



Lower School Division Director

Start Date: July 1, 2022

January 25, 2022: Semi-final interviews

January 31 - February 4, 2022: Final interviews

WOODLAND
SCHOOL | PORTOLA
VALLEY





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About Woodland

Woodland School, an independent day school situated on 10.5 acres in the beautiful and serene community of Portola Valley, is to many people a “hidden gem.” One of the few independent schools on the San Francisco Peninsula to serve early childhood through grade eight, Woodland School benefits from an open and wooded campus that provides children room to breathe, space to play, and freedom to explore the environment around them — all beneficial to their social, emotional, and cognitive growth.

In its 41st year, Woodland is arguably no longer hidden, though it remains unequivocally a gem of a school. In July of 2020, Woodland welcomed a new Head of School, who brings passion for, and extensive experience with, elementary academics — from teaching and learning to curriculum and design. Over the past 15 months, Woodland’s administrative structure has expanded in order to best serve our students. Woodland seeks a Lower School Division Director to complete the academic administrative team which consists of a Director of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Growth, Director of Early Childhood Education, and Middle School Division Director.

At a small school administrators wear many hats, and Woodland is no exception. However, at the forefront, Woodland will want its Lower School Division Director to support teachers in tandem with overseeing the academic, social and emotional development of students. The Lower School Division Director begins July 1, 2022 and reports to the Head of School.





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Our History

Established in 1981 by experienced Carden teacher Lynne Nelson, Woodland School began educating students at Sequoia Church on Topaz Street in Redwood City. Two years of a growing student population led to Woodland's move to today's current Ladera location in the wooded community of Portola Valley, which offers over ten spacious and serene acres of indoor/outdoor learning. Through Mrs. Nelson's incredible vision, Woodland has fostered a legacy of developing and educating children who are not only exceptional students, but more importantly good human beings. After 24 years leading Woodland, Mrs. Nelson retired as director of Woodland in 2005.

John Ora, the school's second Head of School, is responsible for the growth of the Middle School from 2007 to 2016. During his tenure enrollment increased, and a capital campaign supported the expansion of the Woodland campus, including construction of the gymnasium. In 2007, Woodland athletics teams left the Small School Intermediate League and began competing in ten sports in the West Bay Athletic League.

As the school has grown, Woodland has held onto a culture rooted in kindness, compassion, and diversity. By virtue of both its proximity to Stanford University in the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as its values as a welcoming school for all families, Woodland School represents a rich blend of backgrounds, traditions, and cultures. Over half of Woodland families have at least one member of the family born outside the United States. Many teachers also come from international backgrounds. Altogether, 65 different nationalities are represented at Woodland. These cultural differences have enriched Woodland in countless ways, but it's what those families have in common that is perhaps more vital. Woodland faculty, administrators, and families place a high priority on education, embrace the strength of a diverse community, and believe in instilling a core set of values in young children.





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At A Glance

Founded: 1981

Location: Over 10 acres of an indoor/outdoor campus in the community of Portola Valley

Students: Over 300 students from preschool through grade 8; average class size of 15; more than 20 after school enrichment programs and 10 athletic programs; 54% of families self-identify as families of color or multi-racial; 9:1 student-to-teacher ratio

Faculty: Approximately 33 teachers, nearly 60% of whom hold advanced degrees



Matriculation: Woodland graduates are accepted into their first or second choice high schools, with roughly 60% attending private schools and 40% attending public schools

Accreditation: California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)

Relevant Associations and Memberships: National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS); National Business Officers Association (NBOA); California Independent Schools Business Officer Association (Cal-ISBOA); National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM); National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE); National Science Teachers Association (NSTA); Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD); American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages; California Language Teachers Association; International Literacy Association; California Science Teachers Association (CSTA); West Bay Athletic League; Independent School Management (ISM); Common Ground Speaker Series

Tuition: Early Childhood (\$28,000); Lower School (\$32,200), Middle School (\$34,000)

Financials: Operating budget ~\$9M; financial aid allotment ~\$1.2M

Website: woodland-school.org





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Why Woodland? Our Values

Woodland is a small school with a big heart. Families choose Woodland because they feel connected to the core values, which are reflected in Woodland's curriculum and classrooms, as well as the inclusive community. Two recent quotes below demonstrate the positive and lasting impact that Woodland has on so many families.

"We chose Woodland School because it provided academic challenges within a small, innovative, and collaborative environment. We have loved Woodland because our child was immediately integrated into all aspects of the community. Our child has a physical disability, and the school has worked to make him feel equal to his classmates. Woodland is a creative, challenging, and joyful place to navigate the wonders of Middle School." - Parents, class of 2022

"We were first drawn to Woodland because it was a small school-- supportive and inclusive — with a challenging curriculum. What we found was something much deeper than that. These small classes were tight-knit communities of students, teachers and parents. Teachers understood the specific strengths and needs of our son and provided targeted learning experiences to engage him and stretch his thinking." - Parents, class of 2026





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Teaching and Learning

Woodland specializes in education that inspires students by nurturing each individual's voice, intellects, and character.

Balancing traditional teaching methods with progressive approaches including inquiry and student-driven projects, children are empowered and encouraged to be active and engaged learners. Teachers craft meaningful learning experiences that enable creativity, ingenuity, and interdisciplinary connections. Students explore and develop complex understandings that engender a sense of self and purpose in the world.

Teachers model a commitment to lifelong learning, and hone their craft by pursuing professional development and sharing knowledge with one another.

Woodland Learners Are...

- **Insatiably curious** and **unrelenting**
- **Resilient** from testing knowledge and recognizing the value of making mistakes
- **Joyously creative**
- Guided by a **strong moral compass**
- **Appreciative of the interconnectedness** of all living things, cultures, communities, disciplines, and phenomena
- **Whole-brain thinkers** who balance logic and imagination and cultivate grace, fitness, poise, and agility of body and mind
- **Courageous** and embrace ambiguity, uncertainty, and the unknown as a means to discovery
- **Collaborative** and recognize the power of working as a team
- **Engaged** with nature and the outdoors authentically in our setting and through our programs





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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Mission

OneWoodland supports Woodland's community to ensure that all are welcome and belong.

Vision

OneWoodland creates spaces for open conversations, advances educational opportunities, raises awareness, and provides strategies and tools to support an inclusive community that fosters a sense of belonging.

Past, Present and Future

During the 2020-2021 school year, the Board of Trustees established a task force to:

- Ensure that Woodland is an equitable learning and working environment for all,
- Create resources for families to engage in critical conversations around diversity, equity and inclusion,
- Provide teachers with the tools necessary to deliver a robust curriculum that is inclusive of all perspectives, and
- Ensure that all students have access to instruction that consistently reflects our mission and values aligned with this work.

All employees are engaged with dedicated DEI work this year, that began with a focus on self-identity and personal engagement with issues related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Employees have used Thinking Routines from Harvard's Project Zero to guide reflections.

All employees participated in Book Clubs, sharing thoughts and reflections about one of the following books: *Me and White Supremacy*, *White Fragility*, *How to Be an Antiracist*, *Stamped from the Beginning*, *So You Want to Talk About Race*, and *Between the World and Me*.

A team of trustees, faculty, administrators, parents, students and alumni attended the Pollyanna Conference to further Woodland's DEI work. In the Spring of 2021, Woodland participated in the AIM Assessment, developed by NAIS, to gather feedback from all stakeholders (trustees, employees, parents and students). In addition, parents and employees attended focus groups on a variety of topics to share personal experiences and perspectives. An executive summary was developed to guide the process of developing a mission-aligned diversity statement for the school, which will be board approved in 2022. This work is critical in shaping the next iteration of the school's strategic plan.





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Traditions at Woodland

Assembly

Assembly is an opportunity for students to come together as an entire division. Students practice public speaking and share about their academic and personal interests. In doing so, students' self confidence and world knowledge are strengthened. Assembly is also a time for parents to spend time on campus, enjoy assembly presentations, and connect with each other.



House System

A long-time school tradition, Woodland uses a House system to foster camaraderie and teach students throughout all grade levels to work together toward common goals. Each student is inducted into one of four Houses — Oak, Pine, Maple, or Cypress — when they join the school. Students within each House enjoy numerous activities together, including buddy lunches, House meetings and intramural House Cup Games. Each student is connected with others in their House through the cross-grade Buddy Program. For many students, the friendships formed across the grades through the Buddy Program are a favorite aspect of their Woodland experience. The House Program is a wonderful tradition that promotes student engagement, teamwork, collaboration, and a healthy level of competition.



Publishing Parties

At the end of writing units of study, lower school grades host publishing parties where family members are invited to campus to hear and see students' writing and illustrations. Students craft pieces in a wide range of genres including fiction, informational, and poetry which include creative covers and illustrations. Student writing is both passionate and informational.



Kindergarten and Fourth Grade Buddies



Santa Lucia



Core Virtues



Field Trips





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The Position

The Lower School Division Director is responsible for a division which includes 150 students in Grades K-4, reports directly to the Head of School, and works closely with all constituents of the school including students, faculty, parents, administration, and the Board of Trustees. The ideal candidate should have strong knowledge of academic, social, and emotional development of kindergarten through fourth grade students. He or she must be highly organized, have excellent verbal and written skills, understand current education pedagogy, and be adept at working with all stakeholders within the school community. Strong interpersonal, communication, and problem solving skills are essential.

The Lower School Division Director is responsible for oversight of day-to-day operations of the division and demonstrates a commitment to the school's mission, vision, and values. The director is responsible for hiring, supervising, and evaluating faculty and oversees the academic, social, and emotional development of students. The ideal candidate will have a graduate degree in Education or Educational Leadership with a minimum of 3 years teaching experience at the elementary level. Woodland School expects that a Lower School Division Director will adhere to the following duties as part of their daily responsibilities:

- Serves as the intellectual leader of the division
- Serves on the senior administrative team to set school policy
- Works with the Directors of Early Childhood and Middle School to promote continuity and coherence of programs and student experiences
- Hires, supervises, and evaluates Lower School faculty
- Creates and implements schedules and duty rosters in conjunction with the Middle School Division Director
- Participates in the admissions process, promoting the Lower School program
- Manages various divisional budgets
- Supports classroom management
- Partners with parents to insure students are engaged and reaching their potential
- Collaborates with the Director of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Growth in all areas related to curriculum, faculty professional development, and student progress
- Promotes and maintains faculty morale
- Collaborates with the learning specialist to identify and/or communicate with parents about potential learning, and/or behavior needs
- Conducts division and grade level meetings with faculty
- Supports the organization of student reporting and grading
- Organizes and leads morning assemblies
- Works with SEL teacher/counselor to create emotional supports for students and communicates with parents about potential mental health needs
- Promotes a joyful community of learning





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The Application Process

Applications Accepted Through January 19, 2022

All applications must be submitted online, via: <https://woodland-school.hiringthing.com/job/352874/lower-school-division-director>

An application requires submitting four PDFs:

- Cover letter introducing yourself to the Woodland search committee that includes your educational philosophy and interest in the position
- CV or résumé
- A list of four references (include each person's name, current organization, title, phone number, email, and past connection to you— though we will not contact any references without obtaining your permission first)
- Response to the following prompt: What are the key elements of a positive school culture, and what policies, programs, and decisions are most important for creating and sustaining it?

Woodland School is committed to developing diversity within our community and complies with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, or handicapped status in the selection of the Board, in the employment of personnel, in the admission of students, or in the administration of the school's programming.

