



WESTRIDGE SCHOOL

Westridge School

Head of School Position Statement

Pasadena, California
July 1, 2022

WELCOME TO WESTRIDGE!

Educating girls and young women. Inspiring “lives of meaning, contribution, and impact.” Nurturing learners who are “intellectually adventurous thinkers.” Creating “courageous, compassionate leaders.” And always, encouraging girls and young women to meet the aspirational promise of the School’s motto: “Surgere Tentamus. We Strive to Rise.”



THE POSITION

Westridge School is a non-sectarian, fully accredited, college preparatory, single gender, non-profit day school for 500 girls, grade 4 through grade 12. The School is a leading institution among the independent, college preparatory schools in Pasadena, CA and the San Gabriel Valley of Southern California.

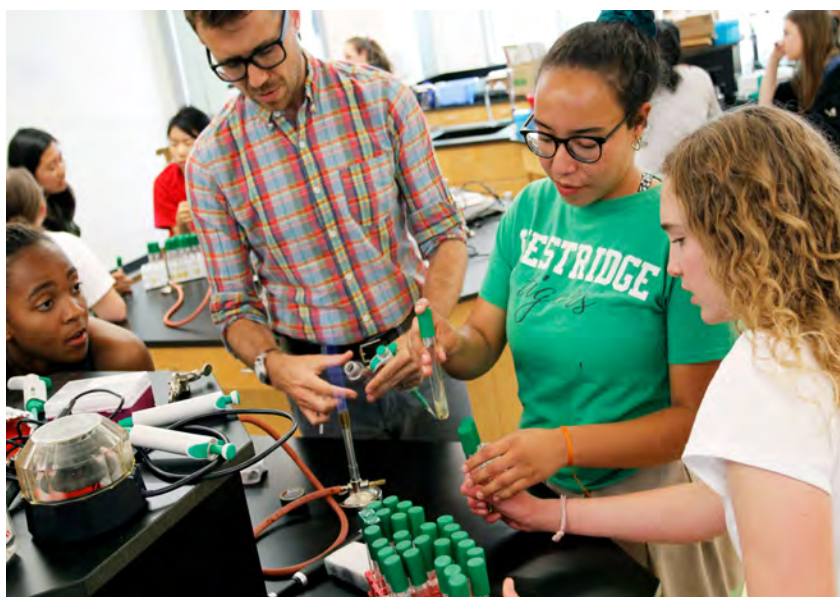
Westridge offers a relevant and comprehensive program of college preparatory studies reflecting an

essential body of knowledge in the liberal arts, mathematics, and the natural sciences with a commitment to values that reflect diversity, individual differences, and ongoing awareness of our changing and dynamic world. In addition, the School offers a balance of co-curricular and extracurricular activities that promote community engagement, competitive athletics, technology, performing and visual arts, at an impressive 9.5-acre

campus situated on the westside of Pasadena. The School environment is safe, conducive to teaching and learning, and effectively advances girls’ knowledge and experiences that promote and safeguard vital academic and life skills.

The School is fully accredited by the California Association of Independent Schools, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and is a member in good standing with the National Association of Independent Schools, the National Coalition of Girls’ Schools, The College Board, The National Association for College Admissions Counseling, the National Association of Principals of Schools for Girls, A Better Chance, Inc., The Cum Laude Society, the Council for Spiritual and Ethical Education, and the Independent School Alliance for Minority Affairs.

As the School enters its second century of quality education for young women, Westridge School invites seasoned and qualified professionals to consider this exciting opportunity to become the 12th Head of School.





“A hundred years ago, Westridge was founded by a woman who believed in girls’ empowerment. Today we are educating girls who can (and do) change the world.”

Since its beginnings in 1913, Westridge School has been home to the fundamental belief that women have a right to be fully educated in an environment that engages the heart, intellect, body, and soul. Founded by Mary Lowther Ranney, an architect and teacher, and with the support of Pasadena parents, the School demonstrated that single-sex education contributes to girls’ achievement, initiative, leadership, and confidence. Miss Ranny retained a unique reputation as a gifted teacher among Pasadena families and before long, she and the families started a girls’ school in a private home on the banks of the Arroyo.



As Pasadena’s population grew in the 1920s, so did Westridge. The campus expanded to accommodate the school’s growing enrollment. Parents and interested friends in the community raised funds for more land acquisition, classroom buildings and expansions. Westridge had outgrown its small, family beginnings and was on a trajectory for growth and notable academic excellence. In 1936, when Miss Ranney retired, a group of parents purchased the School and chartered it as a nonprofit educational institution with a governing Board of Trustees.



Throughout its history, Westridge has retained its founding values of a clear vision for young women, high standards, and a strong moral sense. Certainly, the School’s motto: “Surgere Tentamus. We Strive to Rise,” continues and validates every aspect of the School’s current program. For more than 100 years, Westridge has zealously maintained focus on its mission. The current mission of the School is set forth in three guiding statements: Vision, Fundamental Principles, and Commitment to Diversity and Community.

Vision:

Westridge is an independent, forward-thinking girls’ school committed to educating intellectually adventurous thinkers, and courageous, compassionate leaders.

Our engaging and challenging curriculum prepares students to continue their education in college and beyond as discerning, motivated learners who are committed to excellence and goodness in everything they do. Essential to this work is the commitment to be a community that reflects and values diversity, respects individual differences, and responds to a changing dynamic world.

A Westridge education offers both a path to self-discovery and personal fulfillment and an awareness of the essential interdependence of all peoples, places, and cultures.

We strive to develop young women whose joy in learning, personal integrity, courage, compassion, and commitment to ethical action and social and environment responsibility, will lead them to meaningful lives as contributing citizens of the larger world. We strive to prepare young women to live lives of meaning, contribution, and impact.

Fundamental Principles:

- A tradition of academic excellence for girls
- A legacy of leadership and service
- A commitment of excellence and goodness in every facet of the School
- A vision that embraces inquiry, reflection, and action.

Commitment to Diversity and Community:

Westridge draws strength from the diversity of cultures, voices, and values in its community. It seeks to enhance student, faculty, administration, and staff diversity, to educate girls with the skills to recognize, respect, and embrace diversity of all kinds, and to ensure that a culture of inclusion remains a commitment of the School.

Today, Westridge continues to thrive as it explores more innovative practices and strives for new heights in educational achievement. Recently, the School embarked on a mission to identify those areas of critical importance to the growth and development of the School in the coming years, and published its *Strategic Plan 2020-2025*. The School community has already begun work on these priorities, which it



believes will have a transformational impact on its students and the academic, cultural, and social life of the School.

The Strategic Priorities include:

- 1) Expand programs and resources that promote student well-being and social emotional growth.
- 2) Conduct a curriculum review across all divisions of the School to inform a comprehensive program update focused on academic excellence, innovation, and relevance.
- 3) Strengthen and expand the School's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 4) Develop core leadership skills and personal agency in all Westridge students.



THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

THE STUDENTS

Westridge girls and young women are smart, motivated, and original! They have “spunk,” and they demonstrate great affection for their School. The girls are impressively articulate:

“Westridge is a thriving space for its forward-thinking spirit and welcoming community. The faculty and student body are courageous, intelligent, and driven. The consistent work for a better, more inclusive environment is unique to Westridge and proves its excellence as a school.”

“In virtually all other schools I've been at/looked into, it's been an either/or situation—a warm, welcoming school community or high standards of academic excellence, never the two combined. It's that, along with the

overwhelmingly kind, approachable, skilled teachers, that I really value about Westridge.”

“What makes Westridge a phenomenal school are the opportunities they offer students to grow as learners and people...I also think the student body is something very unique to Westridge. My friends all have passions—whether it's math or kpop or acting—so it's really cool to be able to learn from them as well.”

“Leading lives of impact” is second-nature to Westridge girls and young women. They articulate clearly their understanding of the School's commitment to student voice and agency—and improvements to the School. Examples abound in areas where students have proposed change—everything from changing Grade 8 uniforms to creating a student-led Dream Summit to organizing the Student Action Council with direct and regular

access to the Head of School. Westridge students also follow closely the School's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism, applauding the specificity and commitment the School is making.

The School is fully enrolled with over 500 girls and young women of diverse backgrounds, with approximately 65% students of color, including 6.2% of the student body identifying or multiracially identifying as Black/African American and 13.9% identifying as Latinx. The School has a transgender/gender identity policy, and Westridge students who no longer identify as female are supported and are welcome to remain and graduate from the school. Students hail from about 80 different zip codes in the area, and the most common languages spoken in the home other than English are Mandarin Chinese and Spanish. The School awards \$2.7M

in financial aid each year (which supports 24% of students) and has a commitment to financial assistance and increasing affordability for a Westridge education. The School has endowment funds dedicated to financial aid.

College admissions at Westridge are highly competitive. Of the 63 members of the class of 2020, graduates matriculated at 40 different universities in 16 states, the District of Columbia, and Ireland, having garnered 450 acceptances at 156 colleges and universities. Learn more about college admissions at Westridge here: <https://www.westridge.org/academics/college-counseling>.

THE FACULTY AND STAFF

The faculty and staff at Westridge, respected and appreciated, are long-serving and dedicated to the

School. Accolades about the faculty's expertise and commitment to their students confirm their importance to fulfilling the promise of Westridge:

"The faculty have proven ability to instill confidence in young women to feel empowered, ambitious, and curious in all pursuits."

"The faculty teaches and cultivates resourcefulness and intellectual curiosity."

"Focus on student achievement beyond academic rigor (which is assumed); the development of the whole person is not...sacrificed."

"Build a community of women and faculty based on core values such as humility, service, integrity, and learning."

"Community first. Seeing and understanding girls for who they are.

Growth mindset—not just a catch phrase but a way of life."

"The ability to allow students to apply learned skills outside of the classroom."

"Students feel known and seen for who they are."

"Dedicated to challenging young women intellectually, artistically, and personally."

Currently, 69 full-time faculty members have an average tenure of 11 years at the School. Turnover is remarkably low at 6%. Over \$200K is dedicated to professional development at the School each year.

Also active in the faculty for the past 25 years at Westridge is an independent school-based union that provides professional support for "equity and fairness" in policies and



initiatives. The Westridge Federation of Teachers self-describes as “process-oriented” and supports transparency and consistency in matters of human resources and program priorities. They work hand-in-hand with the School leadership to give genuine and timely feedback with the goal of supporting a positive employee culture.

The Westridge Leadership Team (“WLT”) is comprised of the Head of School, Chief Finance and Operations Officer, Director of Upper School, Director of Lower and Middle School, Senior Director for Enrollment Management and Student Outcomes, Director of Athletics, Director of Advancement, Director of Marketing and Communications, and Director of Technology. The School is in the process of hiring a new Director of Teaching and Learning and a Director of Equity.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees at Westridge is comprised of 27 members, each of whom serves three terms of three years. An impressive number of alumnae serve on the current Board. Best practices in governance are the



norm at Westridge, and Board members are collegial and collaborative. All report a very positive rapport among the Board members and with the WLT.

The Board is deeply supportive of the Westridge mission and program. They believe in the sustained commitment to academic excellence and, at the same time, to the innovative educational programming that will provide Westridge girls and

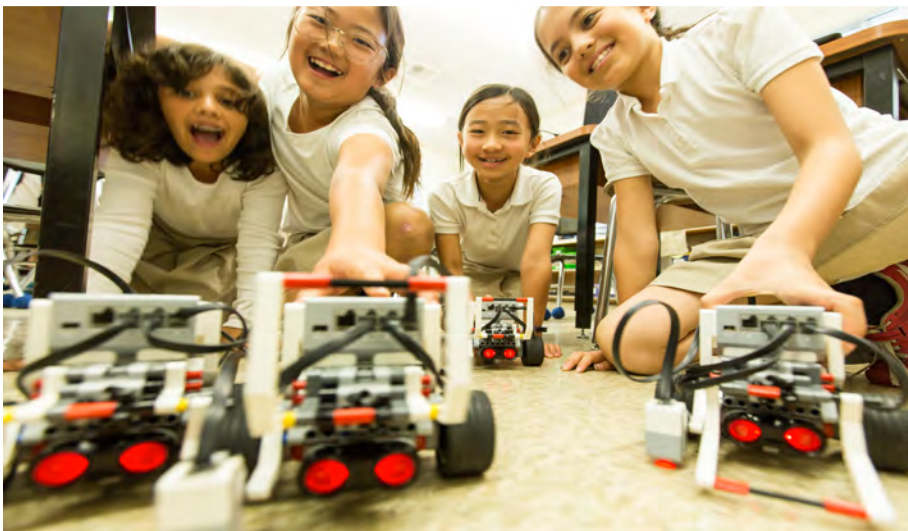
young women with the adaptable skills needed for their futures. Discussions among Westridge Board members are healthy, robust, and generative.

The Board is committed to a thorough and thoughtful search for the School’s next leader as they bid a fond farewell to Elizabeth McGregor who will have served the School successfully for thirteen years.

THE ALUMNAE

The Westridge alumnae are an active and vital element of Westridge today! Eighteen alumnae serve on the Alumnae Board, and eight serve on the School’s Board of Trustees. Westridge alumnae are involved and supportive.

Conscious of the fact that the School was founded before women in America could vote, alumnae are committed to the notion that Westridge has always been on the “progressive edge of women’s education.” They readily articulate the School’s messages to girls:



“Strength to be themselves. Break the mold! Do right by others.”

Several alumnae comment that “individual strengths are sorted out and supported” at Westridge. They recall warmly the camaraderie of single-sex education, and the “joy and energy” that comes from their positive experiences at the School.

THE WESTRIDGE FAMILIES

The Westridge Parents Association (the WPA) goes about its support for the School purposefully and enthusiastically. A range of parent and guardian supported committees support the multiple programs at the School. The parents also describe the School with appreciation and warmth:

“Westridge has a fantastic faculty and sense of community that encourages their students to be themselves, excel academically, and to take risks.”

“We appreciate Westridge's traditions, philosophies, and solid work to teach girls to be courageous, curious, and compassionate.”

“Excellent academics while truly caring about the whole child school experience.”

“Commitment to creative learning, supportive of the girls as they grow into their independence.”

“This is our first year here. But my feeling is that Westridge promotes a culture which is caring, and at the same time encourages girls to do and be their best. And the quality of education reflects very high standards.”

“Knowing each student well enough to identify her strengths and then guiding her to a place where she can make a difference with those strengths.”





collaboration, encouraging risk-taking and support, and hearing the voices of girls--with an important emphasis on providing the social-emotional support for each student. The School intentionally works on inculcating leadership skills in all students so that each girl will learn how to “live a life of impact,” connected to those who have gone before them: <https://www.westridge.org/empowering-girls/lives-of-impact>

In order to achieve these objectives, Westridge seeks to make certain that every girl and young woman feels valued and understood,

known and supported. In this way, Westridge combines the commitment to academic excellence and an equally important commitment to building a caring community of compassionate, confident young women.

Westridge has long embraced the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism holistically: <https://www.westridge.org/about/diversity-equity-inclusion>

The approach is robust and authentic, demonstrated by the willingness to affirm and publish the School’s commitment to these values and the steps it is taking to address next steps in ensuring that Westridge students experience a deep sense of belonging.

The extracurricular program is a panoply of offerings. Sixty-five percent of the girls participate in athletics; the theater program is world-class; abundant service learning projects are open to students; multiple lanes for student leadership opportunities are on offer. Westridge girls and young women are busy!



THE PROGRAM

“As Westridge changes girls, so girls change Westridge.” This mantra lives in the bespoke student-centered programs at the School and is evident in the myriad ways that Westridge seeks to educate and empower girls and young women. The Viewbook can be accessed [here](#).

The School’s website provides an extraordinary view into the program at Westridge, starting with the virtual tour of the school, hosted by a student. The program can be accessed here: <https://www.westridge.org/academics>.

The central tenets of the program are an emphasis on inquiry-based pedagogy, a focus on the research on how girls learn, an emphasis on



THE CAMPUS

Very few schools can rival the aesthetically pleasing and impressive Westridge campus which includes the restoration of historically significant structures, the construction of new buildings to accommodate School growth and enhanced program initiatives, attention to open space, and environmentally sound and economically sensitive planning and practices. Situated on 9.5 acres in the heart of one of Pasadena's original neighborhoods, and in close proximity to the city center, the School benefits from ease of access and is nestled in a secure, tree-lined enclave of single-family dwellings, condominiums, and a park-like environment on Orange Grove Boulevard on the westside of the city.

The School boasts a rich architectural heritage with a collection of historic and new structures, including Pitcairn House designed by Charles and Henry

Greene in 1906, the Braun Music Center designed by Frederick L. Roehrig in 1909, the Main Building, a Tutor-style Revival by Marston, Van Pelt and Maybury in 1923, the north end of campus structures including the Rothenberg Humanities Center, the Fran Norris Scoble Performing Arts Center, and the impressive and award-winning Mathematics and Science Building, the first Platinum LEED-certified building in the City of Pasadena. The academic buildings and entire campus design reflect the intentional planning and execution that have occurred over the years and it is abundantly clear that the campus is an outstanding asset. Additionally, the School has continued its commitment to environmental

sustainability with the installation of water conversation equipment and a solar array, which earned the School a Green City Award that helps to conserve its financial resources and reduce its carbon footprint.

The entire campus is not only home to a vital and engaging program for girls, but it provides opportunities to the greater community by hosting civic events, community engagement, and connection to the larger Pasadena and San Gabriel Valley communities.

PASADENA AND THE ENVIRONS

Situated 11 miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles, Pasadena is home to approximately 140,000 residents. Pasadena is a racially diverse community and is home to numerous cultural and educational destinations, including the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens, the California Institute of Technology, the Norton Simon Museum, the Pasadena Museum of California Art, the Rose Bowl and Tournament House, the Pasadena Playhouse, and the Art Center College of Design. NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory is located in close by La Cañada.



THE FINANCES

The School's budget is approximately \$20M. Current tuition is \$30,275 for grades 4-6, \$33,570 for grades 7-8, and \$39,260 for grades 9-12. Twenty-three percent of students receive financial aid and approximately 14% of the annual budget is committed to financial assistance. The School's endowment stands at \$37.9M.

In its most recent accreditation report in 2018, Westridge School was commended for "its comprehensive and appropriate staffing, policies, procedures and practices around financial and risk management." In addition, the School's administrative team, along with the business team and the Board, were recognized for its capacity to analyze, assess, and respond to changes in conditions and opportunities and respond appropriately to support school planning, prioritizing and pursuing long term financial sustainability of the School. Included in the strong financial management at the School has been the clear appraisal of programming and operations during the recent pandemic, its immediate responses to Covid-19, and the impact on its students and their families.

KEY LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

The next Head of School at Westridge will appreciate the strengths of the School and embrace the exciting opportunities and challenges ahead. They are:

Girls education. Demonstrate a heartfelt commitment to educating girls in a manner that consistently



reflects intention and purpose. Delight in the opportunity and joy of guiding talented young women to meet the challenges of their future. Inspire girls to use their voice and to find their courage to change the world. Build relationships with students and create compelling leadership opportunities for young women.

Visionary thought leader. Bring a cogent vision of the future landscape of education to Westridge. Implement research-based innovation. Support the School's historical and ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and relevance. Be creative and bold to lead Westridge forward.

Academic excellence. Sustain academic excellence as a top priority at Westridge. Promote best practices in teaching and learning. Support the critical thinking, instructional strategies, and classroom experiences that inspire life-long

learners. Provide the discipline, encouragement, tools, and training for talented faculty to deliver a program characterized as challenging and engaging.

Social-emotional programs. Ensure implementation of the social-emotional programming that will support all Westridge girls. Recognize and support the varied learning styles of high-performing students. Ensure that each Westridge girl is understood and valued, able to pursue her "personal best." Calibrate the balance of academic rigor and self-care for achievement-oriented young women.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-racism advocate. Bring experience with implementing diversity, equity, inclusivity, and anti-racism policies, hiring, and programming. Ability to embed this work authentically and purposefully across the School. Bring passion and sensitivity to these initiatives to address the needs of the Westridge community.



Inspirational communicator. Guide the Westridge community through the power of words, written and spoken. Be a visible presence. Bring gravitas, warmth, and a sense of humor to the important work of the School. Build vibrant networks with alumnae, current and past parents, students, and the larger community.

Effective fundraiser. Demonstrate a robust understanding of effective fundraising strategies and continue to promote a culture of philanthropy at the School. Bring experience in and embrace the cultivation and stewardship of donors and executing and meeting fundraising objectives. Connect the mission and values of Westridge to the on-going and future needs of the School and the case for support.

Organizational health. Attend to the importance of positive employee engagement. Build effective teams and collaboration, emphasizing a “one school” ethos.

Delegate authority appropriately. Work in partnership with the Board of Trustees. Advocate for the needs of both faculty and staff. Operate with an “open door” that invites input and robust discussion, but also demonstrate decisiveness and leadership. Prioritize fairness, consistency, and listening.

Operational expertise. Ability to implement the strategic priorities in place for this aspirational school. Create and embed the systems that will define and support educational priorities. Delineate leadership roles and responsibilities as well as how decisions are made and adopted. Lead timely and effective follow-through on initiatives. Communicate both priorities and timelines across divisions with clarity.

Facilities improvement. Build on the prior work of the master facilities program and evaluate the future needs of the campus and adjacent properties. Update the facilities master plan. Maintain and upgrade the current campus.

TO APPLY

Westridge School has retained Coreen Ruiz Hester (chester@rg175.com) and Doreen S. Oleson (doreenoleson@gmail.com) from Resource Group 175 to lead the search. Interested and qualified candidates should apply online at <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup> no later than Friday, March 5, 2021.

The application includes a:

- Cover letter expressing interest in the position
- Current résumé
- Personal statement and/or writing sample
- List of five references with name, phone number, and e-mail address of each (references will not be contacted without prior consent of the candidate)

We are grateful for your interest in Westridge School and look forward to hearing more about your background, experience, and interest in this important leadership opportunity.

Westridge School welcomes and encourages applications from diverse candidates. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, national or ethnic origin, or other legally protected status.