



**Position Statement  
Head of School  
The Carey School  
San Mateo, CA  
Start Date: July 1, 2023**

# The Carey School

## Head of School Position Statement

START DATE: JULY 1, 2023



### THE OPPORTUNITY

*“At the Carey School we believe where you are educated first, matters most.”*

The Carey School is an extraordinary community. The school’s Pre-K through 5th grade classrooms and play spaces are filled with joyous, curious, and engaged children. Each and every constituency of the school speaks to the community spirit, kindness and care with which the program and activities are designed and delivered. Carey is an oasis for children and childhood, with a lively, inclusive and grounded feel throughout the school. The school has repeatedly affirmed the decision to serve Pre-K through 5th grade students, in the belief that these early years of development and learning are both critical and precious. Now in its 94th year, the school strives to balance innovation and tradition, academic excellence with healthy social and emotional life, and to enrich the lives of children and their families within a vibrant school community.

The Carey School has enjoyed steady and highly effective leadership, and seeks its next Head of School from a

position of strength and stability. The Board of Trustees, administrators and teachers have built out the campus and the program with energy and vision, assuring that families who choose to come to Carey feel welcome, and that their children grow and learn in an inspiring community.

### THE MISSION

*“Specializing in elementary education, The Carey School inspires curious, confident, and joyful learners and celebrates childhood in an inclusive, diverse community that nurtures kindness, respect, and personal responsibility.”*

A half dozen “commitments” accompany the mission, and flesh out the philosophy and pedagogy of Carey. The School commits to:

- Educate each child through an academically challenging and balanced pre-kindergarten to fifth grade educational curriculum based on the fundamentals of reading, language arts, and math.

- Advance curriculum with integrated studies in science, music, art, world languages, technology, library studies, physical education, and other enrichment programs.
- Enable students to reach their fullest potential by providing a developmentally appropriate curriculum that nurtures cognitive, creative, social-emotional, and physical growth.
- Sustain a culture of teaching excellence through passionate faculty, curriculum reviews, collaboration, and professional development.
- Partner with families to maintain an inclusive community and build student awareness of self as well as the world beyond.
- Graduate enthusiastic, life-long learners who are prepared with the skills for a successful educational journey.

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### HISTORY

The Carey School was founded in 1928, when Mary and James Carey sought a place where their two daughters could thrive as early learners. Joined by a handful of neighbors Mary, an experienced teacher, welcomed students into the Carey family home, nurturing pre-school children in a play-based, warm and kind community. Word spread and the school grew, moving from the Carey's home to the Clark Drive Mansion, and again to its current 2 ½ acre site in a quiet residential San Mateo neighborhood. Marie Therese Carey and Clare Carey Willard, the school's first graduates, returned as teachers and subsequently became co-heads of the school, retiring in 1989 and handing the leadership responsibilities to Robert W. Simpson and the school's first Board of Trustees. With strong and steady leadership over the years, the school has continued to flourish, holding true to the "traditional values, contemporary standards" with laser focus on an excellent and well-rounded elementary school education for its students.

### CAMPUS

The Carey School's 2 ½ acre campus has purpose-built classrooms, offices, breakout rooms, multi-purpose spaces and distinctive outdoor play areas. Seventy-five percent of the school's buildings are under 10 years old and blend architecturally around a lively and welcoming courtyard; indoor spaces include spacious, light-filled classrooms, a library, "thinkering" lab, art studio, and extended day/special programs space. Outdoor spaces include a garden and exceptionally well-landscaped and hardscaped areas for children to learn and play.



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### SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The school community is vibrant and diverse. The school's 271 students hail from San Mateo, Burlingame, Hillsborough and Millbrae as well as communities further south on the peninsula in the heart of Silicon Valley, and north from San Francisco. About 15% percent of the student body receives tuition assistance; diversity at Carey includes many bi-and multi-racial families with over 50% of students overall identifying as students of color. Notably, there are over 27 languages spoken in the homes of Carey families, a truly international community.

The parent community is fully engaged with the school, supporting school life by committee membership and direct service, spirited engagement in fun-and- fund-raising, and prodigious efforts in support of school traditions.

There are 64 full and part-time faculty, administrators, and staff members (including extended day care) who share a wide range of backgrounds, experiences and interests. The faculty have been chosen for the variety of their passions such that there is a rich professional culture at the school. All share a conviction that the elementary school years are critical; they are devoted to and delighted by the particular needs of their students. The faculty demographics are well balanced and diverse. A close and collaborative spirit pervades.

The Board of Trustees stewards the school's resources, adhering to the NAIS Principles of Good Practice in all its deliberations. There are currently 23 voting trustees bringing wide-ranging professional expertise, along with the Head of School and Parents Association President serving as ex-officio members. The Board has six committees (Executive, Finance, Audit, Development, Trustee, and Strategy/DEI) and meets 5 or 6 times each year.

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### PROGRAM

The Carey School academic program is emblematic of its mission and values, and serves as a springboard for a rich love of learning. The program is a blend of traditional and progressive elements, with well-designed projects, purposeful field trips, integrated units, plenty of hands-on learning, and an emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion throughout. This diversity curriculum begins in Pre-K, a unique commitment and differentiator among peer schools. Homeroom teachers focus on core subjects of math, language arts, social studies and social-emotional learning with the support of both math and literacy specialists, as well as “pull-out” classes in library, Spanish, French, art, music, science, physical education, service learning and gardening. Strong and well-planned professional development opportunities assure that teachers are familiar with up-to-date research and the classrooms and pedagogy reflect the faculty’s familiarity with child development and brain science.

### FINANCES AND FUNDRAISING

The School is fiscally well-managed, with an overall budget of \$10 million. Careful attention is paid to the school's manageable debt (\$3.7 million) and endowment (\$3.2 million) with efforts to retire the debt as soon as possible and focus on building the endowment during the next major fundraising campaign. Tuition and compensation are carefully stewarded, and the school's commitment to tuition assistance (over \$800,000 in the 21-22 school year) pairs with its aspirations to draw students from a broad range of neighborhoods and backgrounds. Salaries and benefits are above the mid-range when compared to peer schools, and the finance team carefully benchmarks all aspects of school finance with data from CAIS (California Association of Independent Schools) and more targeted ISBOA data.

The school has a long trend of successful Annual Fund participation (reaching 100% in the 2021-22 school year) and topping the industry average in per-student gifts (2.5K versus 2.1K). Development activities include an annual gala, in which \$350,000 - \$500,000 is raised in a festive, themed celebration.

The summer of 2022 will mark the second summer of Camp Carey, which includes month-long programs such as “Let’s Code,” “Let’s Dance” and “Let’s Play” as well as “Let’s Lead” — a counselor-in-training program for rising 7th through 9th graders. This is one of the many ways Carey stays connected with alumni.



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### ADMISSIONS, OUTREACH, AND MIDDLE SCHOOL PLACEMENT

Carey is an elementary school in high demand. All stages in the admissions “funnel” from inquiries to applicants, acceptances and enrollments are growing healthily. The school has 271 students, and expects continued full enrollment in the upcoming years. As such, the Director of Admission and Financial Aid can afford to carefully shape each entering class in a way that complements the current Carey community. In the most recent incoming Pre-K and Kindergarten classes (the entry level for most) there are 45 new students. These 45 Pre-K’ers and Kindergartners hail from 11 different towns and from San Francisco to Palo Alto to Pacifica.

While fortunate to be in high demand, Carey does not intend to rest on its laurels and instead will be seeking even greater socioeconomic diversity going forward, pairing this with greater outreach to families throughout the area. This initiative is of considerable interest to the Carey community and is an area of focus in the current Strategic Plan.

The School is proud of its long track record of success guiding its 5th grade students through the middle school placement process. Carey graduates enroll in renowned independent schools such as Menlo, Crystal Springs Upland, and Castelleja as well as some of the finest public schools in the greater San Mateo area. At all of these schools, Carey students flourish as a result of their academic preparation and civic mindedness that encourages these selective schools to give Carey candidates careful consideration every year.



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### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The next Head of School at Carey should be prepared to collaborate with a forward-thinking and devoted Board of Trustees, administration, and faculty to lead Carey boldly into the future, embracing current challenges and seizing new opportunities.

These challenges and opportunities include but are not limited to the following:

- Build upon Duncan Lyon's successful legacy as Head of School by executing initiatives outlined in the Strategic Plan and imagining the future as a national leader in elementary education at this positive inflection point in Carey's history.
- Expand on Carey's innovative and forward thinking elementary education in ways that are consistent with a balanced curriculum, building academic skills across content areas, and tending to the growth of the whole child.
- Address challenges of affordability for families, faculty, and staff, as the school considers tuition, access to socio-economically diverse families, and the rising cost of living in the Bay Area.

- Recruit, develop, and retain outstanding faculty and staff by designing, implementing, and encouraging meaningful professional development and continuing to offer strong compensation and benefits packages.
- Raise significant new funds for the Carey endowment to offset increases in tuition, expand financial aid, and support strategic initiatives by seeking major gifts and building a culture of philanthropy.
- Partner with the Board and OneCarey, a cross-constituent team of trustees, administration, faculty, staff and parents that focuses on creating an inclusive culture, to act on its unequivocal commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. (The Board has established an active Strategy/DEI committee and hired Dr. Valaida Wise to conduct an equity audit which will inform an actionable DEI strategic plan).
- Determine the ideal staffing model going forward, especially in the leanly staffed admissions, business, and development offices. Assess the size and structure of the administrative team needed to execute on future strategic priorities such as expanding recruitment and increasing the endowment.
- Build upon the strength and success of the middle school placement process by continuing to counsel parents effectively and present their students in an authentic manner, know the schools to which students traditionally matriculate, and forge and nurture relationships with middle school administrators.
- Maintain a sense of one community by thoughtfully integrating the recently established Little Carey Pre-School, residing on its own campus, with the main K-5 campus. (The Pre-School is scheduled to expand, adding a 3-year-old program in 2022-2023).

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### KEY QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITIES

The successful candidate to be Head of School at Carey will be a mission and values-driven leader who will embody and demonstrate most, if not all, of the following skills, qualities, characteristics, and experiences:

- Demonstrated success as an educational thought leader in the greater educational community; an active listener with a collaborative nature but able to bring processes and projects to completion; able to make a decision.
- Passion for the value of elementary education; an ability to model and communicate that passion and a vision for where elementary education is headed over the next ten years.
- Student magnet; a keen understanding of elementary school students, a playful and kind relationship with children, and a commitment to knowing every child in the school.
- Teacher whisperer; a gift for identifying, selecting, and retaining outstanding teachers as well as supervising and developing them and encouraging their professional growth.
- Authentic relationships; an ability to forge partnerships both within the constituencies of the school and externally, in the neighborhood, among fellow Bay Area independent schools and more broadly in the educational world. In particular, it will be important for the next Head of School to sustain the successful middle school placement program.
- Courage; a willingness to wade into challenging conversations with conviction while making every member of the community feel valued and heard.
- Cross-cultural competencies; significant training in and experience with building diverse, equitable and inclusive communities.
- Superb communication skills; in writing, in front of groups, in relationships with others, and as a team leader.
- Strategic thinker; a manager with financial acumen; with fund-raising experience, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a record of ambitious and data-driven change.
- High emotional intelligence; kindness, warmth, a sense of humor, and a strong ethical compass consistent with The Carey School mission and culture.



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### TO APPLY

Candidates interested in applying for the position of Head of School at The Carey School should do so online at: <https://rg175.com/candidates/signup>.

Application includes:

- Letter of interest (cover letter)
- Resume or CV
- Personal statement (educational/leadership philosophy)
- Name of four current references and contact information (optional)

The **deadline** for receipt of full application materials is **April 22, 2022**.

Please note that the Carey School search committee intends to interview semi-finalist candidates on Friday, May 6th and Saturday, May 7th in person, if possible, and will invite finalists to visit campus September 2022. Please plan accordingly.

For any questions or further information about the position, please contact:

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