



WESTRIDGE SCHOOL

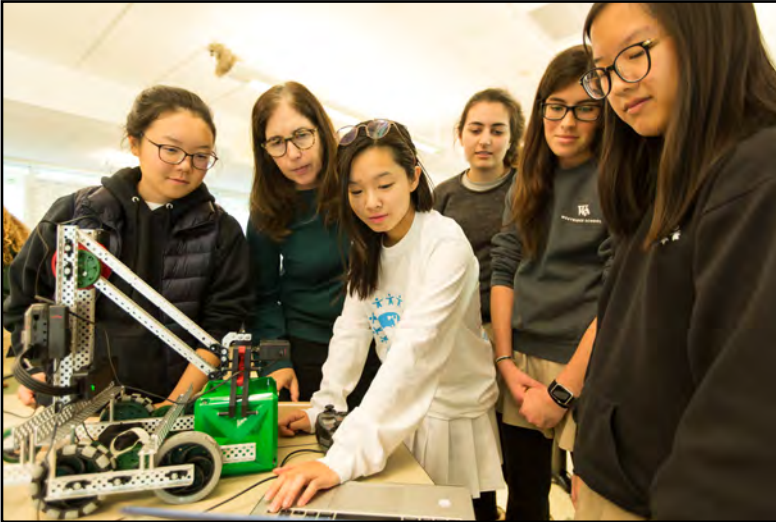
# Director of Upper School Search Westridge School

Position Statement  
Pasadena, California  
Start Date: July 1, 2024





# Director of Upper School Position Statement



Indeed, learning and the pursuit of academic excellence are at the heart of the Westridge experience. With curricular opportunities that fly way beyond the ordinary in computer science, aerospace engineering, research internships at Caltech, and study programs in other countries, this is clearly a place that is all about learning.

One need only watch the students as they go through their day for evidence: Wrestling with a math problem or a physics set; going over lines in the Black Box theater; or talking with a teacher in a department office, these girls are serious about their learning but not at the expense of being kids.

Westridge is purposeful yet relaxed. Students enjoy one another and their teachers as well. Recent visitors to campus marveled at the relative absence of cell phones, an individual interpretation of the school uniform, and the obvious comfort and security that students feel on campus. The prevailing atmosphere is one in which students and teachers take what they do seriously, but where learning and joy go hand in hand.

## THE SETTING

Nestled in one of Pasadena's lovely residential neighborhoods, Westridge School is an architectural and educational gem with buildings of varying age but compatible design, and landscaping that allows the campus to be forever in bloom, with broad paths, inviting terraces, and abundant room for students to flop, gather, work alone or in groups, hang out, or have fun. It is a campus built for students, where it's easy to feel at home. Westridge feels the way school should feel.

Life on campus reflects the mission: *"Westridge is a forward-thinking girls' school committed to developing intellectually adventurous thinkers and courageous, compassionate leaders."* Challenged by a curriculum that encourages independent thinking and supported at every turn by the adult community to grow in courage and compassion, Westridge students joyfully embrace the remarkable opportunities that are theirs with "change-the-world energy."



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## THE SCHOOL

Mary Lowther Ranney, an architect and teacher, founded Westridge in 1913, before women had the vote. From the day it opened, Westridge has been committed to gender equity and to empowering its students to lead meaningful and impactful lives. This historic commitment to equality naturally led the school to embrace the work of DEI, a focus of the current Strategic Plan. <https://www.westridge.org/about/our-past>

With a dynamic Head of School now in her second year, the school's devotion to its mission and commitment to fostering strong habits of both mind and heart in its students, has never been stronger. Good management, strategic, forward-thinking leadership, and a well-crafted program have resulted in full enrollment, strong admissions, a debt-free balance sheet, and an Annual Fund approaching \$2 million. Westridge has the resources necessary to provide financial aid to 24% of its students while caring for its grounds and facilities.



## THE UPPER SCHOOL

With an Upper School enrollment of 300 students, the new Director of Upper School will be well supported by an Assistant Director, a Dean of Student Support, a Coordinator of Upper School Activities (who also serves as the Assistant to the Upper School), four class deans, a professional counseling staff, and experienced college counselors whose goal is knowing and caring for each girl. The School has a long-established advisory program and a class dean system, backed up by the counselors. In casual and comfortable settings and small classes, students form positive and caring relationships with each other and with adults. What is clear to all is that there is no one "Westridge girl;" rather, there's a place for everyone and a girl's schedule abounds with opportunities for leadership and affinity and the chance to be her authentic self.

The hub for most teachers are the department offices where the faculty of 50+ work collegially and develop challenging coursework that reflects their individuality and the autonomy with which they are free to create. Also providing professional support for the faculty is the Westridge Federation of Teachers

(WFT), a school-based union established 30 years ago to act as a "process-oriented" organization to assure equity and fairness in policies and practices. The WFT works well with the school leadership to promote and sustain a positive employee culture. In conversation, faculty speak of being respected, valued, and supported by the administration. Teachers appreciate the flexibility they have to direct their coursework, believe in the mission, and are devoted to their students.

Long respected for its academics, Westridge provides a comprehensive curriculum, one that



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balances progressive and innovative classes with those that are more traditional in their content or approach. After a careful review process, the school has developed a multi-year plan to phase out AP classes and create new advanced courses that encourage creativity and better fit the needs and interests of today's students. Not to be overlooked—and indeed a real strength of Westridge's—are the superior fine and performing arts programs that allow girls to pursue their interests as far as they like. [Candidates should read: <https://www.westridge.org/academics/curriculum>]

Complementing the core curriculum is an elective program in which students have the space and time to explore a range of activities including creative writing, costume design, speech and debate, and the many affinity groups. Electives in engineering and design introduce the students to robotics and rocketry—classes that form the basis for advanced offerings in computer science and aerospace engineering. Girls study aircraft, satellites, landing vehicles, extraterrestrial habitation, exploration vehicles, and much more as they develop project and proposals that can lead to internships at Caltech. For more information, see <https://www.westridge.org/academics/curriculum>

The Director of Upper School reports to the Head of School and is a member of the high-functioning Leadership Team. <https://www.westridge.org/about/directory> The Director's reports include the deans, college counseling, Upper School faculty, Director of Theatre, and Coordinator of Upper School Activities and Assistant to the Upper School. With the creation of the new Assistant Director position, some of those reporting structures will doubtless be reorganized.



## THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE WILL:

- Be committed to Westridge's Mission
- Possess both high IQ and EQ
- Have a sense of humor
- Be well grounded in contemporary educational thinking and research
- Have a record of commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion
- Be a "human-centered leader" in the words of the Head of School
- Encourage the nexus between academic excellence and social-emotional wellness
- Demonstrate commitment to feminism and familiarity with feminist thought
- Be inspirational and a forward-thinker, flexible in thought—not rigid
- Show ability to adjust rapidly and "think on the fly"
- Be intellectually curious and open-minded
- Enjoy working hard for our students and mission
- Relate easily and naturally to students, faculty, and parents
- Be transparent in decision-making and adept at explaining change
- Be committed to both individuals and community building

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## COMPENSATION

The compensation range is \$160,000-200,000.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

For someone looking to be a key element of a great school culture, work with a thriving student body and a highly professional faculty, be part of a “together” administrative team, and in a can’t-beat-it environment, all while working with an ambitious and capable Head of School, this is a dream job. The timeline is short: we require an application through the RG175 portal before **March 4, 2024**. The application will include a:

- Cover Letter
- Resume/C.V.
- Writing Sample

Apply here: <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

Questions should be directed to the consultants:

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and

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