



LJCDS



**Position Statement
Head of School**

La Jolla Country Day School

**La Jolla, California
Start Date: July 1, 2024**





THE CAMPUS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

With clear skies, a natural port, and the Pacific Ocean at your doorstep, San Diego is the finest climate in the world, with clean air and sunshine a daily part of life. People move to the area for work and stay for the environment. There is also an undeniable multicultural vibe to the area with the Mexican border just a few miles away in a metropolitan area where diversity is the norm.

It is probably safe to bet that when Louise Balmer founded what would become La Jolla Country Day in 1926 in a one-room cottage in a quiet neighborhood, neither she nor anyone else could have foreseen the gleaming 24-acre campus that exists today right in the heart of the world's leading hi-tech and biotech firms and research facilities. Jets from the nearby Miramar Marine Air Base streak across the sky above the campus, reminders that the area is also a center of innovation in the country's aerospace and defense industries, with nearby Camp Pendleton and the Coronado Naval bases. The individuals who are creating the world of tomorrow are those who send their children to Country Day, eager to embrace its promise of "inspiring greatness for a better world" because that's precisely what they do in their lives and work.



The aspirational environment that surrounds LJCDS is inescapable. Possibility is baked into the DNA of La Jolla and the greater San Diego community. With the Scripps Research Institute nearby, the Salk Institute for Biological Studies a neighbor, Qualcomm a major employer, the University of California/San Diego just west of the freeway, and the La Jolla Institute of Immunology literally across the street, La Jolla Country Day finds itself surrounded by intellectual ferment and the wonder of what's possible.

It would be difficult to imagine an environment more propitious for igniting young minds than this. A four-division school rich in resources and opportunity, LJCDS is a bundle of energy sparked by its 1160 students and more than 200 teachers, from the Early Childhood Center right through the high school's labs and athletic facilities.

There is a continuum of high expectations and creativity that runs through the divisions, positively impacted by the school's intention to construct healthy buildings and smart buildings that marry a commitment to wellness with an embrace of technology.

As one wanders the campus, a visitor is struck by the palpable energy of the students and faculty, the forward thinking of the administration and trustees as they plan a new, expanded Design and Innovation Center, an aquatics center, and an enlarged cafeteria. These elements of a capital campaign that is already underway reflect a commitment to constant improvement that characterizes both the Board and the school leadership, working as partners in a way that other schools would do well to emulate.



EMPHASIS ON CHARACTER

Character education is anchored in a Dignity Model that has served the school well in a time of polarization exacerbated by COVID and nationwide political divisiveness. Dignity is a bedrock constant for the current Head of School who leads from the front with his clear commitment to fairness, equity, and honor. In multiple conversations with students, the word “dignity” comes up frequently, along with a clear acceptance of differences. Students at La Jolla Country Day appear genuinely interested in different views and are respectful of one another’s ideas and opinions. The importance of character education is evident in the many slogans and banners that hang from lamp posts around campus: “Leaders of Character,” “Leading with Dignity,” “Citizenship,” and “Committed to Diversity and Inclusion,” among others.

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

In a recent survey, 67% of the parent body cited Country Day’s “academic excellence” as the Number One reason they wanted their children there. It’s not hard to see why. Some highlights of the program:

- A balanced curriculum that enables a student to be a scholar, an artist, and an athlete—each element is strong in its own right and the combination is formidable.
- An emphasis on wellness that keeps homework at sane levels and assures students their sleep.
- A faculty culture built on autonomy, collaboration, support, and a sense of agency. LJCDS teachers put their students first.
- Few schools are as ambitious when it comes to Innovation and Design as Country Day. The already impressive space devoted to Design and Innovation is slated to quadruple in size in the current campaign.
- “It’s the most student-centered faculty I’ve ever worked with.” Teacher in two divisions.
- In the Early Childhood Center, students learn to read at their own pace and have multiple opportunities to learn through play <https://www.ljcds.org/academics/early-childhood-center>



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- “Our teaching is based on brain researched learning strategies.” EC Teacher
- In Lower School, the program becomes more differentiated as reading lists widen to include new voices, research enters the history curriculum, and music and Spanish increase in visibility <https://www.ljcds.org/academics/lower-school>
- “We don’t jump on every trend; we’re thoughtful and purposeful.” LS Teacher
- Middle School is increasingly experiential as students learn to navigate from class to class on their own, participate in amazing off-campus trips linked to their curriculum; and experience being part of an Advisory program
- The wonderfully imaginative Art program is woven through the grades, with displays and mini-exhibit areas dotting the campus <https://www.ljcds.org/arts>
- “There’s a conscious emphasis on mental health and wellness, begun in the Lower but really emphasized here in the Middle School.” MS Teacher <https://www.ljcds.org/academics/middle-school>
- Students in the Upper School become more independent, more adept at making mature decisions, choosing from elective opportunities as they fulfill requirements, interacting with college counselors, leading the school’s interscholastic teams, scoring high on AP tests – reaching the apex of their careers at Country Day. <https://www.ljcds.org/academics/upper-school>
- “It was the football players in the Madrigals that sold me on the school.”



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WHAT YOU MIGHT NOT EXPECT

La Jolla Country Day achieved statewide and national recognition, including in the Wall Street Journal, for arguably the single best implementation of COVID response protocols in a school setting. Country Day's approach applied research and took advantage of the school's campus to enact measures that enabled students and teachers to return to campus in September of 2020. Such measures included sophisticated on campus testing, CO2 readers in every classroom, classrooms with sliding doors and patios, and the adaptation of school facilities to create outdoor classrooms.

In living its Mission, LJCDS provides opportunities for all students to thrive and to take on challenges. Whether championships on the athletic fields or courts, a national spelling bee, a partnership with a nonprofit or the achievements of alumni, the School takes rightful pride in all that its community achieves.

<https://www.ljcds.org/about/news-and-stories>

- A National Top-Five girls' basketball team <https://www.ljcds.org/athletics>
- Multiple teaching styles. There is no "one way" to teach at Country Day.
- Notable alumni include a Foreign Service Officer at the State Department, an Olympic Gold Medalist in the WNBA, a Deputy Secretary of Education, major business leaders, the Governor of Colorado, and an Olympic Equestrian Coach
- Opportunities for internships in the surrounding hi-tech and university workplaces
- Emphasis on participation – opportunities abroad, Model U.N., Mock Trial, Torrey Law Review
- Of 34 varsity teams, 30 are coached by faculty members
- "This is where Proven and Progressive meet." Faculty quote



GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

- Self-perpetuating Board of Trustees with 24 members plus the Head of School, ex officio
- 10 working committees of the Board, including Buildings and Grounds, DEI, Engagement, Finance, Philanthropy, and Trustees
- Operating budget of \$41 Million
- Total non-capital giving of \$3.2 Million
- Substantial funding for Professional Development
- 18% of students receive Tuition Assistance

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT HEAD

- Furthering the school's commitment to hiring, retaining, advancing, and compensating top-notch faculty
- Implementing and funding the Strategic Plan
- Bridging the cultural divide exacerbated by politics and COVID to strengthen the sense of community
- Building understanding for and support of the school's DEI vision and policies
- Navigating expectations of a diverse parent community with high standards and strong voices
- Finishing the capital campaign begun in Gary Krahn's last two years
- Engaging faculty in policy discussions, reducing a "top-down" sense among teachers
- Attending to the faculty's desire to have more clearly defined policies and stick to them
- Addressing the deferred maintenance issues in classroom buildings
- Providing vision to the program that is often seen as "all things to all people"
- Leading with integrity and humor while being visible and available
- Optimizing the balance of managing tuition expense while paying teachers well



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THE NEXT HEAD OF LA JOLLA COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL WILL MOST LIKELY HAVE:

- An abiding love of working with children and young adults
- Extensive independent school experience, both teaching and in administration
- Deep understanding of the operation of a K-12 school of 1100+ students and 200+ faculty
- Experience to advance the school's commitment in assuring the dignity and inclusion of everyone in the school family
- Vision for the future and the ability to articulate that vision
- Expertise in hiring and retaining faculty
- Extensive knowledge of college counseling and strategic planning
- Excellent communication skills – in both speech and writing
- A willingness and relevant skill set to fundraise
- Track record of assembling and working with high performing teams
- Experience with financial models and budgeting
- Experience with crisis management
- A track record of working well with parents and trustees
- An eagerness to be a visible participant in all areas of school life
- Strategic thinking ability
- Experience in or understanding of campus planning

HOW TO APPLY

Candidates should apply through the RG175 website: <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup> and are expected to submit a cover letter, a c.v. or resume, and a writing sample. References are not needed at this time. **The deadline for applications is February 1, 2023.** We request that candidates not be “buzzer beaters” who apply at the last second. Candidates who apply well in advance of the deadline are more likely to be interviewed.

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MISSION (What we do)

La Jolla Country Day School prepares individuals for a lifetime of intellectual exploration, personal growth and social responsibility.

PROMISE (Why we do it)

Inspiring greatness for a better world.

CORE VALUE (How we do it)

We believe in the **dignity** of all people because every human has inherent value and self-worth. **Dignity** can mean many things to many people. At La Jolla Country Day School, we value:

- **Diversity:** We embrace and advance the diversity of our student body, faculty, staff, board of trustees and community partners to foster an enduring interest in divergent ideas, concepts and cultures.
- **Inclusion and Safety:** We create and sustain an inclusive and equitable community that affirms the identities of all individuals to provide everyone an opportunity to thrive.
- **Collaboration:** We make connections and cultivate meaningful relationships through the power of collaboration to help ourselves and others lead happier, healthier and more purposeful lives.
- **Student Independence and Growth:** We teach students how to think, not what to think. We strive to instill a sense of independence and self-confidence so that they can discover their authentic selves and advocate for what they believe.

DIVERSITY

LJCDS is working to create and sustain a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community for students, faculty, and staff of all backgrounds. Through our commitment to inclusion, belonging, and systemic equality, we will create a community of learners committed to an environment that promotes curiosity and the exploration of all aspects of identity.