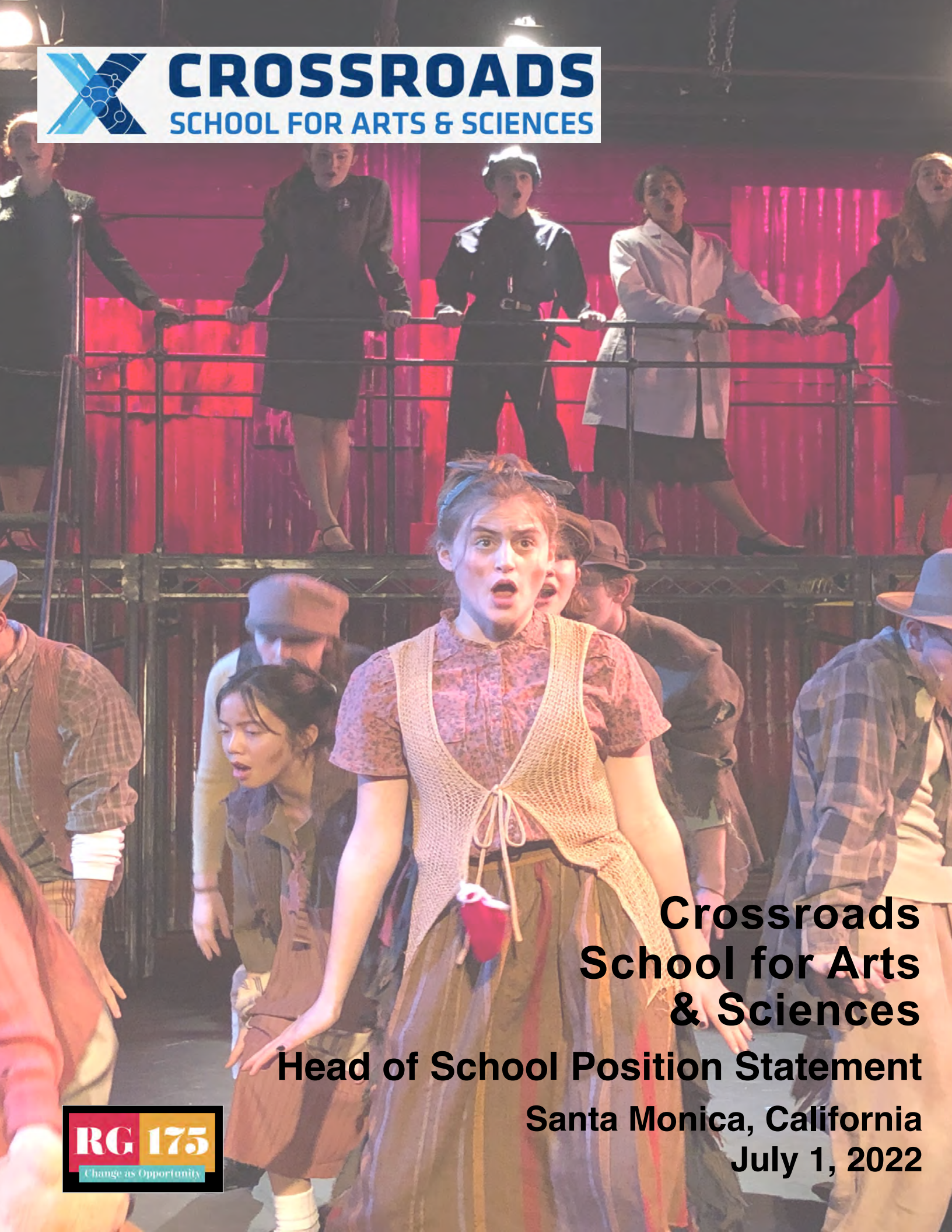




CROSSROADS
SCHOOL FOR ARTS & SCIENCES



**Crossroads
School for Arts
& Sciences**

Head of School Position Statement

Santa Monica, California

July 1, 2022



OVERVIEW

“We are a School that was created with a very specific mission: to be a part of the change in the world.” Spoken by the current Head of School, that belief is widely shared at Crossroads and captures Crossroads beautifully. A 50-year-old school brimming with the exuberance of adolescence, it is a place dedicated to learning, to innovation, to activism, to excellence, and to developing each student’s full human potential. Created in the progressive educational mode of John Dewey, Crossroads retains many elements of those progressive roots even as it has evolved into a multi-faceted school of 1,200 students with outstanding programs lodged on two Santa Monica campuses: The Norton Campus, which houses the Elementary School and K-12 Sports Center, and the 21st Street Campus for Middle and Upper Schoolers.



The Elementary School’s beautifully designed building is specifically tailored to the needs of K-5 students. The 21st Street Campus consists of a pastiche of innovative new buildings, each designed by notable local architects, and several re-purposed buildings that the school has bought over the years as it has grown in enrollment and expanded its offerings.

Known for years to have among the strongest visual and performing arts programs in the entire country, Crossroads today features a comparable success story with its science department, opening a 25,000 square-foot Science Education & Research Facility on the 21st Street Campus in 2015.

Typical of Crossroads, when a need is identified, there is a will to meet it. The current \$110 million capital campaign built the new science building and will see the creation of a performing arts center comprising a 650-seat theater and an adjoining studio classroom building. A third component of the capital campaign is the Crossroads Equity & Justice Institute, launched in 2018 to address society’s most critical current needs and expand the school’s partnerships with public institutions and nonprofit organizations. Crossroads previously established P.S. Arts and P.S. Science —now independent nonprofits—to provide fully funded classroom instruction and teacher training in underserved Title I schools.



This is a school where discussion of tough subjects is encouraged; where “Black at Crossroads” prompted serious soul-searching and program evaluation; where students speak up and are heard; where faculty and administrators have passionate discussion and debate when necessary to assure the best outcome. The Norton and 21st Street Campuses are vibrant, joyful, creative spaces where you might find students raucously performing music, taking advantage of a robust athletics program, holding passionate rallies against gun violence, or giddily conducting hands-on experiments. The next Head of Crossroads will inherit a school with more highly qualified student applicants than it can accommodate, a diverse and talented faculty, a supportive and respectful Board, an enthusiastic and generous parent body, and the opportunity to expand the school’s impact as a force for good, both locally and nationally.

Crossroads was founded as a progressive school that gives equal weight to each of its five founding commitments: to academic excellence; to the arts; to the greater community; to the development of a student population of social, economic, and racial diversity; and to the development of each student’s physical well-being and full human potential. Project-based learning, student-teacher connections, and curricular innovation are in its DNA. One of the earliest schools to require community service and to drop AP courses, establish Life Skills and Environmental and Outdoor Education Programs, and a leader in public-private partnerships, Crossroads is infused with a sense of community responsibility. In the words of the school’s visionary co-founder and first Head of School, Paul Cummins: “The work we do should not be just about Crossroads.” If that sounds enticing, read on!





ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

Currently, the Head of School has these direct reports: the Associate Head; the three heads of the Elementary, Middle and Upper schools; the Director of Enrollment Management; the Director of Advancement; the Director of Finance and Operations; the Founding Director of the Equity & Justice Institute; and the Executive Assistant to the Head of School.

Not surprisingly for a school that is a bundle of energy, the current Strategic Plan (launched in 2019) has 15 ambitious initiatives. Among those priorities is Crossroads' commitment to cultivate a consistent culture of learning and continuous improvement. As one administrator noted, "We must always keep in mind the need to balance the seriousness of the educational program with the casual nature of the school."

One of the division heads says, "We value kids. We value fun. It's a beautiful mess." If only more schools had such a "mess!"



FACULTY, PROGRAM, AND STUDENTS

A visitor to Crossroads is immediately struck by the close and friendly relationships that exist between teachers and students. Doubtlessly helped by the school's first-name practice, there is a real sense of camaraderie in the Elementary School, Middle School, and Upper School. Students in every division are quick to say how much they like their teachers (who go above and beyond to support them) and the faculty say the same about their students. At the same time, this warm and embracing school is a challenging academic institution where there is a palpable desire to excel, whether that excellence comes in the classroom or in the studio, on stage, or on the court.





One of the school's strategic plan goals is to develop a more workable schedule than the one currently in place, given the complexities of sharing facilities. There is also a need for a comprehensive faculty evaluation system. Yet neither a new schedule nor an evaluation protocol should affect the autonomy the faculty enjoy—and from which the students benefit—in determining their curricula and pedagogy. There is an immense reservoir of goodwill that exists between teachers and learners at Crossroads that appears unassailable.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

During the current Head's 12-year tenure at the helm, the Board established term limits for the first time and now functions more formally than in the past. There is a committee structure in place and both enough longtime members to honor the school's history and enough recent members to assure the forward-looking nature of its work. The Trustees are financially and philosophically supportive; they back the Head and follow his lead. They regard the Head as the school's Chief Academic Officer and are not involved in the day-to-day operations of the school.

As a group, the Board remains committed to Crossroads' roots of arts education, social activism, and community involvement. The makeup of the Board has grown more diverse and representative of the Crossroads community: 40% of Trustees are people of color and 44% are women. In addition to being comprised of Crossroads alumni, parents, and grandparents, the Board relies on trustees' varied skill sets in a variety of fields, which is likewise sought out in future Board appointments.



THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL SHOULD IDEALLY:

- Have experience working in a large school in a metropolitan area
- Be calm in crisis and approachable by all
- “Have an arc of diversity experience”
- Know how to be a good listener
- Demonstrate a sense of humor and be willing to hang out in The Alley or on the Norton Campus with the students
- Embrace Crossroads’ past while illuminating the path to the future
- Be an articulate advocate for the diversity within Crossroads’ community, including race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, religion, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation.
- Endorse the value of Arts, Environmental and Outdoor Education, Athletics, and Life Skills equally with the academic programming
- Have a significant teaching background
- “Appreciate the funk of Crossroads!”
- Love what the school is doing now and want to make it even better
- Be an accomplished public speaker

It’s hard to put into words what a wonderful opportunity this is. Crossroads is a magical place where thrilling things happen all the time. It is a place proud of its past but open to its future, eager to discover what comes next. Up until now, all of the school’s heads have been promoted from within; the next Head will likely be the first without prior Crossroads’ experience. That individual will find willing colleagues in a school imbued with a spirit of optimism and adventure, ready to build on the school’s remarkable history and distinguished reputation.

HOW TO APPLY

If you feel this job calling you, then apply through the candidate portal on the RG175 website at:

<https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

The application includes:

- A cover letter explaining why you’d be a good fit with Crossroads
- Your updated resume
- A writing sample of your own choosing (but not more than three pages)

If you have any questions, please reach out directly to Cathy Hunter cshunter33@gmail.com or Tom Hudnut at tom@tomhudnut.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

