

POSITION STATEMENT

Sierra Canyon School

CHATSWORTH, CALIFORNIA



DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT SEARCH

START DATE: JULY 1, 2026





OVERVIEW

Sierra Canyon is a premier independent college preparatory day school enrolling 1,200 students from Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. The highly cosmopolitan student community reflects the greater Southern California area: 58% of students identify as students of color and the student body comes from 127 different zip codes from Los Angeles and Ventura counties. There are 8% international students, some of whom participate in homestays and some of whom live in houses adjacent to campus.

An enormous opportunity presents itself for a Development professional to make a long-term impact at a high-performing school that is courageously honing, identifying, and clarifying its vision and mission for the children it serves. This is a position for a change agent and team builder, designed for a confident professional leader who has ambitions and wants to make evident—and accelerate—the substantial progress made at one of California's finest

schools. There is justifiable pride in the strength and depth of its program and the signature warmth of this caring school community as it strides confidently into the future.

A critical hire, the Director of Advancement will need to move fluidly between the big picture, as a strategic advisor and institutional thought partner, and the detail-oriented work of problem solving and operations. The candidate will need to bring a combination of strategy, entrepreneurial business acumen, superior relationship building skills and operational management strength.

At Sierra Canyon, there is a focus and purpose that extends far beyond educating young minds. Its trailblazing philosophy—referred to as Learning Forward—continues to drive everything the School does. Entrusted with and committed to helping each student discover their passions and develop their full potential, Sierra Canyon believes that this personal development is the foundation which supports the healthy balance, strong leadership, and service beyond self. Caring for and nurturing the whole student and the uniqueness of each individual student—from the youngest learners to the graduating leaders—drives the program and decisions made each day.

At Sierra Canyon, the commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging centers on striving to cultivate belonging, dignity, and respect, and advance just outcomes for all members of the community. The School is committed to honoring people's multiple identities, including but not limited to ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, family structure, gender expression, gender identity, nation of origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. Sierra Canyon School works to be an antiracist and inclusive school.

CURRENT LEADERSHIP

Jim Skrumbis has expertly led Sierra Canyon for the past 22 years. Jim has focused his efforts on building a strong culture of belonging for all the School's community members. Present across the campuses each and every day, Jim is well-known and much admired by parents, students, alumni, faculty, and staff. He can be found regularly in classrooms, in the stands cheering on athletes, in the theatre and auditorium supporting artists, visiting with Lower School students on their campus, and, in between, meeting with countless parents, alumni, and community supporters. Jim's dedication to and support of Sierra Canyon's faculty and staff is boundless. Jim's deep commitment to developing authentic relationships and a strong community across Sierra Canyon's campus and beyond grounds his leadership and guidance of the School. His firm commitment to putting students first in all aspects of operations creates an environment where students strive for their own success guided by experienced faculty and staff and achieve their potential to become contributing citizens to the community, the country, and the world. He will move into a newly created role as Head of School Emeritus to focus on strategic initiatives, the national and international promotion of Sierra Canyon, major gift development, and future capital projects.

Stephanie Rubin, the current Associate Head of School, has been appointed the next Head of School starting July 1, 2026. As noted by Jim Skrumbis, "From the moment Stephanie arrived on campus, she made us a better institution. She brings a level of thoughtfulness and a desire to provoke growth more than any administrator I have



ever worked with, and her dedication to Sierra Canyon's continued success is demonstrated daily."

Stephanie joined Sierra Canyon in 2015 as Director of College Counseling. She has led the Upper School and was appointed Associate Head of School in 2024. Her academic background—a bachelor's degree in history and sociology from UCLA and a Master of Science in Education from USC—complements her proven record of leadership and practical excellence.

Jim has led the School's Development efforts (along with a four-person team) for the past three years with magnificent results. The School is now seeking to hire a new Director to lead the Development and alumni relations teams and who will help to further develop the teams' knowledge, skills, and capacities to grow as professionals while providing clear direction and inspiration.

With a strong enrollment, highly selective admissions, a noteworthy campus, strong financial resources, and a deeply loyal community, Sierra Canyon operates from a position of strength and optimism. Students have a wide array of opportunities to explore intellectually, artistically, athletically, and co-curricular. The students take healthy risks, connect with one another, and receive exceptional support from faculty and staff. The community is united around and makes frequent reference to the School's Core Values – Excellence, Integrity, Community, Independence, and Perspective. Above all, Sierra Canyon thoughtfully develops ethical life-long learners and leaders.

HISTORY AND THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Originally founded as a day camp in 1972, the elementary school was established in 1978, and its founders are still a vital part of Sierra Canyon. The Middle School was then added, with the Upper School opening in 2005. Throughout its history, the school has been guided by community leaders and educators seeking to build an exceptional school. Today, as then, the school's program guides and challenges the intellectual, social, emotional, moral, artistic, and physical growth of each child.

At Sierra Canyon, academic excellence includes the means and methodologies known to be best suited to that end. The school knows that students will be required to solve problems of currently-unimagined complexity; that the safety and survival of the world depends ultimately on having not just the intellectual acuity to understand problems but also the skills to work

with others of diverse backgrounds and the “conscience, character, compassion and cultural competence” required to persevere.

The Lower School 17-acre campus has been recently upgraded and is expansive, child-friendly and helps lay the firm foundation for learning and growing. For a virtual tour of the two campuses, click [Explore Our Campuses | Sierra Canyon School](#). New additions to the Lower Campus include the Kardashian Jenner Pavilion and the Tripodis Family Vineyard.

For a full review of the curricular scope and sequence, please visit the links: [Lower School \(Grades Pre-K–6\) | Sierra Canyon School](#); [Middle School \(Grades 7–8\) | Sierra Canyon School](#); [Upper School \(Grades 9–12\) | Sierra Canyon School](#); [Peak Week | Sierra Canyon School](#)

As can be seen, the school continues to grow and develop in the 21st century, with its faculty continually seeking new tools and ideas to promote rich academic growth, prepare its students for success in college and beyond, and develop graduates of character.



THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

The international program at Sierra Canyon, which primarily enrolls Chinese students, plays a pivotal role in fostering our diverse and inclusive community while enhancing global connections and revenue streams essential for the School's growth. These 101 students (85 on the Upper Campus and 16 on the lower campus) students thrive in our challenging academic program, robust athletic opportunities, and inspirational artistic freedoms, benefiting from a seamless transition to American culture supported by dedicated faculty and staff, while matriculating to colleges and universities in the United States and abroad. To sustain and expand this vital initiative, our next Director of Advancement must actively engage with it, as the Head of School, Associate Head of School, and International Program Director travel annually to China for prospective student interviews and fundraising dinners with current and alumni families.

ARTS

The arts (visual and performing) are celebrated at Sierra Canyon and will have a new home with the soon-to-be-completed Everest Family Center for the Arts. From orchestra to digital media to the SC Film Festival, students discover, celebrate, and share their one-of-a-kind perspective. Courses and tools abound to foster the students' artistic expression and inspire innovation. Of particular note is the development of the school's own record label—Trailblazer Records—and the development of the Arts Academy program under the leadership of Performing Arts Director Chris Sampson. For more information, please visit the microsite: <https://www.sierracanyonschool.org/giving/center-for-the-arts>

ATHLETICS

Sierra Canyon is renowned for its high-achieving and championship-level teams. In just 15 years, it has established itself as one of the premiere high school athletic programs. Sierra Canyon has won 12 State Championships and 16 CIF-SS Championships. Four current teams are ranked nationally with games broadcast on ESPN. There are 12 Sierra Canyon alumni who are professional athletes; 247 Trailblazers play collegiately. For a comprehensive overview of the Trailblazers' athletic program, please click.

<https://www.sierracanyonschool.org/athletics/school-of-champions>.



THE REGION

Nestled in the northwest corner of the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles, and located on two campuses, Sierra Canyon is in the suburb of Porter Ranch, near to the Reagan Presidential Library.

Diverse, vibrant, and laid-back, Los Angeles is an attractive destination for tourists each year. Known as the “Creative Capital of the World,” LA is well defined by its performing arts culture. Sierra Canyon’s location places it in a growing capital of creativity and innovation in entertainment, engineering, technology and biotech, and other industries.

Dry and sunny, Los Angeles is warm year-round, and outdoor enthusiasts enjoy easy access to

the beaches of Malibu and Santa Monica and abundant recreational opportunities in the Pacific Ocean and in the surrounding mountains. Cultural attractions in the city include over 800 museums and art galleries. Sports lovers cheer on several professional athletic teams, including the World Champions Dodgers, Lakers, Clippers, Angels, Rams, Chargers, Kings, Ducks, Sparks, Angel City and Galaxy.

Education is a top priority for residents, and the city features numerous public and private universities, including the University of Southern California, University of California Los Angeles, the American Film Institute Conservatory, Occidental College, Pepperdine University and California State University among many others.

SIERRA CANYON AT A GLANCE

Founded:	1978; Upper School in 2005
Grade levels:	PreK-12
2024-2025 projected operational budget:	\$55 million
Tuition 2025-2026:	\$27,500 Pre-K; \$39,800 K-6; \$46,300 grades 7-12
Financial aid:	\$8.17 million; approx. 31% of current families receive financial aid
Endowment:	\$6 million
Debt:	\$37 million
Number of employees:	400 total employees, 200 full-time, 200 part time/summer; 162 faculty; 66% of faculty with advanced degree
Enrollment:	1,200 total
Racial diversity:	58% identify as students of color:
Athletics:	24 sports; 98 athletic teams
Arts:	56 courses in arts; 84 individual productions in visual/performing arts



FINANCES AND FUNDRAISING

Engaging families with established histories at the School who have been so helpful and appropriately recognizing the impact of their support is always necessary. Making sure the families who are new to Sierra Canyon feel an important part of the Sierra Canyon fabric is also essential. Having a growth mind-set, communicating openly, sharpening the list of major gift opportunities, having a willingness and openness to try some new ideas, studying other peer schools (and a more aspirational set of those schools) to see how improvements can be made are all part of the directional arc to be set.

The Sierra Canyon Fund is the School's version of annual giving. With Jim Skrumbis leading the effort and supported by a dedicated four-member (including communications) Development office team, the School astonishingly finished FY25 at \$3,849, 193, an increase in the past four years from \$2,060,018 since Jim helmed the effort.

A decrease in the number of donors presents an opportunity for even more growth. While national statistical patterns also reflect this trend, there is a further opportunity for increased stewardship and communication of gift impact. Continued attention is necessary to grow the culture of philanthropy at the School, with the realization that a stronger Sierra Canyon Fund will lead to exponential growth in capital and endowment giving. In the most recent fiscal year, parent participation was 73%; Board participation has been 100%.

Stewardship can be strengthened as donors desire to learn the impact and importance of their gifts. Storytelling and communication are key ingredients to constantly provide a “fresh voice” to build Annual Giving from different tiered donors who could grow in their support of the school.

Sierra Canyon has an endowment with a value of \$6 million. There is interest in bolstering the School's endowment while still pursuing some additional capital funding for additional classroom space, administrative offices, a pool, and tennis courts.



THE OPPORTUNITY

The next Director of Advancement will have the opportunity to be a full partner with the incoming Head of School and work with a strong and long-tenured senior administrative team. The candidate will be asked to make their mark by advancing the School's mission to be a future-ready school that changes students' lives.

As the School continues to innovate, its faculty are leading the way seeking out new tools and ideas to promote rich academic growth and to prepare students for success in college and beyond. This is an incredibly exciting time to join Sierra Canyon. This is a chance to take the School's Development program to even greater heights by harnessing the School's energy and promise by winning the trust and admiration of the various constituencies.

The Director of Advancement is responsible for leading all aspects of a well-designed development strategy for all fundraising programs including capital and endowed gifts, annual fund, foundation support, major gifts, and planned giving through research, constituent relations, and stewardship.



Reporting to the Head of School, the Director of Advancement develops and executes development campaigns and philanthropic events in support of the School's mission and programming goals while cultivating engagement and impact within the community. As a member of the senior administrative team, the Director of Advancement serves as a liaison between the School and the community, including donors, alumni, and volunteers, fostering relationships that support the School.

The Director of Advancement provides leadership and daily oversight of an integrated program encompassing all development activities, budget administration, and supervision of staff, including the responsibilities to:

- Develop strategic fundraising plans with short and long-term goals and regularly provide updates on performance metrics to ensure activities are aligned with the School's mission, strategic planning, and programming objectives
- Direct development activities, through best practice, by identifying, cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding donor prospects to secure capital commitments with the ability to raise six-, seven-, and eight-figure gifts
- Experience with fundraising in Asia (especially in China) is preferred to maximize the International Program opportunities and secure the philanthropic support that drives the School's institutional advancement.
- Have an external focus; be a visible part of school life
- Be an effective storyteller who can articulate the case for support of Sierra Canyon
- Work closely with the Director of Communication to develop and execute an effective donor communication strategy including alignment of messaging through various publications and distribution channels

- Build Development office systems and procedures to elevate the Development office functionality
- Assist with governance training of the Board
- Partner with the Chief Financial Officer to coordinate budget allocation of fundraising results, develop presentations and/or reports, and routinely establish and/or evaluate procedures for endowment and gift accounting
- Collaborate with division heads, senior administrative members, and other department or program heads to align fundraising goals with programming objectives and priorities
- Foster alumni relations by establishing and implementing strategies that align alumni interests with corresponding opportunities for engagement within the School and broader community
- Administer activities that support and benefit various school programs through special events in coordination with parent liaisons and volunteers.
- Participate in meetings with the Board of Trustees to deliver presentations, communicate updates, and facilitate opportunities for supportive engagement
- Responsible for documentation standards, integrity, and confidentiality in maintaining accurate donor records including the management of fundraising database(s), following appropriate accounting procedures and reporting
- Lead all activities and programs with a commitment to ethical fundraising practices following the Code of Ethical Standards and industry best practices established for fundraising professionals
- Oversee all daily and ongoing operational activities for the Development Office staff, including budget, scheduling, performance, goal setting, hiring, professional development, and training programs
- Support the School's mission, model the School's core values, and participate in school life



Are You the Right Person for the Job?

- Are you attracted to the joyfulness and creativity of children?
- Are you committed to getting to know the children and the families well? Do you enjoy getting to know, meeting and engaging families?
- Are you a person of high energy?
- Are you reasonable and level-headed?
- What is your vision of independent school education, especially around access and affordability?
- Are you an excellent listener?
- Do people enjoy spending time with you?
- Do you have the vision and strategic thinking to lead, strengthen and maximize an institution that wants to “get things right,” wise, professional in its operations, and committed to continual improvement?
- Do you know how to thoughtfully communicate your appreciation for people?
- Do you have a growth mindset? Are you comfortable with an experimental and entrepreneurial work environment? Do you think creatively and encourage innovation? Are you a curious person?
- What examples can you provide of how you have demonstrated forward-thinking abilities? How have you shown your mental nimbleness?

- Can you encourage and actively support change and innovation while retaining the core values and traditions of a school?
- Do you have the ability to inspire, lead, develop and attract talented staff?
- Are you a person of strength, gentleness, and authenticity?
- Do you know how to prioritize your responsibilities? Do you know how to use technology to maximize your time? Do you know how to delegate?
- Can you handle the considerable range of tasks: from major gift solicitations to helping with the smallest details of an event?
- Do you have the ability to lead, develop, and manage well in all directions?
- Are you willing “to roll up your sleeves” for all the work that is needed?
- Do you get things done?
- Do you understand the cadence and rhythm of a school year? What are examples of how you work with your colleagues in a collegial manner?
- Do you have a track record of success as a fundraiser and implementing a strategy? What is your level of experience in communicating the narrative of an institution?
- Have you had experience in a capital campaign?
- Do you have business and financial savvy?
- Do you have facility, humility, and desire with equity and inclusion work required to embrace and support a diverse and dedicated community of faculty, staff, students, parents, and alumni?
- Are you comfortable with the locational realities of Los Angeles as a major metropolitan center, knowing that Sierra Canyon School has a culture and personality all its own?

Physical Demands

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this position, such as the ability to see, hear, speak, and understand English and use a computer. This position is active and requires standing and walking, including stairs. Additionally, employees must be able to:

- Sit at computer and keyboard for moderate periods
- Lift and carry up to 20 pounds on a frequent basis
- Mobility sufficient to move about the campus
- See, hear, and speak to interact with students, parents, and groups of individuals

Travel

Ability to work occasional evenings and weekends, means of travel to off-site events, ability to travel, domestically and abroad as needed.

FOR CANDIDATES

Compensation and Benefits

Sierra Canyon School uses a salary scale that is based on academic attainment and years of experience, a robust benefits package, and professional development opportunities. The range of compensation is \$225,000-275,000. This position would qualify for the 50% faculty tuition remission; application can be made for additional financial aid. The school is committed to supporting team members in their personal and professional growth.

This job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee. Other duties, responsibilities, and activities may change or be assigned at any time with or without notice.

Duties and tasks in this position are varied and complex. The position works on whole problems or projects. This position directs projects, and challenges are resolved with complex and precedent-setting solutions. This position requires a high degree of collaboration. This position operates in a professional school environment. The functions of this position are performed in a typical office environment with no known hazards.

Sierra Canyon is fully committed to a culturally diverse faculty and student body. The school is an equal opportunity employer. Sierra Canyon does not discriminate in its hiring or employment practices based on race, color, religion, gender (including gender identity or expression), disability, national or ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, marital status, genetic information, or other legally protected characteristic or status.

Prior to submitting your resume for this position, please read it for accuracy. RG175 verifies academic credentials for its candidates and conducts a thorough review of candidates' social media presence. Sierra Canyon will conduct thorough background checks prior to finalizing an offer.

TO APPLY

If the possibilities in this opportunity excite you, please apply online at the RG175 website: <https://rg175.com/candidate/siagnup>

The application should include:

- Letter of interest
- Resume or CV
- Writing sample of your choice

The deadline for receipt of the full application is **May 15, 2026**. For any questions or additional information about the position, please contact the RG175 consultant below:

James E. Pattison
jpattison@rg175.com

