



SAINT MARK'S SCHOOL

Upper School Head Position Statement

**Saint Mark's School**

Altadena, CA

July 1, 2019

**RG 175**

Change as Opportunity

## THE SCHOOL

Saint Mark's School is an Episcopal, fully accredited, coeducational, independent day school for children preschool (age 2 years, 9 months and potty-trained) through Grade 6. The School specializes in early childhood and elementary education, intentionally pairing strong academics with social-emotional learning to help students thrive and grow into intelligent, well-rounded leaders. Grounded in its Episcopal identity, Saint Mark's is authentic in its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusivity. Students can be themselves, as they tackle new challenges and come to appreciate the importance of working with others.



Saint Mark's believes that the social and emotional development of students is equally important to their intellectual growth. Its holistic approach to early childhood and elementary education allows a supportive space for preschoolers through sixth graders to engage in their learning. By intentionally educating the whole child, the School guides students toward academic excellence, encouraging an intellectual curiosity that will create lifelong learners. The diverse community—from its faculty and staff to highly engaged parents—models the confidence, resilience, and compassion that the School strives to instill in its students who go on to become thoughtful leaders in their community and world.

Saint Mark's School was founded in 1960 by dedicated members of Saint Mark's Episcopal Church on a mission to meet the changing diversity of Altadena and greater Los Angeles.

Today, the School serves approximately 300 children, and diversity remains a deeply held value throughout the School community. The church continues to be a partner with the School and supports its programs and activities.

The School's five and a half acre tree-filled campus at the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains in Altadena (north of Pasadena) combines the vibrancy of a natural environment in a beautiful neighborhood with purposeful programming for hands-on learning, including an outdoor classroom and a large playfield. Just as the school is uniquely designed for early childhood and elementary education, the campus is a place that celebrates childhood, and it feels like home to students and families.

The School seeks an energetic and accomplished Upper School Head to partner with the Head of School, Lower School Head, leadership team, and faculty and staff in advancing the School's mission. As a member of the senior administrative team, the Upper School Head reports to the Head of School and is the primary administrator for the effective execution of Grades 3 through 6 curriculum, instruction, discipline, and activities. The next Upper School Head must embrace the mission, philosophy, and history of Saint Mark's. An important priority for her/his leadership will be to guide the Upper School forward with continuing focus on the development of each child's unique potential within a diverse community that emphasizes compassion, intellectual curiosity, and responsibility. A more detailed description of the job is listed below.

## THE COMMUNITY

### Students

The School serves a student body of 300 students, many of whom arrive at Saint Mark's as curious preschoolers and leave confident to take the next step in their academic and personal growth. Strong intellectual engagement, academic growth, and joyful learning are evident at all grade levels. Small class sizes encourage collaboration and close teacher-student relationships. The Head of School and Upper School Head work closely with parents and students throughout the middle school placement process to optimize choice and the best fit for each child. Each year, Saint Mark's graduates have a variety of options for next schools, including top schools in the area.





## SAINT MARK'S SCHOOL: UPPER SCHOOL HEAD SEARCH

### Faculty and Staff

The faculty and staff are energetic, caring, and competent. It is evident they believe in the mission of the School and are dedicated to the notion that an active and collaborative learning environment can empower children to participate and succeed.

Saint Mark's teachers possess certification for their respective age level teaching assignments and have varying degrees of longevity at the school. All teachers hold bachelor degrees; a majority of faculty members have earned advanced degrees. Classrooms are also supported by Teacher Interns who work closely with lead teachers.

A Student Support Team composed of educational specialists and coaches works closely with classroom teachers, administrators, students, and families to identify and support the learning styles and motivations of students and to ensure a thriving learning community.

### Administration

The administrative team is highly competent and collaborative. The Head of School is supported by the Upper and Lower School Heads, Chief Financial Officer, Business Manager, Director of Enrollment Management, Director of Advancement, Director of Information Technology, and the Director of Auxiliary Programs. An efficient staff work hand-in-hand with the Head of School and her team to manage the day-to-day schedule, operations, activities, and programming.



## SAINT MARK'S SCHOOL: UPPER SCHOOL HEAD SEARCH

### Board of Trustees

The School's 24 trustees are a dedicated and diverse group of parents, alumni parents, church members, and others, who love and appreciate the school, its program, and its people. Board members are committed to following best practices in independent school governance and building strong connections within the School community. Trustees maintain a dynamic relationship with the Head of School, characterized by shared purpose and clear boundaries. Trustees are generous with their time, talent, and resources.



### Families

Families come from diverse backgrounds and faiths and are active in the life of the School. The Parent Association provides parents with many volunteer opportunities, strengthening the community and helping with fundraising activities.

The School is committed to partnering with families and offers extensive parent education throughout the year, bringing in experts in childhood development. These events are open to current and prospective families.

Preschool through grade 6 students attend regular and well-led Chapel services that provide opportunities to gather as a community, reinforce shared values, and shape the moral compass of the students.





### THE PROGRAM

The program is divided into three divisions: Preschool (ages 2 years, 9 months to 5); Lower School (Kindergarten through Grade 2); and Upper School (Grade 3 through 6).

#### **Preschool**

Saint Mark's preschool program builds upon a child's natural curiosity to discover and understand their world through the implementation of developmentally appropriate practice in creative and supportive learning environments. The school utilizes a whole child approach by encouraging all aspects of children's development and maintains a hands-on, minds-on philosophy in which children are actively engaged in purposeful play to provide a solid foundation for future learning.

Preschool and kindergarten are key entry points for many Saint Mark's families.

#### **Lower School**

In lower elementary (K-2), students build strong foundations in reading, writing, and math; explore the natural and physical world; and enhance their learning through the use of technology, cross-curricular activities, and hands-on learning. The lower school program fosters intellectual curiosity, engagement, and creative expression in an environment that promotes self-awareness and compassion for others.

Each week includes blocks of time dedicated to literacy, mathematics, writing, and theme studies in social studies and science, as well as Spanish, technology, music, art, library, and physical education. Teachers collaborate

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between classes and grade levels, ensuring a thorough understanding and application of subject matters. Class projects, performances, and presentations allow children to share their learning with their peers and gain valuable experience formulating opinions and presenting their ideas to others. Beginning in kindergarten, students attend chapel twice a week and participate as leaders in the service.

### Upper School

With the support of teachers, third- through sixth-grade students become advocates of their own learning and develop valuable study and time management skills crucial to success in middle school. A departmentalized approach is used in fifth and sixth grades. Students rotate between grade level teachers for instruction in mathematics, science, social studies, and English. Teachers strive to provide opportunities for collaboration, leadership, self-expression, and creativity across all subject areas. Upper School students embark on a weeklong outdoor education program to Olympic

National Park, WA and a field study adventure to Washington, DC. They also have the opportunities to participate in Student Council, service learning, and a variety of leadership programs.

### Extended Care

Saint Mark's School has a strong commitment to serving students and families in a professional learning community all year long. Students may participate in their choice of scheduled activities, including free play, organized games, board games, sports, drawing, art, crafts, puzzles, reading, classroom study groups, or Study Hall. Beginning in Grade 4, Saint Mark's students compete against athletic teams from other schools. The School also offers Summer Camp for our students and others from the area.



### THE STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

The new Upper School Head will benefit from the many strengths of Saint Mark's including:

- Eager, motivated, active, and happy students who thrive academically, socially, physically, and emotionally and who exhibit a love for their school;
- Caring, competent, and loyal teachers who are skilled educators, student-focused, and who promote mutual respect and social responsibility in and out of school;
- A seasoned and forward-thinking administrative team comprised of individuals who work collaboratively to solve problems and promote new ideas;
- An effective Parent Association and committed parent body, who volunteer their time and contribute philanthropically; and
- A safe and well-maintained campus that is welcoming and effectively supports the School's program.



### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE YEARS AHEAD

In its commitment to sustaining excellence, Saint Mark's School embraces the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead:

- Adapting to the growing cost of attracting and retaining outstanding teachers;
- Navigating local trends in independent school education, specifically shifting demographics and competition from for-profit schools and charter schools;
- Continuing to clarify the range of learning styles and differences the School can reasonably be expected to serve;
- Remaining accessible and affordable for a broad range of families;
- Embarking on a capital campaign to complete an exciting master campus plan.



# SAINT MARK'S SCHOOL: UPPER SCHOOL HEAD SEARCH

## THE JOB

It will be critical that the new Upper School Head will:

### Leadership/Administration

- Conduct regular and individual team meetings, faculty and teacher intern meetings, and classroom observations to support teacher, specialists, and staff in instructional design, curricular adherence, professional development, classroom management, school and work schedules, differentiated instruction and adherence to school principles of collaboration, responsibility, respect, motivation, communication and active service learning;
- Provide strong faculty, teacher intern, and support staff oversight and guidance, conducting all upper school teacher and teacher intern evaluations with a coaching lens;
- Mediate any upper school teacher, teacher intern, and staff conflicts;
- Review all resumes and interview all prospective upper school teachers, teacher interns and substitutes and make hiring recommendations to the Head of School;
- Maintain an active upper school teacher and teacher intern Substitute List;
- Manage personnel coverage for absences and tardies of upper school teachers and staff, serving as a teacher substitute when unable to secure daily substitutes for faculty and staff absences;
- Monitor new elementary students' progress and assimilation to the school and their individual, academic and personal growth;
- Participate in school activities (including, but not limited, to Fall Festival, Christmas Programs, Spring Auction, Elementary Talent Show, Parent Education offerings)
- Communicate with upper school parents regularly, informing parents and families of the School's practices, policies, school schedules, service learning activities and student opportunities;



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- Manage all upper school discipline, conflict resolution, counseling and referrals;
- Support the primary advisor to the Elementary Student Council, assisting with all grade 3 through 6 activities, dances, service learning and fundraising activities;
- Write and edit instructional and curriculum communiques for school publications;
- Serve as primary Upper School instruction and curriculum expert and be fully apprised of current educational philosophy, trends and best practices, including educational research, brain research, and successful teaching practices;
- Keep parents and families informed of any unusual circumstances (e.g. admissions, discipline, schedules, drills, attrition, accidents, etc.)
- Meet regularly with Head of School to solve/discuss admissions, attrition, retention, parent concerns/issues, accidents, legal issues, operations, space and facilities, personnel, assessments, etc.;
- Coordinate daily schedule of Upper School teachers, teacher interns and all upper elementary classroom daily schedules;
- Attend weekly senior leadership meetings;
- Represent Saint Mark's School at local, regional, and national meetings/conferences, as needed
- Inform business office personnel and facilities management of all janitorial, plant, campus health, safety and maintenance needs;
- Assist with all regular fire, earthquake and crisis management trainings and all-school drills;



- Recommend and prioritize purchase recommendations for supplies, texts, and furniture needs for approval by the CFO and/or Head of School; and
- Possess current and necessary educational field and management certifications and training relative to health and safety practices and requirements (e.g. CPR and First Aid Training).

## SAINT MARK'S SCHOOL: UPPER SCHOOL HEAD SEARCH

### Curriculum

- Continue the development of the School's strong curriculum in grades 3 through 6, collaborating with the Lower School Head to ensure a cohesive, relevant and intentional scope and sequence across the school;
- Display commitment to continue our schoolwide mission to providing a multi-faceted education, creating new offerings in the core and extended day programs;
- Partner with the Rector and Chaplain in leading and sustaining the successful Elementary Chapel offerings;
- Interpret ERB test scores and lead assessment discussions for teachers, parents, and administrators, to inform student and programmatic growth;
- Work in collaboration with the Lower School Head to oversee the school's Student Support Team and coordinate follow up steps when appropriate;
- Coordinate Grade 3 through 6 parent meetings and lead discussions related the upper school's curriculum, instruction, pedagogy, practices and expectations;
- Read and review all upper school teacher written narratives and report cards prior to dissemination;
- In collaboration with the Head of School, oversee the middle school placement process for graduating 6th graders;
- Coordinate educational field student programs with grade 4 through 6 teachers, including Brig Pilgrim/Rancho,



Olympic Park Institute, and Washington, DC; chaperone trips as needed;

- Coordinate human development classes for fifth and sixth graders.
- Oversee the advisory program for 6th grade students

### Enrollment

- Participate in admission tours with the admissions team;
- Read applications and consider candidates along with the Director of Enrollment Management and the Head of School in elementary admissions decisions;
- Facilitate screenings of candidates through work with the Admissions Office;
- Communicate with Director of Enrollment Management regarding retention conversations; and
- Prepare all grade 3 through 6 class lists and inform parents/families of classroom assignments.



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### QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Bachelor's degree, preferably advanced degree in education or a related area;
- 5 or more years of experience in education, preferably elementary;
- Ability to work collaboratively with a forward-thinking leadership team
- Strong organizational management skills to oversee multiple programs;
- Strong communication skills and the cultural competence to work well with diverse constituent groups including students, faculty, and parents;
- Proven commitment to elementary education and the capacity to lead and continue development of effective curriculum and training across grades 3 through 6; experience with Singapore Math, guided reading, and Responsive Classroom is a plus
- Experience and empathy to be a mentor to faculty and staff and a key resource to parents of children;
- Strong ability to strike the right balance between maintaining a warm, approachable presence and being a clear, decisive leader;
- A proven track record of finding, attracting, motivating, evaluating, supporting, and retaining outstanding elementary faculty and staff;
- Ability to manage difficult conversations; and
- Energy, optimism and a sense of humor necessary to take joy in the leadership of a dynamic division of a school and its community.



### THE SEARCH

Saint Mark's School has retained Doreen S. Oleson, Ed.D., from Resource Group 175 to lead this administrative search. To apply, qualified candidates should submit, in ONE document, before **March 1, 2019:**

- A letter expressing interest in the position;
- A curriculum vitae; and
- 3 current references.

Applications should be sent to: [doreenoleson@gmail.com](mailto:doreenoleson@gmail.com).

*Saint Mark's School is a non-profit 501(c) 3 corporation. In accordance with federal law, the School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, family configuration, or sexual/gender orientation.*