



Oakwood School

Assistant Head of School

North Hollywood, CA

Introduction

"You want to be where everybody knows your name." That old *Cheers* theme song is what comes to mind upon visiting Oakwood's lively campus. Greeting everyone by first name, Oakwood's students, faculty, and staff know each other and their relationships are at the core of this friendly and engaging school. Student voice is central in Oakwood's larger institutional design and in the detail of individual programming.



Community members prioritize caring for each other and are as comfortable in respectful disagreement as they are in harmony. Students easily interact across grade levels and even divisions and typical student cliques are non-existent at Oakwood.

Founded in 1951 by parents driven to provide their children an education rich in the arts, sciences, and humanities, Oakwood is a community that encourages independence of thought, intellectual integrity, sensitivity to the needs of others, and preparation for participation in a democratic society. Families and faculty coming to Oakwood know what to expect and are largely mission-aligned. Social justice principles are deeply ingrained, and the focus is on ensuring equitable and inclusive learning and prioritizing environmental sustainability. In helping to make sure Oakwood does its part to change the world for good, the program is set up to create future leaders who are committed and prepared to bring about such progress.

This relational school is made up of passionate and committed adults who care about and are connected to the students, their learning and development, and their long-term success and happiness. Faculty work to ensure everyone feels cared for throughout the community. As evidenced by the long faculty tenures, the school leaders clearly do an impressive job of hiring and have created a stable roster of adults providing a steady and connected experience for students.

Oakwood has consistent strong enrollment and while continuing to promote the story of 'Why Oakwood?', the school is blessed with families excited to join the school. Programs like the immersion program, a two-week intensive course experience beyond traditional academics, for all Secondary Campus students is a big attraction. In collaboration with faculty experts, students are able to take a deep exploration into courses like *California Land and Sea*,

Cooking through Cultures, Race Matters, and Young Investors to name a few. Oakwood's outdoor education program, engineering-lab-facilitated STEAM electives, and extensive clubs and on-campus organizations provide more opportunities for students to develop leadership and hone passion projects and interests.

While Oakwood evolves, the leaders are steadfast in their commitment to the original founders' goals. Parents can rest assured that with an Oakwood education, students will be encouraged in their individual intellectual growth and to take part of an active communal life. Throughout their time at the school, students will gain increasing autonomy and responsibility. Days at Oakwood are meant to be rewarding, predominantly positive, and certainly joyful.

Oakwood School at a Glance

Facts and Figures

Founded: 1951

2022-23 School-wide Enrollment (K-12): 830

Lower School: 310

Middle School: 166

Upper School: 354

Students self-identifying as students of color: 45%

Employees: 200

Average tenure of Faculty: 13 years

Location: North Hollywood, CA

Endowment: \$51 million

Indebtedness: \$7.4 million

Operating Budget: \$43.4 million

Tuition: \$39,490 - \$46,300

Financial Aid: \$5.8 million to 20% of students

Total Funds Raised, 2021-22: \$4.3 million

Parent Participation in Annual Giving: 88%

Accreditation: Western Association of Schools and Colleges, California Association of Independent Schools; member, National Association of Independent Schools

On the Web: <https://www.oakwoodschool.org/>



Main Tenets of Oakwood's Statement of Philosophy

- **To guide students toward mastery in their academic, artistic, and athletic pursuits.** We want students to grapple meaningfully with ideas, to discover relationships among disciplines, and to become independent and moral thinkers.
- **To spark passion.** We want young people to become wholeheartedly immersed in their work. We believe that intelligence and imagination enrich each other, and that to involve a student passionately in learning is to involve the whole person.
- **To cultivate depth of character.** We seek to nurture students' empathy, imagination, and moral courage; to foster a sense of responsibility and humility, along with a habit of service; and to instill a lifelong commitment to social justice. We intend for the development of their intellect and character to be intertwined, so that their choices are guided by internal controls and sensitivity to the needs of others.
- **To help students gain self-knowledge.** We want students to learn about their strengths and needs as learners. We seek to accommodate and appreciate the unique qualities of each young person and to provide multiple opportunities for students to succeed, to learn from mistakes, and to take risks for the sake of learning.
- **To foster a sense of community.** We seek to create a vibrant public life in the school, where students learn to express themselves fluently and responsibly, and to consider differing perspectives respectfully. We believe that an environment most conducive to learning and growth is diverse and inclusive, and balances seriousness of purpose with a sense of play.



Opportunities and Challenges Awaiting the Assistant Head of School

Oakwood's Assistant Head of School will be in the fortunate position of joining a high-functioning distinctly relational school. Students and faculty know and support each other in a hands-on joyful learning community. Oakwood is known for challenging the traditional concept of a rigorous school while still being greatly academic with its emphasis on critical thinking, dialogue, and debate. The school is especially strong in STEAM, arts, and athletics. The Assistant Head of School will have the time to prioritize learning the 'whos' and 'whats' of the community without the pressing need to fix what is already a thriving school. Instead, they will be able to prioritize their own learning and to developing trusting connections across the school community.



One of the unique aspects of Oakwood is its collective holding, understanding, and ownership of the Statement of Philosophy as a living document. In that spirit, every community member's voice (students, faculty, staff, board members, alumni, *and* families) is valued. Also framed in the mission, Oakwood has an overarching entrepreneurial spirit and is impressively open to change. One challenge with this nimbleness is institutional sustainability. The Assistant Head will help institutionalize key strengths and cement, consolidate, or sunset programming as appropriate. They will be able to help define or create systems and structures to provide cross-school consistency, coordination, and efficiency ensuring that no programs are dependent on a single individual.

Now in his fourth year, Head of School, Jaime Dominguez has successfully built strong relationships and tries to get to 'yes' in support of exciting ideas generated at Oakwood and brought to him. Given that his leadership started following the four-decade tenure of the previous Head, his strength in community building is impressive. The Assistant Head of School will serve as a balance and support to Jaime, helping to implement or adapt those 'yeses' and move the community forward.

As it has since its founding, Oakwood strives to be a progressive learning and intellectual community. At times, liberal ideals overshadow and get conflated with progressive teaching practices. The Assistant Head of School will be an important resource to enrich teaching and learning practices so that active learning and student-centered teaching is the standard in all classrooms. The hardworking and highly academic faculty will be able to sharpen their methodologies with updates in brain research and classroom approaches to take their teaching to the next level enhancing an already strong academic student experience.

Looking forward, the Assistant Head of School can help market and frame Oakwood's identity in light of some narrow perceptions or misconceptions, externally, and internally, they can help make sure community members know whom to go to for what decision. Beyond just bringing transparency to the organizational structure, they can help develop pathways to manage, navigate, and respond to issues that arise and help to define DEIB efforts and priorities.

Oakwood's kindergarten through sixth grade is on the elementary campus (EC) and seventh through twelfth grades are on the secondary campus (SC) two miles away. Both campuses preserve the village feel and even provide for an appropriate moving up sense when students move from the Lower School on the EC into the Middle School on the SC. Aligning programs across campuses and even across divisions has been a challenge, especially for a school that regularly works to evolve and adapt. A fundamental priority for the Assistant Head of School will be to create better alignment across divisions, campuses, and programs like athletics, admissions, and DEIB efforts.



The Position: Assistant Head of School

Reporting to Head of School Jaime Dominguez, the Assistant Head of School will be joining a cohesive leadership team chiefly to support the Head and release him from some of the day-to-day operational needs of running the school. The Assistant Head of School will devote much of the time collaborating and developing strategy, creating and honing systems, and implementing long-term goals to continue to help the school achieve its mission to the fullest. In addition, the Assistant Head of School will be a resource in finding win-win solutions for escalating challenges and be an impartial ear to help resolve concerns of any stakeholders. The Assistant Head will focus on cross-divisional schoolwide pursuits like communication, admissions, athletics, and diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

Key Responsibilities

- Builds trusting relationships across parents, students, faculty, and staff.
- Collaborates with divisional principals to hone and advance K12 curricular alignment.
- Works closely with the Elementary Campus and Secondary Campus Admissions Directors to create a more consistent and compelling experience for families exploring Oakwood at all levels.
- Partners with the Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging along with other senior leaders to advance Oakwood's DEIB efforts and serves as a resource to help navigate and address stakeholder concerns regarding DEIB matters.
- Provides all-school communications support for both internal and external messaging; serves as a resource for HOS in crafting important and timely community-wide letters; aids in ensuring consistent messaging to families regarding on- and off-campus events; supports internal flows of information to help break down unintended siloes.
- Serves as additional resource for faculty, staff, parents, and students in navigating challenges.
- Coordinates with Elementary Campus and Second Campus Athletics Directors to provide better K12 Athletics alignment and systems of support.
- Serves as a member of the Senior Leadership Team particularly assisting advancement of school-wide initiatives.



- Manages, leads, or guides special projects as needed.
- Open to leading or participating in committees.
- Works collegially within a diverse community and communicates effectively with diverse populations.



Desired Qualifications and Qualities

Experience and Skills

- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree in education or relevant discipline preferred.
- A minimum of five years of K12 progressive teaching and curricular development/design experience.
- Ability to communicate effectively, efficiently, and with heart, in writing and in person with both small and large audiences.
- Project management experience from idea generation through to implementation and evaluation.
- Experience creating effective systems.
- Ability to see the big picture and move a community forward.
- Ability to empower others.
- Experience navigating change with sensitivity toward the balance between innovation and tradition.

Personal Characteristics

- Team-oriented and collaborative; able to bring people and ideas together to solve problems and advance initiatives.
- Fundamentally relational, highly trustworthy, and able to hold confidences.
- Student-centered.
- Courageous and willing to lean into difficult conversations.
- Curious.
- Comfortable making hard decisions.
- Even keeled, highly emotionally intelligent, and empathetic.



Key Competencies

- **Manages Workflow** – Providing direction, delegating, and removing obstacles to get work done.
- **Communicates Effectively** – Developing and delivering multi-mode communications that convey a clear understanding of the unique needs of different audiences.
- **Being Resilient** – Rebounding from setbacks and adversity when facing difficult situations.
- **Manages Ambiguity** – Operating effectively, even when things are not certain or the way forward is not clear.
- **Collaborates** – Building partnerships and working collaboratively with others to meet shared objectives.
- **Situational Adaptability** – Adapting approach and demeanor in real time to match the shifting demands of different situations.

Benefits and Compensation

The salary for this position aims to be competitive and commensurate with experience. Oakwood School offers a comprehensive benefits package including medical, dental, and vision insurance and a matching 403b retirement plan.

Application Requirements and Search Process

DRG is conducting this search on behalf of Oakwood School. Interested candidates should submit, as soon as possible, materials including the following:

- A cover letter indicating why they are particularly interested in and qualified for the position
- A current resume
- A statement of leadership philosophy
- A second writing sample of your choice (newsletter, article, talk, etc.)
- A list of references (references will not be contacted until the finalist stage of the search)

Application Deadline: November 28, 2022

Start date: July 1, 2023

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

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

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