



## Senior Advancement Officer Search OAKWOOD SCHOOL

North Hollywood, California

July 1, 2020 or until search is completed

### THE PLACE

Oakwood is a village – one where people are busily engaged, happy in their work, and where they all seem to know one another. Combining the big city reality that is Los Angeles with the small town feel is quite a feat, one that Oakwood School has mastered. On the inside, the bustle is audible, the output is visible, and the camaraderie is palpable. Outside, the hum of the city is an ever-present reminder of the creative community and entertainment industry that flourish in this corner of Los Angeles.

A few blocks away, the Elementary School is an oasis in the urban landscape. Spacious and inviting, it sits adjacent to a public park, and reflects the same industriousness and joyous spirit found on the upper campus. With its new Story Center, a central play yard, science labs and studios for art, music, and drama, it is an ideal locale for a child to grow in wisdom and in confidence.

Neither campus is imposing, both are communal and warm. Oakwood is a school where the next five-million-dollar gift would more likely go to financial aid or a new program rather than to a new building; although there are plans to build a new theater and more classrooms, people and programs seem to come first. As one senior faculty member puts it, "This is a place I feel good coming to."

Los Angeles itself is the backdrop to Oakwood. A vast, sprawling, polyglot city of neighborhoods with people from every corner of the earth, every language and cuisine imaginable, it is a city with cultural opportunities too vast to enumerate, world-class universities and top-flight professional sports teams, to say nothing of the entertainment industry whose writers, actors, producers, composers, and executives send so many children to this particular school.



To learn more about  
Oakwood School:  
[www.oakwoodschool.org](http://www.oakwoodschool.org)



## THE PEOPLE

Founded by men and women some of whom had been blacklisted by Hollywood during the McCarthy era of the 1950's, Oakwood is to this day grounded in progressive ideals. Community service opportunities abound as students, teachers, and parents alike are quick to put their political sensibilities to good use; and, not surprisingly, social justice is part of the curriculum beginning in the elementary school. As an example, the Fourth Grade California history course is taught from the standpoint of the native Californians and Spanish settlers who were gradually subjugated by white America's "manifest destiny." Yes, this is a true-blue school in a blue state, a place where parents are seeking an immersive curriculum for their children, one heavy with experiential opportunities in the arts, sciences and humanities. The undeniable philosophical appeal of the school for many Angelenos begets a crowded applicant pool, as Oakwood is unquestionably the school of choice for many families.

Not surprisingly, such families are looking for a progressive education for their children, albeit one that is highly academic. "Values with vigor" and "becoming the best versions of ourselves" might be an apt way of describing an Oakwood education. The faculty and administration are true to the school's philosophical underpinnings – individual growth, active communal life, autonomy and responsibility, fostering a sense of community – while offering a first-rate, competitive academic program that is marked by innovative curricula and sound pedagogy.

Because of the school's "village feel" and its shared ethos of commitment, many faculty, administrators, and staff members find it an easy place to love and a nearly impossible place to leave. One has only to listen to what is said: "We are all part owners of Oakwood," one teacher says, as another states: "We're given the freedom and resources to do what we want." Parents are described by teachers and administrators as "smart, knowledgeable, active, respectful, and gregarious." A visitor can tell that students and teachers know and like each other; they all go by their first names. Teachers and administrators are accessible. "Play is infused into this place," a student says, while a faculty member comments: "There is an overall sense of passion here. This is meaningful work." "People at Oakwood are nice, smart, and down-to-earth."

Oakwood alumni identify strongly with their experience as students. They speak fondly of the sense of community that permeates not only the physical space but, more meaningfully, their lives. "The germ of what makes Oakwood 'Oakwood' hasn't changed," is how one graduate puts it. Another says, "I'm holding onto a piece of my life that I cherish. Oakwood wasn't a school; it was a village [where] there is a deep, abiding sense of community." While emphasizing that sense of community and the lifelong friendships and love of learning they gained as students, alums also recognize the values they absorbed: "Oakwood taught me to work hard. I am so grateful for the foundation I got here."



## THE STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The Statement of Philosophy is a living document – every word is reviewed and measured as it continues to guide every facet of school life. One faculty member comments that this “evolving document infuses the work that we do and the way that we do it.”

At every level and across the curriculum, Oakwood’s mission and philosophy are evident. Whether it’s the kindergartners talking about the difference between wants and needs, sixth graders writing persuasive essays about human rights, or high school students studying biodiversity within tropical eco-systems, Oakwood students “grapple with ideas” and have classes that instill a commitment to social justice and encourage students to be active learners and citizens.

## THE PROGRAM

At all ages and in every discipline, the Oakwood program is intentional and builds on itself. Students at Oakwood value a curriculum that is less test-driven and more experiential than what their friends encounter at other schools. As one of them puts it, “Oakwood kids always want to think and challenge.” The program is “rich in the arts, sciences, and Humanities and challenging to a student’s creative, intellectual, and physical capacities.” An active communal life, intellectual attainment, and increasing autonomy “for one another, for the environment, and for the larger world” are goals once put forth by Oakwood’s founders that remain in place today.





## ELEMENTARY CAMPUS (Grades K-6)

Founded as a progressive school, Oakwood has long been known for its developmental and creative approach to curriculum. On this joyful campus, students “learn to love learning” in an atmosphere that is collaborative and supportive. They are encouraged to be writers, scientists, artists, mathematicians, and performers. Their teachers emphasize independence and risk-taking in all disciplines – this is not a cookie cutter school. The atmosphere at the Elementary School “is not competitive at all” (a feature claimed by the high school



as well). Students are wildly enthusiastic but not mindlessly so; they are critical as well. In math, they are challenged to find as many answers as possible and to learn the role of mathematics in other fields. In all disciplines, they are active and problem solvers. In this integrated curriculum, that emphasizes engagement, their questions are encouraged and every perspective valued. Evidence of the commitment to the written word and to self-expression is reflected on the walls of every classroom.

The arts are an essential component of the holistic approach to education for these young students. They learn to listen and to make music, they sing and dance, they perform, and they create. As in all other aspects of the curriculum, students are active participants in their learning and are encouraged to discover.

Athletics play an important part in the life of the elementary students, beginning in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Participation is virtually 100% for boys and girls. Ask any sixth grader about this year's boys basketball team that won three of the six championships in league play at a recent multi-school tournament. All students have free play and physical education, programs that take advantage of the new gym and the spaces on the campus.



## SECONDARY CAMPUS (Grades 7-12)

The Middle School's program (Grades 7-8) capitalizes on the enthusiasms of these students and their fundamental questions about identity and their interest in fairness.

In their two-year sequence of Humanities, an interdisciplinary English and Social Studies program, they explore through history and literature the "causes and effects of social and political change," and focus on individuals who can affect change. General Science, another two-year sequence includes both the life and physical sciences. In math and world language, students have opportunities to stretch their skills and advance as appropriate.

The arts sequence in the middle school affords every child the opportunity to explore dance, music, theater, visual arts, and humanities. A long-standing partnership with the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) allows middle school students to take a second visual or performing arts course. Additionally, there are electives for middle school students in the humanities, courses that emphasize the school's interest in developing socially conscious adults. These varied offerings include "Aztec to American" and "Coming of Age in LA."



All middle school students take PE and participate in a no-cut policy sports program, one that produces teams that compete well with the other middle schools in the area. Many of these teams enjoy success as witnessed

by the high school girls' basketball team achieving a "first in the history of Oakwood" CIF Southern Section championship. In the Secondary School, over half the students are on a team: 15 sports, 19 teams including notable teams in boys' and girls' volleyball, girls' basketball, and both soccer squads.

Despite a friendly, lively atmosphere, this is a strongly academic school and students comment on the underlying dichotomy between the relatively low-key atmosphere and the academic expectations.







believer in the development of equipment as well as product. Sixth graders build their own microscopes and upper school students apply computer modeling, sketching, and geometry to design and create.

In the performing and fine arts, the offerings are expansive and build on the introductory rotational courses offered in the middle school. Everybody can find a way to dance, perform, and create at Oakwood whether in the jazz band or chamber orchestra, beginning strings and woodwind, or music theater. The vibrant theater program makes magic in the intimate black box theater. Displays of student ceramics, oils, photographs, and sculptures can be found around every corner and on every wall.

A strong liberal arts program in all disciplines provides the foundation for an extensive elective program in the high school (Grades 9-12). Test scores are not the driver, nor the focus of daily school life. At Oakwood, what matters to everyone is that students develop the capacity to think for themselves, to express themselves and to be respectful of different points of view. The course work tackles complicated and difficult ideas and situations, develops in students a kind of humane intelligence for one another and about a larger world that champions inclusivity, multiculturalism, and social justice in the face of national retrenchment. Given inevitable critique, there is no reason to compromise. One teacher explained that, "While developing their computational, logical, and analytical skills, we encourage our students to become active, creative problem solvers." In history, the courses "stress the historical significance as well as the practical applications of the concepts taught." Similarly, "Our students learn the role of mathematics in other fields of study." Complementing the Advanced Studies courses are elective classes in every discipline that reflect Oakwood's social consciousness. A sampling includes: Culture and Values in 20<sup>th</sup> Century America; Disney - A History of Happiness; and Introduction to Racial Literacy. Additionally, there are Independent Study opportunities, special topics, and extra classes on topics from Kafka to the Music of Lady Gaga, and the opportunity to study languages that are outside the curriculum include Japanese, Korean, and Italian.

Before the terms STEM and STEAM were coined, the concepts were prevalent at Oakwood. The long-standing Robotics team emphasizes creativity, hands-on experiences and problem-solving under the direction of a faculty member who was an early adopter and a

It should be no surprise that Oakwood students turn their passion for the arts into a community service project. Community Youth Partnership (CYP) offers weekly free music, dance, science, and visual arts workshops to Los Angeles Unified School District students in the San Fernando Valley, taught exclusively by Oakwood Students who have shown a proficiency in these disciplines and an interest in community-building. Oakwood students must take a service-learning course in conjunction with the program.





Oakwood's Immersion Program has evolved over generations and involves faculty, parents, alumni, and friends of the school. For two weeks following the conclusion of the first trimester, students in grades 7-12 elect to attend any one of nearly 40 different Immersion courses, offering "unbelievable opportunities that balance a seriousness of purpose with a sense of play." These range from travel to China, Spain, Costa Rica, and Oxford (to study history, ecology, theater, and human rights); to local offerings: California Drought: The Grapes of Wrath; Non-Traditional Public Art; Screenplay: The First Ten Pages; and Staying Safe (self-defense). These programs are not only great bonding opportunities for students and teachers but also are often a precursor to a student's college major, lifelong passion or chosen profession.

At all grade levels, parents speak of Oakwood's commitment to service. "My students have found their voices at Oakwood School and developed a social conscience," is a typical comment. The habit of service and the lifelong commitment to social justice often find their origins in the Elementary School and are then confirmed in the affinity groups, alliances, interest groups, and clubs at the Secondary Campus. Feminism, Gender Alliance Coalition, Peace, Gardening, Thespian Society, Oakwood Art Alliance - The list is seemingly endless for the all of these organizations because they are easy to create, are student generated, and address the issues of the day.

## THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The faculty, staff, administration, students, parents, and trustees, recognize that exciting changes are underway with the appointment of Jaime Dominguez as Head of School for the 2019-20 academic year, and all are invested in its success. Areas identified as opportunities are:

- Fundraising; the expectation is to reinforce and grow a culture of philanthropy through joyful personal involvement in fundraising;
- Effectively articulating and crafting the story-telling about the existing Master Plan that visualizes the space requirements of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century education twenty years from now;
- Embracing and prioritizing social change agents – "Imagine what could be done with just an inch more intentionality."

In other words, opportunities abound to move the program forward, and build upon the great legacy that has been established.



## THE SENIOR ADVANCEMENT OFFICER

The successful candidate will be an outstanding leader who thinks strategically, communicates a clear and compelling case for support of the school's mission, follows up on details, and develops and fosters a team environment. The Senior Advancement Officer will advance the mission and vision of Oakwood School, work principally and collaboratively with the Head of School and report directly to the Head of School. The candidate will also need to work with the Board, the senior administrative team, and the Advancement Office.

The Senior Advancement Officer needs to be a real team player with excellent alignment with the Head of School and the Director of Advancement. In addition to finding financial resources to strengthen financial sustainability, there are non-monetary goals as well: extending the impact of the school, creating goodwill in the community, strengthening the school's excellence and reputation and advancing relationships.

### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

- Lead the effort, with his/her expertise and experience, in a capital campaign;
- Have a personal portfolio of 75-125 major gift prospects and help direct other major gift prospect managers in their work;
- Work as member of an administrative team with short- and long-term strategic planning and overall organization capacity-building activities;
- Serve as a mentor/coach for the Director of Advancement;
- Work closely with Head of School, Director of Advancement, and Board to develop and implement a comprehensive fundraising strategy to maximize gift support;

- Strengthen annual performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of all Advancement activities;
- Further develop a comprehensive strategy that utilizes major gifts, Annual Fund, event sponsorship and underwriting, alumni relations, planned giving, and school fundraising events to successfully achieve revenue targets;
- Effectively cultivate, solicit, and steward a portfolio of major gift prospects with the ability to make five- to seven-figure gifts in support of identified needs;
- Build on existing stewardship program with alumni to develop and expand alumni relations and to expand the donor base and cultivate deeper ties;
- Be an integral partner in the Annual Fund drive to maximize revenue;
- Develop and expand Planned Giving program to increase endowment funds;
- Anticipate and plan for fundraising in support of capital needs.





**QUALIFICATIONS**

- Bachelor's degree required. Master's degree and CFRE preferred
- Five+ years of experience in the nonprofit sector and in fundraising
- Proven success in directly soliciting and closing charitable gifts
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Experience working with and motivating volunteers and staff members
- Outstanding knowledge of fundraising data software and database management software
- A creative thinker, learner, open to new ideas;
- In alignment with pushing the school's diversity-equity-inclusion initiatives;
- Self-confident, charismatic, strategic, visionary;
- Approachable, accessible and a good listener;
- Quick to embrace Oakwood's history and sense of exceptionalism;
- Comfortable and adept at dealing with parents, students, teachers, politicians, and press; and Cosmopolitan but down-to-earth.
- Attentive to detail, self-starter;
- The personality, energy, intellectual integrity, warmth and leadership ability to inspire a school community; positive, passionate, can-do spirit; unbridled curiosity, relentless optimism, and boundless energy
- Eagerness to work hard as both leader and team member;
- A collaborative spirit that will allow for close work and partnership with the Head of School and Director of Advancement;
- Proven success with and affinity for a diverse population;
- Ability to meet deadlines within context of a complex office/school calendar;
- Ability to deal confidentially, diplomatically and comfortably with a diverse community of parents, students, alumni, and faculty/staff and have the presence, demeanor, and communication skills necessary to represent Oakwood effectively; excellent responsiveness to all constituencies;
- High executive functioning skills: high degree of organization, effectiveness at multi-tasking, calmness under pressure with sense of humor;
- Demonstrated success working with a volunteer board;
- Demonstrable strengths in dealing with planning, operations, budgeting, and success completing complex, detailed projects;
- Knowledge and practical experience with highly professional communication pieces: Annual Reports, newsletters, electronic communications.

And the Senior Advancement Officer should take this to heart: "Who we are shouldn't change. How we do things should." The successful candidate will receive a compensation package that includes a highly competitive salary plus generous health and retirement benefits.

**Work Environment and Complexity**

Duties and tasks in this position are varied and complex. The position works on whole problems and projects. 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.

**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.

**Travel**

Occasional travel is expected in this position.

## FAST FACTS ABOUT OAKWOOD

<b>Enrollment:</b>	Elementary School – 300 (K-6) Middle School – 170 (7-8) Secondary School – 350 (9-12)
<b>Students of Color:</b>	33% at the Elementary School, 39% at the Secondary campus
<b>Tuition Range (2020-2021):</b>	\$37,080 (Elementary) to \$43,480 (Secondary)
<b>Financial Aid Benefits:</b>	17% of the student body
<b>Operating Budget:</b>	\$40,000,000
<b>Endowment:</b>	\$30,000,000
<b>Annual Giving:</b>	\$2,200,000
<b>Number of Faculty:</b>	120
<b>Total Number of Employees:</b>	191

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Oakwood School is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, age, national origin, ethnic, background, disability or any other characteristic protected by law. The successful candidate will receive a compensation package that includes a highly competitive salary plus generous health and retirement benefits.

### Background Check

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. Oakwood School will conduct thorough background checks prior to finalizing an offer.

**Prospective Candidates may apply online at** <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

This application includes a letter detailing your interest and suitability in the position, an updated curriculum vitae or resume, and a copy of original writing on any subject of interest that can be written for this exercise or provided from something written previously.

Questions may be directed to: James E. Pattison, [jpattison@rg175.com](mailto:jpattison@rg175.com)

