulness and SEL competencies provided by the school counselor.

Virtual learning during COVID reinforced the importance of technological literacy for all students. Grades 1 through 5 are equipped with Chromebook carts and individual devices for each student. Kindergarten classrooms share a rotating iPad cart. Chromebooks and iPads are used to enhance instruction with the use of innovative learning applications and websites, including an individualized learning and assessment program purchased by the school. Each student has their own account and can use it to access learning materials based on their academic levels.

Sarkis & Seta Demirdijan Middle & High School (DHS)

In middle and high school, the academic program is designed both to prepare students for college and to provide them with career readiness skills. Numerous Honors and Advanced Placement courses are available to students seeking additional challenge. The use of technology to enhance curricular programs is a high priority. Each student is assigned a school-issued Chromebook, and most textbooks are accessed as e-books.

By the end of freshman year, high school students may apply to one of five career-oriented Focus Groups in Health & Medicine; Engineering & Technology; Business & Communication; Law & Politics; and Visual & Performing Arts. These groups offer students concentrated coursework complemented by guest speakers, educational field trips, and a required internship during senior year.

Electives include Yearbook, Robotics, Public Speaking, Visual Arts, Performing Arts, and Competitive Sports. COVID permitting, international programs such as the annual 10th grade trip to Armenia, an Armenia internship, and an exchange program with a sister school in Argentina reinforce the globally focused nature of the school. Beyond the minimum requirement of 80 community service hours, students are encouraged to participate in the student council and various student clubs. The high school student council participates in a variety of socially conscious initiatives, including an annual fundraiser with Armenia Fund, an organization dedicated to providing humanitarian and infrastructural assistance to Armenia.

Athletics and Physical Education

The physical education curriculum spans from kindergarten to grade 9, emphasizing motor skills development, teamwork, rules, sportsmanship, and the importance of exercising and staying active. Students may participate in after-school sports teams including basketball, soccer, volleyball, track & field, table tennis, flag football, tennis, softball, golf, cross-country, swim, and cheer squad. Teams compete in three distinct leagues: an Armenian school league called KAHAM, the San Fernando Valley Private School League, and the California Interscholastic Federation.

Opportunities & Challenges Awaiting the New Head of School

The next Head of AGBU MDS will join a thriving, mission-centered school community that has tackled the challenges of the COVID era with determination and creativity. Among the opportunities and challenges awaiting the next Head of School are the following:

The Educational Program

Initially providing education virtually, and this year on campus with COVID restrictions, has helped AGBU MDS to identify learning priorities and accelerate innovations for both faculty and students. There was an urgency to update the curriculum school-wide to ensure that students were presented with current and compelling materials, both online and in-person. Students and faculty alike were forced to become more technologically literate and savvy, which has helped enhance learning in all departments. A renewed commitment to standards-based instruction and assessment should pay long-lasting dividends for students, as will the new focus on technology as a valuable tool for individually tailored education. The incoming Head of School will play an important role in ensuring that the school's commitment to educational excellence and continuous improvement continues unabated.

Enrollment

Over the past 20 years, AGBU MDS has maintained an average enrollment of 835 students. Primarily due to COVID related challenges, enrollment fell to 764 last year, with most of the decline coming at the preschool level. With the return to on-campus learning this year, enrollment jumped by 21 percent, bringing the total school population to 968. The majority of the enrollment increase has occurred in the elementary grades. Kindergarten has increased

from two to four sections. Grade 1 also has four sections, while grades 3 and 4 now have three sections each. The middle school enrollment increase has also led to the opening of one additional section per grade level.

While the rapid enrollment increase demonstrates the school's health and resilience, it has also led to some strains within the community. Some families and faculty are expressing concerns about class sizes and advocating for a more selective admissions process. A more thorough admissions evaluation, including interviews of families, test scores from previous schools, recommendation letters, and a new entrance exam will be utilized in the upcoming school year to help monitor enrollment levels and better screen candidates. The next Head of School will be expected to work with the Board of Trustees and administrative team to identify long-term enrollment strategies to sustain the student population while ensuring the admission of mission-appropriate students.

The School Culture

As of this writing, the school is still operating as a closed campus, which does not allow for parents on school grounds. For a school community that prides itself on its family-oriented atmosphere, this has been a difficult challenge. As the school gradually returns to more normal operations, the next Head of School will need to reinvigorate the spirit of unity and common purpose that has long been a defining characteristic of AGBU MDS. Many members of the school family would also welcome a Head of School who is eager to serve as a moral leader of the community, providing a renewed focus on the upholding of high standards and clear disciplinary guidelines.

Ensuring that AGBU MDS continues to provide a thorough grounding in Armenian language, history, and culture should also be a top priority for the school's next leader.

The Position: Head of School

The Head of School, as the chief administrator and instructional leader, will be responsible for maintaining an effective instructional program by providing educational leadership that will result in the highest possible student learning, achievement, and integrity. The Head of School is responsible for the supervision of the senior administration, school physical plant, school budget, certified and classified staff, student activity programs, technology, and all instructional materials and equipment.

The Head of School will be responsible for furthering the school's mission, which encompasses dedication to academic excellence and achievement while fostering strong Armenian cultural awareness in a safe and supportive environment. In addition, the Head of School must maintain a commitment to and understanding of the purpose and mission of the school and of the AGBU.

General Responsibilities

- Serve as the chief administrator and officer of the school.
- Provide leadership designed to inspire students and staff to thrive, with a commitment to integrity.
- Establish a positive school culture to continually improve the level of student achievement.
- Implement and direct instructional programs with focus on curriculum development to improve teaching and learning.
- Ensure and supervise the preparation of all required reports including curriculum, student test metrics, teacher evaluations, testing, teaching methods, benchmarking metrics and any other reports deemed necessary to evaluate programs, progress, and problems.
- Ensure and collaborate in the preparation of school budgets, monitor the revenues and expenditures in accordance with the Board and Finance Committee guidelines, and ensure that all resources are allocated efficiently and within approved budget guidelines.
- Communicate, implement, and enforce all policies, procedures, regulations, contracts, and the code of conduct as they apply to students, staff, and parents.
- Implement policies and program to provide a safe school environment for students and staff.
- Oversee matters related to student recruitment and admission policies and procedures.
- Serve as a resource for and liaison to all the stakeholders of the school community with a focus on strengthening parent and community relations.
- Maintain active relationships with the community, all school stakeholders, AGBU schools internationally, regional PK-12 educational institutions, and select colleges and universities in the region.
- Preserve and promote Armenian identity and heritage through ensuring that the school provides appropriate educational and cultural programs.
- Monitor plant maintenance and operations, ensuring that the facilities are well-maintained, clean, and conducive to good health and safety.

Supervision, Instruction, and Learning

- Supervise and evaluate the senior administration team/department heads in the instructional programs and operations in an effort to provide continuous improvement.
- Oversee faculty to ensure that all instructional requirements of school policies, accreditation standards, and state and federal laws are being implemented.
- Supervise and provide final approvals related to recruitment, screening, interviewing, training, and evaluation of all personnel.
- Cultivate and support leadership capabilities and cohesion in the senior administrative team. Work individually with administrators in a continuous and cooperative evaluation process designed to improve instruction strategy and execution.
- Develop and ensure adherence to ethics and compliance policies, procedures, and internal controls. Enforce the code of conduct by providing written instructions for student discipline and behavior standards.
- Encourage and foster appropriate student activities by department in order to develop varying interests and abilities of the students
- Maintain personal continuing professional development and education and oversee professional development and education for staff.
- Protect confidentiality of records, communications, and information, and use discretion in sharing such information.

School-Community Relations

- Communicate school progress and problems/issues to parents and stakeholders as appropriate.
- Work closely with parents, parent committees, volunteers, and other school-related groups.
- Foster a strong connection between the school, the parents, and the community.
- Publicize and market the school and school activities through appropriate media.
- Personally represent the school at various community functions.
- Encourage and implement fundraising activities in coordination with the Parent Association and other school organizations.
- Represent the school within the global AGBU educational network

Who Should Apply: Desired Qualifications and Qualities

The headship of AGBU MDS offers an exceptional career opportunity for a mission-focused educational leader with the requisite skills and experience. Ideally, candidates will offer most of the following attributes:

Professional Qualifications and Qualities

- Master's or equivalent degree. Postgraduate work in school administration, curriculum, and instruction, or a related field preferred.
- Successful leadership in an academic institution for a minimum of three years desired.
- Proven success in teaching.
- Demonstrated success in organizational and management skills.
- Experience with integrating technology into the curriculum.
- Experience with accreditation and/or strategic planning.



Leadership Skills and Personal Qualities

- Demonstrated leadership style that values collaboration and a clear vision.
- A commitment to moral leadership and community building.
- Strong communication, writing, and interpersonal skills.
- Previous experience in a multicultural or Armenian setting.
- Previous experience in and knowledge of Armenian language and history education. Armenian language skills preferred.

Application Requirements and Search Process

DRG Talent Advisory Group is conducting this search on behalf of AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School. To discuss the opportunity in more detail, contact the lead search consultants:

Jennifer Fleischer, Senior Talent Consultant

jfleischer@drgsearch.com

Andy Watson, Search Consultant

awatson@drgsearch.com

AGBU MDS is committed to moving as thoughtfully and expediently as possible in order to find its next impactful leader. The position is open until filled.

Candidates should submit as soon as possible materials including the following:

- A cover letter indicating why you are particularly interested in and qualified for the position.
- A current resume.
- A statement of leadership philosophy.
- The names, email addresses, and telephone numbers of five references, to include the relationship with the references. (We will obtain permission from candidates before contacting references.)
- Optional: other supporting material (e.g., articles, talks, etc.) that would be useful to the Search Committee.

This position description is based upon material provided by AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School, an equal opportunity employer.

To apply for this position, please click [HERE](#).

