



LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY | SEATTLE, WA

MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION HEAD



“This is a truly special place—a place where children are seen, valued, and encouraged to grow in every way: academically, socially, emotionally, physically, and creatively.

From the moment you walk onto our campus, you can feel the joy, curiosity, and care that define our school community.”

— DR. DARYL WRIGHT, HEAD OF SCHOOL



LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Westside School, an independent preschool–8th grade school in West Seattle, is seeking a highly relational, student-centered leader to serve as its next Middle School Division Head. Guided by its mission to help students learn to think critically and act with compassion in a joyful, supportive community, Westside is a place where intellect and heart thrive side by side.

Since its founding in 1981, the school has empowered students to meet challenges with imagination and resilience. Families describe Westside as “the school we didn’t know we needed,” a warm and welcoming environment defined by respect, belonging, and genuine partnership among teachers, students, and families.

Reporting to the new Head of School, Dr. Daryl Wright, the Middle School Division Head oversees all aspects of the program for grades 5–8, collaborating with faculty and staff to guide approximately 150 students through a formative stage of growth. The Division Head joins a collegial

Educational Leadership Team to deepen alignment across divisions and champion the continued evolution of teaching and learning. This leader will bring steadiness and perspective to a dedicated faculty, strengthening team culture and supporting Westside’s commitment to the whole child.

The next Middle School Division Head will enter a community ready for stability and shared direction after a period of transition. With optimism and vision, the new leader will nurture confidence among faculty and families, communicate transparently, and celebrate the spirit that makes Westside distinct.



They will uphold the school's promise to serve a wide range of learners with creativity, empathy, and high expectations, striking a thoughtful balance between support and stretch for every student. This person will help articulate the Middle School's identity and collaborate across the institution to share the impact of a Westside education with clarity and pride.

The ideal candidate will lead with energy, humility, and high emotional intelligence—someone who finds meaning in guiding early adolescents and the educators who inspire them. A clear-sighted communicator and trusted partner, this leader will cultivate consistency, enthusiasm, and shared purpose across the division. This is an exciting opportunity for the Middle School Division Head to help shape the school's next chapter, uniting a vibrant community around scholastic curiosity and authentic connection.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In partnership with the Head of School and divisional colleagues, the Middle School Division Head will be expected to advance the following priorities:

- Rebuild trust and stability within the Middle School. Strengthen consistency, communication, and follow-through after multiple leadership transitions.
- Clarify and champion the Middle School identity. Articulate a compelling vision that celebrates the distinctiveness of Westside's Middle School experience while ensuring alignment with the Lower School and the school's overall mission.
- Cultivate a culture of professional learning and development. Support and celebrate a talented faculty through meaningful opportunities for professional development, reflection, and collaboration. Establish consistent systems for feedback and evaluation that encourage ongoing professional excellence while maintaining trust and autonomy.
- Advance programs and practices that center student well-being and growth. Advocate for the school's commitment to social-emotional learning, restorative practices, and differentiation that meets the full range of learners. Elevate student voice and agency, ensuring that every learner feels known, challenged, and supported.



THE POSITION

- Partner with colleagues in admissions, advancement, and communications to tell the Westside story. Highlight the impact and outcomes of a Westside education, sharing stories that connect current families, alumni, and the broader community.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Maintain and help focus the school's mission, vision, and values
- Foster a highly engaged student and faculty culture in the middle school, characterized by high expectations, joyful learning, and a strong sense of community
- Build strong relationships with students, parents, and educators
- Coach, mentor, and evaluate middle school teaching staff, with particular attention to early career teachers
- Support teaching teams in achieving a high quality of collaboration and instructional practice
- Champion and facilitate curricular planning for the middle school, with a focus on inquiry-based, project-based, and experiential learning
- Provide positive support for students in achieving academic and personal success, including oversight of student support structures and the MS Dean role
- Oversee middle school communications, including the curricular and program sections of teachers' newsletters
- Organize and facilitate middle school faculty meetings
- Attend 'special circumstances' parent/teacher conferences and be available for check-ins and portfolio conferences
- Serve as the point person for student behavior plans, partnering closely with the Middle School Dean
- Develop strong systems for positive parent involvement and communication
- Collaborate with the Heads of Lower School, Early Learning, and the Head of School to strengthen cross-divisional connections





- Work with the Head of School and Educational Leadership Team to plan professional development, retreats, and faculty growth initiatives
- Lead hiring committees for middle school faculty and staff
- Serve as the main point of contact for parent questions, concerns, or feedback related to the middle school program
- Build the middle school schedule in conjunction with other division heads
- Participate in recess, dismissal, and other duties weekly
- Meet weekly with the Head of School
- Other duties as assigned

QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES

The next Middle School Division Head will be an inspiring leader who cultivates trust through clarity and follow-through, strengthening the confidence and cohesion of the division. Rooted in a love for middle school-aged children and a belief in centering the whole child, this leader will model empathy, visibility, and authenticity in every interaction. As an instructional leader, they will nurture professional growth and proactive support for both students and teachers while preserving the creativity and autonomy that define Westside's faculty culture. With humility, humor, and high EQ, the Division Head will unite students, faculty, and families around a shared sense of purpose, fostering an environment that honors every student's capacity to grow and lead.

Additionally:

- Skilled and transparent communicator - both a thoughtful listener and an articulate messenger
- Culturally responsive practitioner with a deep commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice



THE POSITION

- Proactive problem-solver who supports students, families, and faculty with empathy and consistency
- Experienced middle school educator and leader who understands adolescent development and differentiation
- Ability to balance vision with day-to-day pragmatism
- Reflective, forward-thinking, and grounded in the realities of teaching and learning
- Brings sincerity, humor, and high energy to leadership and community life

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Studies have shown that people of historically marginalized backgrounds are less likely to apply for a position unless they believe they meet every listed requirement. Westside School is most interested in finding the best candidate for this opportunity and encourages people to apply if they feel they meet most of the following qualifications:

- Advanced degree in teaching, educational leadership, curriculum and assessment, or a related discipline
- Proven success in a position of faculty leadership
- Prior classroom teaching experience, preferably in middle school
- Experience recruiting, hiring, supporting, and retaining talented, diverse, and mission-aligned faculty
- Demonstrated success leading mission-aligned change
- Strategic and detail-oriented approach to leadership
- A passion for curriculum development and teacher growth

MISSION

Westside students learn to think critically and act with compassion in a joyful, supportive community.

VISION

Westside is committed to being a collaborative, inclusive school where learners discover their unique strengths, embrace challenges, and develop a passion for learning, in order to contribute positively to their world.

VALUES

Joyful Learning: *Westside students find joy through discovery. They are inspired by challenges and immersed in meaningful explorations that spark their curiosity and sense of wonder.*

High Academic Standards: *Our dynamic program inspires students through differentiated and interdisciplinary learning opportunities designed to meet clear and measurable goals. Westside students engage in deep thinking, discourse, and creative problem-solving.*

Confident Learners: *Westside students actively engage in and take ownership of their learning. They build resilience by taking risks and embracing productive struggle. Students are empowered to understand and appreciate their unique learning styles.*

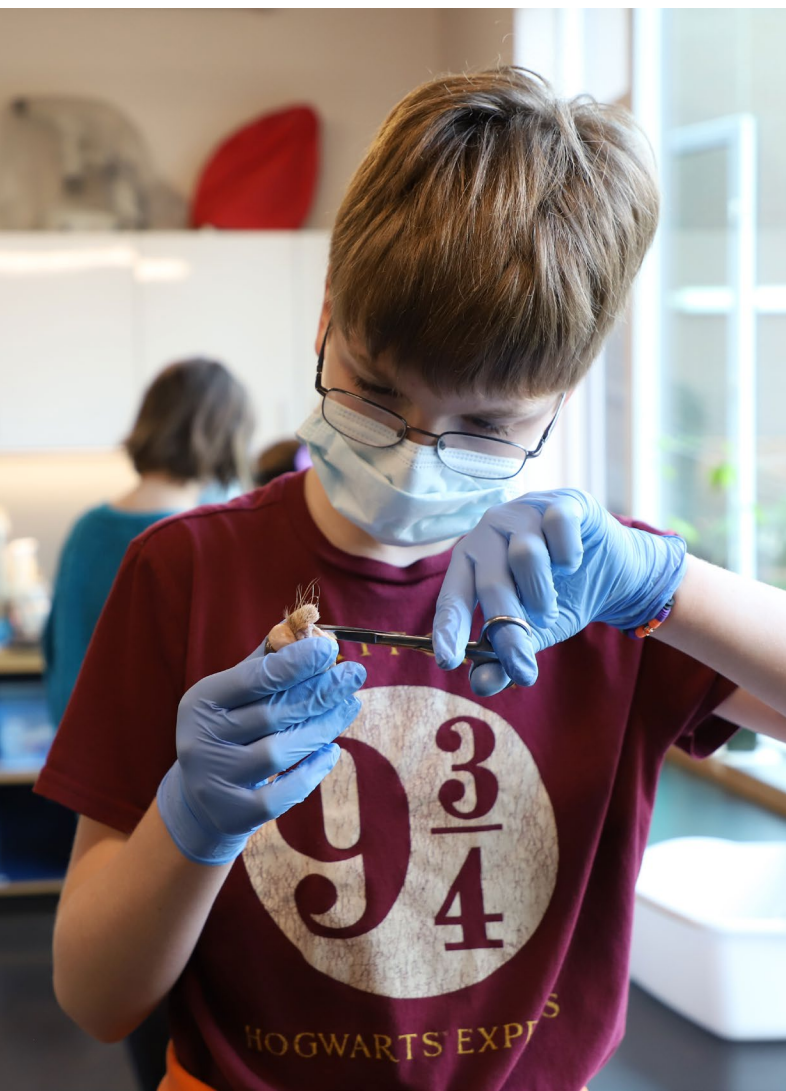
Caring Community: *We foster a community where empathy and support empower every Westside student to grow, recognize their worth, and care for others, creating a more compassionate environment for all.*

Fostering Belonging: *We remove barriers and uplift individuals, creating a community where all identities are seen, known, and celebrated. Through authentic relationships, shared responsibility, and equitable practices, we strive to honor each person's lived experience and build a space where everyone belongs and thrives—together.*



Westside School is an independent preschool through 8th-grade school where students learn to think critically and act with compassion within a joyful and supportive community.

Since 1981, Westside has fostered creativity, innovation, and a strong sense of community. Westside's approach emphasizes student-centered, inquiry-based learning in a vibrant, creative environment. The school is deeply committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB), integrating social justice standards into its curriculum.



At Westside, teachers create experiential learning opportunities that connect students with meaningful contexts and service. Our students engage with the wilderness, the city, and local neighborhoods, building purposeful global citizenship. Graduates leave with a robust academic foundation, ten years of World Language study, and a deep appreciation for the arts and natural world.

THE PROGRAM

The Westside School curriculum draws on a wide variety of methods and practices. As students progress through the school, the curriculum is increasingly embedded in investigative projects that allow teachers to align the level of depth and challenge for each student. Projects further allow students to practice analytical skills while developing a wide variety of solutions or responses. By the time students are in eighth grade, many are using creative forms such as writing, theater, or graphic arts as tools for critical inquiry.

Teachers at Westside seek to create experiential opportunities that anchor learning through doing, and

THE SCHOOL

deepen purpose by connecting work with meaningful context or service. That is why Westside students spend time in the wilderness, in the city, and in their local neighborhoods. Westside is building purposeful global citizenship, so students graduate not only with a strong core of academics but also with 10 years of world language study alongside a deep dive into the arts and natural world.

Experiential Education

Experiential learning is central to a Westside education and extends across every grade level. From early explorations in local parks and gardens to multi-day overnight trips in the Pacific Northwest, students learn by doing, connecting classroom concepts to the wider world. The Outdoor and Experiential Education program blends environmental stewardship, teamwork, and personal challenge, fostering resilience, curiosity, and a deep appreciation for nature and community. As students grow, these experiences expand in scope and complexity, culminating in middle school expeditions that inspire confidence, leadership, and a lifelong sense of adventure.

Student Support

Westside is deeply committed to nurturing the whole child through an integrated approach to academic, social, and emotional growth. A dedicated Student Support team, including counselors, learning specialists, and academic guidance leaders, works in partnership with teachers and families to ensure that every student thrives. Social-emotional learning is embedded throughout the curriculum, helping students develop self-awareness, empathy, and resilience within a supportive community. For those needing additional academic support, the team provides individualized strategies and small-group instruction that foster confidence, independence, and a lifelong love of learning.

Early Learning

In the Early Learning Program, play is learning. Rooted in an emergent, play-based curriculum, the program invites children to explore, create, and

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Westside School is committed to promoting inclusiveness, diversity, and cultural competence in its education, employment practices, school community, and governance. It views inclusiveness as a fundamental value, diversity as a key element, and cultural competence as a vital skill necessary to prepare students to participate in and contribute to a global society. Westside uses the term diversity broadly to encompass differences in the attributes of individuals, families, and communities.



collaborate as they build the social-emotional and cognitive foundations essential for lifelong learning. Teachers thoughtfully observe each child's interests and guide them toward projects and activities that spark curiosity and deepen understanding.

Through a balance of classroom learning stations, small- and large-group activities, and rich experiences in physical education, performing and visual arts, and world languages, Westside's youngest learners are empowered to take an active role in their own learning. Each day begins with connection and community during Morning Meeting and unfolds into purposeful play where imagination, discovery, and growth intertwine.

Lower School

In Lower School, learning is joyful, hands-on, and rooted in curiosity. Teachers guide students to think independently, collaborate with others, and connect learning to the real world through dynamic, project-

based experiences. Whether exploring local ecosystems, presenting ideas, or working alongside peers, students build confidence, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning. The curriculum continually evolves to reflect best practices in student-centered education, ensuring every child is both challenged and inspired.

Middle School

Middle School at Westside nurtures curiosity, builds community, and empowers growth. Rooted in a student-centered, inquiry-based approach, the program honors early adolescence as a time of exploration, self-discovery, and increasing independence. Teachers design learning experiences that are both challenging and supportive, integrating academics, the arts, social justice, and social-emotional learning to cultivate the whole child.

Guided by the principles of the Responsive Classroom, faculty meet students where they are—academically, socially, and emotionally—while encouraging them



THE SCHOOL

to take ownership of their learning and leadership. Hands-on, collaborative projects invite students to think critically, engage creatively, and connect their studies to the wider world.

In this dynamic environment, middle schoolers develop confidence, empathy, and a deep sense of belonging. By the time they complete eighth grade, Westside students are not only prepared for the academic demands of high school but also equipped with the curiosity, compassion, and courage to lead with purpose.

CAMPUS & GEOGRAPHY

Campus

Nestled on a picturesque hillside in West Seattle's Arbor Heights neighborhood, Westside is surrounded by wildflowers, towering fir trees, and stunning views of Mt. Rainier. The school is housed in a naturally lit, child-centered, creative building that provides a collaborative learning environment for its students. The campus has 53,000 square feet of space dedicated to teaching and learning: 27 classrooms; light-filled, child-centered work spaces; a beautiful library; separate, team-oriented middle school classrooms; a 500-seat auditorium; green space, and warm and inviting gathering spaces where students, teachers, parents, and visitors can connect, share, and meet.

Geography

West Seattle offers the best of both worlds: a vibrant, connected neighborhood with all the cultural and natural richness of the greater Seattle area. Set apart by its strong sense of community and breathtaking views of Puget Sound, the Olympic Mountains, and the downtown skyline, West Seattle is home to local markets, waterfront parks, and a thriving arts and food scene. Its proximity to downtown Seattle places the school within reach of world-class museums, universities, and technology hubs while maintaining the relaxed pace of a coastal neighborhood.

AT A GLANCE 2025–26

393 students

(Middle School — 144)

Enrollment

36.4%

% Students who identify as people of color

79

(Teachers & Instructional Assistants — 38; Staff — 26)

Number of faculty & staff

30+%

% Faculty/Staff who identify as people of color

15:1

Average Student: Teacher Ratio

16–20

Average Middle School class size

24%

Students receiving tuition assistance

\$14,500

Average tuition assistance award

PROCEDURE TO APPLY

Westside School does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, or disability.

Westside School fosters a vibrant culture of belonging, recognized by the Northwest Association of Independent Schools as a defining strength. Rooted in joyful learning, meaningful relationships, and mutual respect, we inspire creativity, innovation, and community. Our expert educators thrive in an inclusive environment that values diverse perspectives, integrated curriculum, and project-based learning. Supported by beautiful, mission-driven facilities, we celebrate different backgrounds and prioritize inclusion. We welcome applicants from all cultures and communities to apply.

Interested candidates should submit via https://bit.ly/Westside_MSHed_AppForm the following materials confidentially in one single PDF file:

- A cover letter indicating your particular interest in and qualifications for the position
- A current resume
- A statement of educational philosophy
- The names, email addresses, and telephone numbers of five references, including at least two recent supervisors. References should speak to your ability to be an effective educator and administrator, to work successfully with children, and to work collaboratively and collegially with adults (references will be contacted only with the candidate's permission). Please indicate your relationship with each reference (i.e. supervisor, colleague, or direct report).

Salary Range: \$135,000–\$145,000

Please address any questions by email to maryrose@strategenius.org.



SEARCH CALENDAR

December 12, 2025

Application Deadline

Weeks of January 5, 2026

Semifinalist Interviews

Week of January 26, 2026

Finalist Interviews

February 2026

Announcement

July 1, 2026

Start Date

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