



**park
century
school**

HEAD OF SCHOOL

July 1, 2013

Culver City, (Los Angeles) California

Park Century School was founded in 1968 as an independent, not-for-profit, coeducational day school to meet the needs of children with learning disabilities. It serves a diversity of students, ages 7 to 14, of average to superior intellectual potential, in an optimal educational environment, while providing a developmental and therapeutic support system for the whole child.

MISSION

The Mission of Park Century School is to meet the educational, emotional and social needs of learning disabled students of average to superior intellectual potential and their families in an empathetic and supportive environment emphasizing academic success, maturity and independence.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The guiding philosophy of Park Century School is based on the conviction that learning disabilities are life-long challenges that affect the total existence of a child and family. All children with learning disabilities need educational, emotional, and social assistance. Many also must have help with attention,

organization, memory, language, and perceptual-motor function. Simultaneously, their families may be overwhelmed and exhausted by psychological stress, economic burdens, and confusion about the future. These conditions require a broad spectrum of therapeutic and educational interventions.

Park Century's experience with learning disabilities has fostered a unique concept of the role of the school and the teacher. The school must function as a comprehensive center assuming responsibility for evaluating and meeting the ever-changing needs of a child and family.

Under the guidance of the Co-Directors and Dean of Students, the expanded responsibilities of the classroom teacher include the coordination of the efforts of the school faculty, medical specialists, therapists, and parents and to serve as the central therapeutic person in each child's school program. Accordingly, Park Century School is committed to preserve its ability to attract and retain a dedicated and highly qualified professional faculty and to ensure its continuing professional development in a manner consistent with the school's mission and philosophy.

PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION

The Park Century academic program is taught within one-to-one tutorial sessions and in small classes. Classroom group lessons are provided in subjects such as social studies and science. Specialists provide one-to-one instruction in reading and mathematics for all students. When appropriate, students move into small literature and math groups. Instruction in written and oral expression is individualized to meet the needs of each learner. Integral parts of each student's program include technology, organization/study skills, visual and performing arts, media, physical education, perceptual motor skills, and, if necessary, speech and language therapy. Students are helped to develop a positive self-image and learn self-advocacy skills and strategies necessary to return to a traditional school. Parent education and participation within a team approach are essential to each student's intellectual, psychological, social and moral development.

A program of instruction for the child with learning disabilities must also emphasize the building of social skills. Some learning disabled children misperceive the feelings of others and are also unaware of the effect of their behavior on other people. These difficulties in socialization can create a distance from peers, making the child feel rejected and undermining self-image. Thus, social curriculum is integrated throughout the day. Daily interactive experiences provide the basis of instruction about socialization and provide opportunities for the classroom teachers to observe and help develop the social skills of their students.

From the student's admission to Park Century School until graduation, it is the school's goal to prepare the child for a successful transition into a

traditional educational program, where possible. The Transition Specialist and the faculty work closely with the family. Both before and after graduation, Park Century collaborates with the new school to ensure a smooth, successful transition.

The Speech and Language Program at Park Century is multifaceted. It includes helping students who have difficulty processing information; expressing their ideas effectively; sequencing their thoughts; articulating clearly; and retrieving vocabulary needed to participate in fluent conversations, understand group lessons and follow directions. Emphasis is also placed on expressing ideas in clear, organized written form and on understanding the pragmatics of social interactions,

Not every student at Park Century requires these services but all students are continually monitored by the teachers and specialists who work with them to assess the need for this type of assistance. Language difficulties sometimes become apparent only as students mature and are involved in the more complex interactions of social communication or as the need increases to process complex information and/or demonstrate comprehension both orally and in written form.



FACULTY

The faculty of the school includes two Co-Directors, an Admissions/Community Outreach Coordinator, an Academic Dean of Students & Curriculum, a Dean of Students and Programs, an Assistant Dean of Students, two Clinical Coordinators, ten Classroom Teachers, eleven Teaching Assistants, eleven Reading and/or Math Specialists, an On-Site Substitute Teacher, a Visual Arts Instructor, a Science/Computer Teacher, one Physical Education Instructor, an Assistant Physical Education Instructor, a Media/Assistive Technology Instructor, a Librarian, two Clinical Aides and five Speech and Language Therapists. In addition, selected arts professionals conduct classes and programs in the Performing Arts. Many of the School's faculty are trained as educational therapists and serve as mentors in the community.

STUDENTS

The school serves students from communities in the South Bay to the San Fernando Valley and from Malibu to Hancock Park, encompassing much of the greater Los Angeles area. The school's location allows it to make use of Los Angeles' many cultural resources, such as museums, theatres, historic sites, and parks.

A very active Student Council enhances school spirit among the students and faculty while also developing a sense of leadership and responsibility in the students. To participate in student council, each child must demonstrate appropriate leadership skills, good academic effort, citizenship, and the ability to model positive behaviors.

PARENTS

Park Century School has an enthusiastic Parents Association that works in partnership with the School Administration. These dedicated parents coordinate many school activities and act as liaisons between the school and the parents.

The Parents Association hosts the Back-to-School Barbecue and Class Coffees. They manage the Book Fair, logo clothing sales and the Hot Lunch Program. Each year they create a Thanksgiving Feast for the students, faculty and



staff and host an annual Staff Appreciation Lunch. The Parents Association is also an accomplished fundraising arm for Park Century School, creating successful events such as The Fall Carnival and the Spring Benefit.

OUTREACH

Park Century School is committed to sharing its unique expertise in educating children with learning disabilities with the broader Los Angeles community through a permanent outreach program staffed and located at the school. The Community Outreach Center offers seminars and workshops for professionals in the field, as well as for teachers in mainstream schools. In addition, parents who need help in identifying and addressing their child's learning disability can find useful advice and referrals. The school plans to expand the range of the outreach programs as it continues grow.



LOCATION AND CAMPUS

For 26 years, Park Century School operated from a 10,000 square foot building in West Los Angeles. The building, purchased in 1982, was designed to accommodate 42 students and 20 teachers, specialists and administrators. By 2001, the school had expanded to 60 students and 34 staff, and the demand for admissions far surpassed the school's ability to handle it. During these years, as the school was increasing enrollment, it was also expanding the programs. To accommodate this growth, the school bought a 43,000 square foot building in Culver City. Redesigned by architect Christopher Ward, with a loggia created by former parent and Trustee Frank Gehry, the facility opened in 2008. The building has since won several awards for design.

Culver City is located within western [Los Angeles County, California](#). It was founded in 1913 and incorporated in 1917. As of the 2010 census, the city had a population of 38,883. It is mostly surrounded by the city of [Los Angeles](#), but also shares a border with [unincorporated areas](#) of Los Angeles County. The city now comprises approximately five square miles.

Since the 1920s, Culver City has been a significant center for [motion picture](#) and later television production, in part because it was the home of [MGM Studios](#), where movies such as *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz* were made. It was also the headquarters for the [Hughes Aircraft Company](#) from 1932 to 1985. [National Public Radio](#) West and [Sony Pictures Entertainment](#) now have headquarters in the city. The [NFL Network](#) studio is also based in Culver City.

Recently, Culver City has undergone rejuvenation, now boasting a lively nightlife and a first-class restaurant row. The new light rail system ultimately planned to connect downtown and the beach currently terminates one block from Park Century.



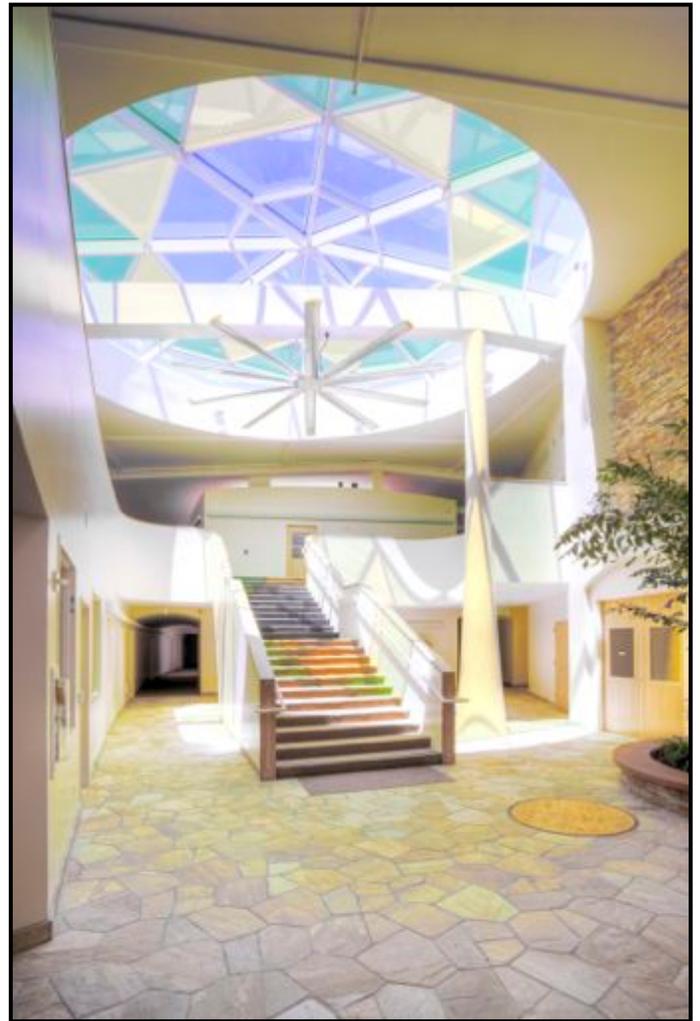
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Managing Change to New Leadership

Park Century School is making the transition from a small school operating in cramped quarters to a school of 100 students located in a spacious building designed for its current needs. This change is causing growing pains. The school will be going through a leadership change for the first time in 40 years. The next head will continue to value the strengths and rich history of the school, enhancing what is already working. He or she will also need to reach out to faculty and families, demonstrating sensitivity and understanding in times of change and stress. The school community will need time to adjust to the leadership style of a new head, and he or she should be willing to learn from a distinctive approach to educating special-needs learners that emphasizes and individualizes the program for each student. Naturally, this chapter in the history of the school will bring a cultural shift for many of Park Century's families, faculty, and staff; the next head will be responsible for leading the community through this extraordinary and exciting time.

Marketing

The next head will be involved in internal and external marketing to help the school achieve its goal of an enrollment of 120 students. He or she must actively promote the school in the community and develop referral sources in order to assure a flow of new applicants. The next head will be the public face of the school with the educational therapeutic community, secondary schools, colleges, prospective families, and the greater community. The new head will need to have a vision for, and an understanding of, the future of Park Century School. It is one of few schools for children with learning disabilities in the Los Angeles area, and it is proud of its track record of mainstreaming as many as 60% of its students. The new head will be a person who is able to maintain and build upon this distinguished reputation.



Creating an Effective Infrastructure

The head of school should look carefully at the school's organizational structure. Many faculty members indicate that administrative roles need to be more clearly defined. They also indicate that the school is being run as it was years ago when the enrollment was half its current size. Also, scheduling the school day is a genuine challenge. Students have a core teacher, but the students are frequently pulled out of class to work with a variety of specialists in small groups or one-on-one. Balancing the importance of the students' work with specialists against the scheduling demands of core curriculum presents significant difficulties. Park Century emphasizes its ability to individualize the educational programs of its students, so clearly access to specialists is a signature part of the school. This

Continued...

complicated scheduling, which also includes making time for arts, science, technology and PE classes, can affect the ability of both core teachers and specialists to work with their students.

Another concern is the need to address the personnel issues presented by the differing employment status of classroom teachers, specialists, and speech and language therapists. Skills in managing human resources will be very useful.

Additionally, the educational model currently used is extremely expensive and is the main driver for the high tuition. A priority for the next head must be to see whether it is possible to maintain the quality of the program with a modified delivery model. He or she also needs to look carefully at the current administrative structure to determine if it is optimal for the school. Before making any changes, the next head should take a significant amount of time to learn about the school.

Technology

Most people in the school agree that technology infrastructure must be a higher priority. The faculty point out the need for technology upgrades in their classrooms, and express the desire for

assistive technology that should be integrated into the curriculum. Hardware, software, training, and support are high priorities for the faculty.

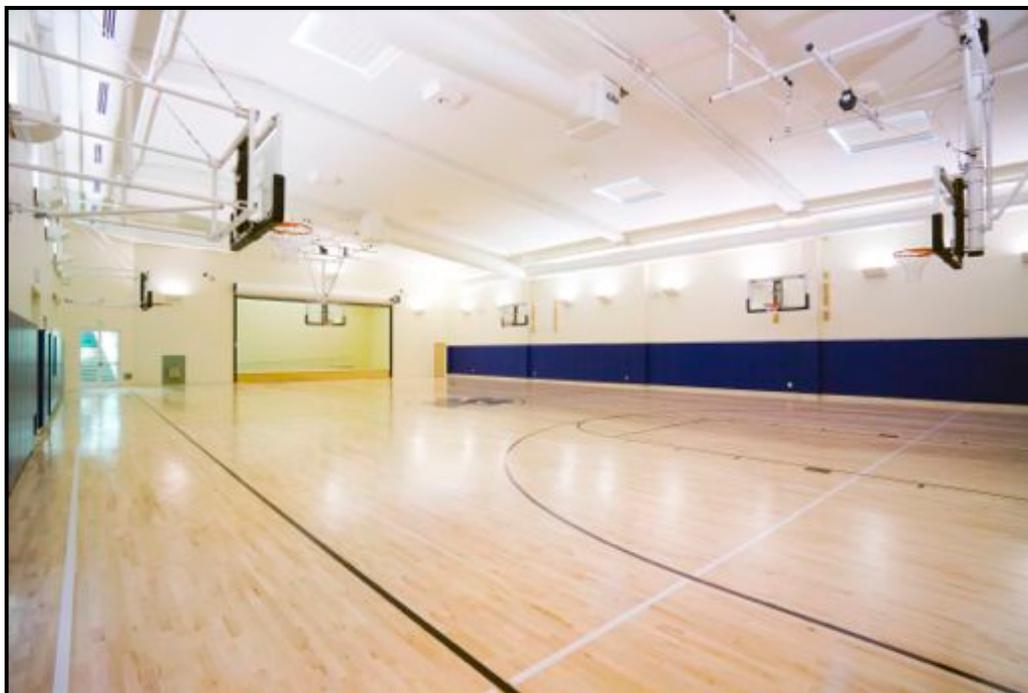
Decision Making

The next head of school will need to assure that everyone affected by important decisions has the opportunity to voice opinions. Yet, faculty members want routine decisions to be made more speedily and decisively. They say that processes for small and routine issues need to be streamlined and decisions need to be followed through.

Finance and Development

Park Century School has a number of financial issues that demand guidance from the head of school. The school has increased its physical facility with the opening of a large and impressive building and the overhead has increased commensurately. Most significantly, the educational model is expensive. These factors have driven tuition to a very high level. The head must help the board anticipate the implications of financial issues, must control costs, and must manage operations so that the school remains financially viable. Furthermore, the school raised more than \$15 million during a recent capital campaign to pay for the new building, but still has

a debt of approximately \$10 million, which must be retired to stem the annual outflow of funds supporting debt service. The school also needs to increase financial aid to students so that more middle- and lower-income families can join the school. The next head of school will embrace the fundraising goals of the board, complete the current campaign, and fully engage in any other fundraising endeavors the board authorizes.



Continued...



This will be an exciting opportunity for the new head to collaborate with the development office.

Parents

As in all schools for students with special needs, the parents at Park Century School are both grateful to the school for the success it brings to their children as well as anxious about their children's futures. Park Century has a parent body comprising many well-educated, wealthy people, including some celebrities. This well-connected parent body can help create many benefits in areas such as fund-raising and visibility. There are occasionally some concomitant concerns, such as handling privacy and creating consistent and mutually respectful relationships between school and parents. The next head must assure that communication with these parents is open, that the school's role is clear, and that realistic expectations and goals are communicated regularly. The head must also have the gravitas and strength to assure that parents understand how to appropriately communicate with the school,

especially the faculty, and that any poor behavior by parents is labeled as such. The faculty must feel they can rely on the head to support them in these relationships.

Board of Trustees

There is currently strong board leadership and energetic and experienced trustees. These trustees are ready to assist the next head in realizing the mission, and in developing a strong strategic plan for the future. The trustees are knowledgeable about independent schools, non-profit organizations, and large corporations. Historically, the school leadership has always depended on the board to perform certain roles that more traditionally belong to an administration. The new head will have to reassess these roles to make sure they are delegated appropriately. The board has recently added more current parents and parents of younger children. The next head will help these trustees maintain realistic goals for the school as well as for their own children.

THE CANDIDATE

Professional Qualifications

The next head of school should possess excellent professional experience and credentials that include the following:

- Master of Arts or the equivalent
- Administrative experience
- Classroom experience with students who have learning disabilities
- Experience dealing with information technology
- Independent school experience
- Proven ability to lead as well as manage
- Experience working through a transition would be beneficial
- Understanding of school finance
- Fundraising experience, preferred

Personal Qualities

The next head of school should possess the following personal qualities:

- Vision
- Decisiveness
- Patience
- Diplomacy
- Stability
- Approachability; accessibility
- Warmth, friendliness, sense of humor
- Good listening skills
- Ability to communicate orally and in writing articulately
- Excellent “people skills”
- Forthrightness
- Problem solving skills
- Resilience
- Flexibility
- Compassion
- A sense of fairness and firmness





**park
century
school**

HEAD OF SCHOOL

July 1, 2013

Culver City, (Los Angeles) California

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

CANDIDATES SHOULD SEND A COVER LETTER, RESUME, STATEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY, AND A LIST OF REFERENCES TO:

Roger J. Bass
Search Consultant
Resource Group 175
rbass@RG175.com
Tel (206) 441- 4112

Additional information about the school may be learned from the website <http://www.parkcenturyschool.org>

