



Sacramento Country Day School

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Application Due Date: September 1, 2015

Start Date: July 1, 2016

SACRAMENTO COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

Sacramento, California

OVERVIEW

Sacramento Country Day is an extraordinary school in a highly livable and desirable location in Northern California. Founded in 1964 by parents who wanted the very best for their son, the school has grown from a handful of students to over 500 today in grades PK – 12. Those students are taught on a handsome 12-acre campus, complete with mature trees, fields and a variety of new and older buildings. SCDS has a first-rate faculty, loyal and happy parents, a balanced budget, and a solid board. In short, this represents a terrific opportunity in one of California's most affordable cities.



Mission of Excellence

Sacramento Country Day School provides a challenging, comprehensive college-preparatory education to students from a variety of backgrounds who demonstrate strong academic potential and good character. Within a community that affirms positive human relationships and sincere respect for others, the school nurtures in its students the qualities of self-confidence, creativity, integrity, and responsibility.

SACRAMENTO AND THE CAMPUS

Sacramento is, of course, the state capital, and is 90 minutes away from vibrant San Francisco and only 100 minutes away from majestic Tahoe in the beautiful Sierras. Locals and insiders know that Sacramento offers very attractive amenities: first-rate restaurants, an historic downtown district with wonderful architecture and shopping, an NBA franchise, championship minor league baseball and soccer teams, excellent health care, housing that is better than that in the Bay Area and a fraction of the cost, a vibrant visual and performing arts scene, and a first-rate independent school! It is close to both the ocean and mountains, as well as California Wine Country, and has a modern and first-rate airport.

SCDS is located in a very attractive and centrally located residential neighborhood not far from the downtown area. Steve Repsher is the current head and is retiring after 13 successful years. He was charged with improving campus facilities and has coordinated efforts resulting in a beautiful new lower school building, a new middle school science and math building, a new high school science building, and numerous upgrades to both the middle and upper school sections of the campus.

Thanks to significant investment over the past decade, SCDS has transitioned from an older environment, dominated by temporary structures, to new Spanish mission style architecture with abundant natural light and indoor/outdoor space complemented by landscaping and attractive gathering areas. There is a modern gymnasium, a soccer field and an infield baseball training diamond, and an educational & community garden. Classrooms are cheerful and bright and are complemented by two libraries. The school also has made a substantial investment in technology in the last ten years and is considered a leader in the use of technological integration and innovation in California. An iPad is issued to every middle school student and MacBook Pro laptops are issued to every high school student. Lower school students are introduced to coding and school email accounts are assigned beginning in the 5th grade.





Administration

In addition to the head, there are three division heads, an assistant head (new to the school in 2014), a CFO/business manager, admissions director, development director (who is new to SCDS in 2015), athletic and physical education directors, director of technology, director of special programs including summer camps and after school care and enrichment classes, a director of human resources, and a Breakthrough Sacramento director. This is a solid group that is experienced and knowledgeable

about the school and committed to its students and their success.

COMMUNITY OF THE SCHOOL

Faculty

“Extraordinary,” “dedicated,” “beloved,” “inspiring.” These are but a few of the adjectives used by parents and students to describe the teachers at SCDS. Representing an excellent mix of veterans and those relatively new to the school, the faculty presents an energetic mix of styles and personalities, among whom are revered teachers whose impact and influence will long be remembered. They are highly loyal to the school and its mission and turnover is relatively low. Teachers at SCDS come to teach, love what they do, and are extremely close to their students. The SCDS faculty has the unique ability to discover and encourage student interests and strengths and the maximum potential in every student. Faculty members challenge students to speak in public and develop strong interpersonal relationships for success in college and beyond. The faculty is especially proud of its eclectic nature, its occasional eccentricities, and its superb quality.

Students

“Simply the BEST” -- as one teacher so succinctly put it. Sacramento Country Day students are bright, well-mannered, considerate, and just plain interesting. Over 35% identify as students of color and they come from roughly a 45-minute radius around the school. There is some significant attrition at the end of the 8th grade, due to the historical pull of the large parochial high schools in Sacramento.

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**Parents**

Parents at SCDS are active but not intrusive. They like and appreciate their school very much and show it with hard work and dedication. There is an active Parents' Association that sponsors a wide variety of activities and events during the year. There are also two parent booster organizations on campus: The Sports Boosters and The Performing Arts Boosters. All three of the parent groups provide volunteer assistance for their respective events with the goal of promoting school spirit

throughout the school year. The development office oversees the annual auction and solicits parent volunteers to chair different committees and to help solicit donations for the auction, which highlights the spring term. The PA runs the school spirit wear program, helps with fund-raising, hospitality, and school spirit events.

However, many of the very brightest students remain at SCDS for grades 9 – 12, motivated at least in part by the excellent reputation of the high school and the school's very strong college placement record. There is generous financial aid at the school, especially for students in the high school, and SCDS is committed to increasing the school's diversity.

Board

The SCDS board consists of a healthy mix of 21 current and past parents. The board is professional and representative of the school's diversity and geographical mix, and has been supportive of the school in appropriate ways. It understands the distinction between governance and operations and, via good leadership, has maintained those boundaries. There are the usual standing committees.





introduced early through a variety of learning modalities. Spanish and French are taught starting in Kindergarten and continue throughout the grades. The math program is modern and concept-based, emphasizing real-world applications and relevance. Science is hands-on and experiential wherever possible and students learn about their community via social studies and active service opportunities. An SCDS education is without walls. Experiential learning is at its finest in the SCDS garden, B Street Theatre, Crocker Art Museum, Farmer's Market, State Capitol, UC Davis Dairy, Fish Hatchery, as well as the Exploratorium and Angel Island excursions in San Francisco. Where better to study California history than in Sacramento? Overnight field trips begin in the 3rd grade to the Monterey Bay area, followed by the Sutter's Fort overnight 4th grade with the culmination of the Marin Headlands experience in the 5th grade. The program is complemented by strong visual arts, music program, and physical education offerings.

PROGRAM

SCDS is the only accredited PK – 12 secular, independent school in the area and its program is engaging and exciting. The school has taken an active stance in embracing diversity, technology, community outreach, and service. Courses at the secondary school level are demanding.

The Lower School, grades PK – 5 at SCDS, is committed to the development of the whole child in a warm and supportive atmosphere. Classes are small and intimate and the basics are

Traditional grades are not used in the lower school and detailed narrative reports keep parents abreast of the child's progress during a fall and spring parent-teacher conference along with a student led conference.

The Middle School program is designed to form a firm foundation for the rigors of secondary school. Grades are introduced and students have the opportunity to accelerate their math studies. The academic subjects are often integrated. Field trips build on the lower school experience with one-week experiences in October. In years past, 6th and 7th grades have visited Yosemite, Redwood Glen in Santa Cruz, or a dude

ranch in the Sierras with the 8th graders travelling to Washington D.C. Projects are highlights of grades 6 – 8. SCDS has adopted an iPad program for all middle school students and it has been a great success, weaving technology through a variety of subjects. Building on their lower school base, students elect to study Spanish, Latin, or French in a deliberate and intense way. Team sports, student council and after school clubs are introduced and a very strong arts, electives, and student council complement the academic side of the curriculum.

As mentioned above, a number of the eighth graders choose to attend high schools other than SCDS. The reasons are complex and varied: there is a tradition in Sacramento of attending the large parochial high schools of which many of the city's leaders are graduates; some students are seeking a bigger, more social school with a greater variety of athletics, e.g. football; the academic program at the high school level at SCDS is rigorous and some students lean away from the discipline necessary to be successful at grades 9 – 12 at the school. All of these and other factors contribute. While the high school is strong at SCDS, the school would like to increase external visibility and internal student retention.

The Upper School at SCDS is well known for the excellence of teaching and the rigorous course work for all students. The school sticks to its three languages, Latin, Spanish, and French, and adds a

large number of AP courses. Classes remain small and students in all the high school grades report an extraordinary closeness with both their teachers and with one another, even across the grades. Laptops are used both in and out of classrooms and provide a firm basis for technological integration. The program is designed to prepare students for college and the SCDS college placement record speaks for itself; the SAT scores for the school are the highest in the region. Athletic teams are exceptional and SCDS has produced several recent Division One NCAA recruits in the past few years. The arts program is inspiring with a very strong orchestra, drama, and fine arts department. The Mock Trial Team is extremely competitive, often going up against larger schools and receiving several awards. The award-winning school

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newspaper, *The Octagon*, is consistently recognized nationally for its individual and group achievements. The high school yearbook, *The Medallion*, is another popular extra curricular enjoyed by many high school students. The high school student council is extremely active organizing and promoting rallies, community service events, dances, fundraising and increasing school spirit. In short, this is a terrific high school with a great faculty and excellent program.

SCDS is extremely community service oriented and actively practices the “Habit of Helping” across the entire school to benefit local, regional and international efforts. Locally, SCDS donates the space required to run the Breakthrough Sacramento summer program for motivated middle school students and also provides significant financial support to run this program. Regionally, SCDS supports the Sacramento Food Bank and is the #1 Fundraiser for the food bank in the “Run To Feed The Hungry” event held every Thanksgiving Day. The garden program also donates produce to the food bank. Internationally, SCDS supports a sister school in Rulindo and raises funds every year through a musical “Play A Thon.”

This last year the school raised funds to purchase goats for the families who have students who attend the Rulindo School. SCDS proudly supports and hosts Breakthrough Sacramento (the program formerly known as Summerbridge), which serves nearly 300 middle and high school students on the campus in the summer and during the school year. These are academically motivated students from under-served populations and who come from local public schools in the greater Sacramento area. They benefit greatly from this college track program held on the SCDS campus each summer and run by the Breakthrough Sacramento staff members.

SCDS also runs Camp Cavalier on campus in the summer as well as before and after school care and specialty classes programs for its students. The summer camp and after school care and classes are extremely popular with lower school families.

For more detailed information regarding the school’s program please visit the website: www.saccds.org.

CHALLENGES and OPPORTUNITIES

SCDS is in excellent financial condition. The school weathered the 2008 recession with some stress, but has rebounded with good enrollment. Nonetheless, challenges remain moving forward. Given the strong foundation in place, an interested candidate has the opportunity to provide leadership to take SCDS to an even higher level.



Finances and The Faculty

In recent years there has been unrest at SCDS over faculty salaries and benefits. Due to the recession and the subsequent decline in enrollment, faculty was asked to endure a temporary salary freeze and decrease in retirement contributions. The result is a perception that some administrative salaries have grown inordinately while the faculty has suffered. The board and administration significantly increased the lower and middle ends of the scale significantly last year. However, recent head of school internal communication has not changed the perception and some apprehension and trust issues remain. The next head has a chance to significantly impact school evolution and culture through strong

leadership, communication, and faculty salary redevelopment. The next head would do well to work to be sure that all salaries are in line with appropriate NAIS/CAIS norms for schools like SCDS and to concentrate on salaries and benefits for the faculty. The candidate should enjoy the challenge associated with increasing the presence of an ambitious organization with the strong fundamentals already in place.

Size of the High School

SCDS currently enrolls about 140 students in grades 9 – 12 or about 35 students per grade. While this forms a solid critical mass, the offerings at the high school could increase if the student body was slightly larger. However, this requires revisiting the school’s conditional use permit with the City of Sacramento, an effort that is currently under way. This would also create more options for team sports, extra-curricular activities, and increased social experiences for high school students. Most folks at the school feel the space is there to accommodate that number. The increase could be driven by a higher retention rate from grade 8 to grade 9 as well as increased visibility in the community.

Sacramento Country Day School At-A-Glance

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| 500 students in grades PK – 12 | |
| Annual budget: | 11 million |
| Financial Aid: | 1.8 million |
| Endowment: | 2.5 million |
| Associations: | NAIS, CAIS, ERB, WASC |
| Campus: | 12 acres |



Marketing and Outreach

SCDS may be the best-kept secret in town. The school's location, on a quiet side street in an upscale residential neighborhood to the east of the downtown area, does not create "drive by" opportunities and historically, SCDS has been overshadowed by the large parochial schools.

The new assistant head of school has been charged with working on marketing and outreach and good first steps have been taken. Yet more needs to be done. Board members report surprise when their peers in the community learn there is a high school at SCDS. The school needs to establish admissions, marketing and outreach strategies in greater Sacramento that will increase its visibility and attractiveness.

Fund-Raising

The fund-raising efforts at SCDS have not provided enough benefit; the school has only conducted two capital campaigns. Historically, Sacramento has been a tough market in which to raise funds for non-profits. The school has not raised a great deal in annual giving (less than \$300,000

this past year with only 52% participation amongst current families) and its most recent capital campaign for the new Middle School Science and Technology Center fell short of its goal. (The school raised funds to build a new math and science building.) There is more potential for giving in the community. SCDS needs to engage and develop a new current family and alumni annual giving campaign. The new development director will focus on leadership gifts and motivating the top donors to take a stronger and more visible position within the community. Fundraising for the Breakthrough Sacramento program to be self-supporting will be a top priority as well. Of course the next head will be central to these efforts.

THE CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will possess strong leadership, great people skills and a solid background in independent school administration.

Professional Background

- Demonstrated faculty leadership
- Experience with faculty evaluations and professional development
- Excellent independent school teaching and administrative experience
- Comfort with fund-raising
- Work with the external functions of a school: board, admissions, and marketing to increase visibility and awareness of only PK-12 Independent School in the area
- An advanced degree
- Evidence of warm relationships with all constituents – students, faculty, and parents
- Work in an urban area akin to Sacramento

Personal Qualities

- Visionary leadership
- Out-going, extroverted personality, optimistic and positive
- Charisma
- The ability to listen
- The highest ethical standards
- Good judgment and discretion
- Self-confidence
- Sense of humor
- Boundless energy and enthusiasm
- Empathy and heart
- A genuine love of schools and their students

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter describing their interest in the position, a current resume, personal statement, and a list of references by **September 1, 2015** to:

Clay Stites
Resource Group 175
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508-636-4984