POSITION STATEMENT

The Country School

VALLEY VILLAGE, CALIFORNIA



LEADERSHIP SEARCH

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Start Date: July 1, 2027

THE COUNTRY SCHOOL
WHERE MASTERY MEETS MINDFULNESS

RG 175
Change as Opportunity

A Leadership Search conducted by **RG175 Search Consultants Debbie Reed and Tom Hudnut**

OVERVIEW

Who We Are

The years immediately following the end of World War II did not feature much excitement or innovation in the independent school world of Los Angeles. There were boys' schools and there were girls' schools, parochial schools and military schools, along with assorted proprietary elementary schools that had been around since before the Depression. Social activism that would change the educational landscape was just over the horizon: the Red Scare of the McCarthy Era was right around the corner, and the Civil Rights movement wasn't far behind.

Onto this scene burst an elementary school in the San Fernando Valley that was grounded in social justice, whole-child education, and determined to be a place where every child was known, where everyone was on a first-name basis, and where John Dewey's principles of progressive education took root. Thus was born The Country School in 1948.

Although most schools profess to be student-centered, TCS was that way at birth. Consider the core beliefs that have animated the school ever since: "Every student belongs. Every identity matters. Differences strengthen our community. Equity requires action, not just intention. Inclusion and Respect are daily practices, not slogans. Recognize and resist bias and injustice."

This is a deliberately small school where every child is known by every faculty member; where "collaboration is second nature, and love of learning is intentionally nurtured" by a faculty who always put students first. As one faculty member has recently written, "I believe deeply in the mission of TCS, the power of progressive education, and the unique culture that has made this institution such an important part of so many children's lives for nearly 80 years."



Although the guiding principles have remained constant, The Country School has definitely changed with the times. Its mantra today — "Where Mastery meets Mindfulness" — is a recognition of the need for emotional growth that parallels intellectual development. With creative approaches to teaching and learning, TCS operates on sound ground, both pedagogically and psychologically.

A centered child is likely to be a happy child and an eager learner — a major focus of the school's commitment to mindfulness. Indeed, it would be hard to find another elementary school so immersed in wellness as a necessary complement to learning. According to one long-time faculty member, TCS "is a place where parents never have to choose between academic excellence and emotional well-being."

The school's approach to learning is well researched and fundamentally sound. No cell phones. No homework. Technology is used only for specific classroom assignments and never during free time. In a world increasingly dominated by Artificial Intelligence that risks alienating people one from the other, people need, and seek, connection and community, exactly what The Country School offers its students and their families. The next Head must know that there is a sweetness to this school that needs to be preserved; in its intimacy and tenderness, TCS is very, very different from most independent elementary schools.

But the school isn't only about feelings and wellness and emotional stability; it's also a serious academic institution with a rigorous curriculum that emphasizes critical thinking, clear reasoning, and collaborative learning. From the play-based pre-school that encourages curiosity and social awareness as steps toward individual confidence and competence, to learning to question the media and to think on one's feet by middle school, education at TCS is always age-appropriate, challenging, and spot-on.





Two significant innovations are hallmarks of the TCS academic program: TILE (Targeted Instructional Learning Enrichment) enables students not performing on grade level to receive twice weekly one-on-one instruction in reading and/or math. MOVERS (Moving on to Vastly Enriches Studies) allows students who demonstrate readiness for work beyond grade level to move ahead om Language Arts, Math, or both. These signature programs are a TCS staple rarely found in elementary schools.

As students progress, their work becomes more far-reaching and expansive, so that by the time they reach middle school, they are pursuing Ethnic Studies, can be part of the Diversity Club, or get involved with the Diversity and Equity Fair. Along with sports, drama, and music, their lives are enriched way beyond the classroom.

Following a beloved and long-term Head of School is never an enviable task, but that doesn't mean it can't be done and there is work for the next Head, for certain. Admissions is a constant issue for all K-8 schools in Los Angeles, and surely at The Country School. More so is the matter of retention; too many students leave after Grade Six to go to big, well-known 7-12 schools, so specific attention needs to be paid to the academic and extracurricular programs featured in Grades 6 through 8. A school the size of TCS is always in need of greater philanthropy, so a Head who can tell the story and bring in the dollars will find plenty to do if the school's historic commitment to Financial Aid is to remain robust.

Those are some challenges for the next Head of The Country School, but the opportunities for success abound: a strong and dedicated faculty; a facility that works and is an oasis in its neighborhood; a parent body whose devotion is nothing short of remarkable; excellent relations with secondary schools who know and value TCS graduates; a diverse board whose members are committed, energized, and eager to work with the new Head; and last, not least, the chance to be part of a vibrant educational scene in the most diverse city in America.

Ideally, the next head will understand the landscape of Southern California Independent Schools. The work ahead will require someone with energy and vision, someone who will hold dear the culture and mission of The Country School's founding, and someone who will embrace this community. The compensation for the next head of school commensurate with experience will be in the range of $200-$300,000.



TO APPLY

The Next Steps

Should this sound appealing, we want to hear from you. We'll be sure to follow up once you do, so please brighten our day!

Each application will contain a cover letter, a resume, and a writing sample and must be delivered through the applicant portal on the RG175 website:

www.rg175.com/login

For questions about the search, contact the RG175 Consultants:

Debbie Reed
dereed2014@gmail.com

Tom Hudnut
tom@tomhudnut.com