



**Position Statement for
Head of School
Park Century School
Culver City, California
July 1, 2022**



Park Century School (PCS) is an independent, not-for-profit, coeducational day school meeting the needs of children with learning disabilities, located in Culver City, CA. The school serves a student body of 100 children, ages 7 to 14, of average to superior intellectual potential in an optimal educational environment that provides tailored academic, developmental, and therapeutic support via individual and small group instruction.

THE MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

“Park Century School empowers bright children with learning differences to reach their academic and personal potential. Students flourish within our individualized, evidence-based curriculum and supportive environment. In collaboration with their families, the school inspires students to develop into resilient self-advocates and build a foundation for lifelong achievement.”

Park Century School embraces an educational philosophy committed to the growth and development of its young people, while sharing that trust and responsibility with their families. Learning differences are life-long challenges that affect all aspects of children’s development, as well as their families. It is the firm belief at Park Century School that with



current research-based policies, effective instructional and therapeutic practices, and informed collaboration among parents and educators, all students can thrive academically, socially, physically, and emotionally.

Children with dyslexia, ADHD, and other kinds of learning and attention issues are as smart as their peers. However, without the right support, many fall behind academically and struggle socially. They are more likely to repeat a grade in their earliest years, get into trouble at school, drop out, and face challenges as adults. But this

downward spiral can be prevented. Park Century School’s teachers and specialists serve as key therapeutic and instructional partners, helping students to unlock their capabilities and discover their true potential.

Every effort is made to integrate the most current neurodiversity research and best teaching practices and protocols into the school program. Park Century School is committed to offering an outstanding academic and therapeutic program that allows ongoing assessments, continual growth, and self-advocacy for all of its students.



THE HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

Often characterized as “a place where uncommonly bright kids thrive,” Park Century School was founded in 1968 as an independent, not-for-profit, coeducational day school to meet the needs of bright children who learn differently. PCS serves students between the ages of 7 through 14 (grades 2 through 8) living throughout the greater Los Angeles area, from the South Bay to the San Fernando Valley. Students with language-based learning differences matriculate at Park Century School because they may have struggled in previous classroom settings. Often, even additional tutoring and educational therapy experiences have not provided adequate support.



Since its beginning, Park Century School has enriched the educational lives of its students by delivery of an individualized curriculum and co-curricular offerings. Using each student's neuropsychological evaluation as well as Common Core Standards, a tailored curriculum is developed for each child. This then guides the personalized instruction program and subsequent assessments. Students benefit from strong and authentic relationships with teachers and specialists, at an enhanced campus that provides beautiful spaces for teaching and learning. PCS's program teaches children responsibility, resilience, persistence, empathy toward others and age-appropriate ways to think beyond themselves.



Today, the school is accredited by the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) and is a member of the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA), the International Dyslexia Association (IDA), and the International Dyslexia Association of Los Angeles (IDALA). The faculty, staff, and administration comprise an optimistic learning community dedicated to the preparation of students in a family-centered educational setting, within a bright and vibrant school culture.

THE PLACE

Park Century School is located in a beautiful 44,000 square-foot facility in Culver City, CA. The structure was renovated and designed by architect Christopher Ward, and boasts a loggia created by former parent Frank Gehry. The facility opened in 2008 after relocating from a smaller West Los Angeles campus, and, since its opening, has garnered several awards for its design. Complete with classrooms, welcoming common areas and meeting spaces, the building includes a dedicated art room, a library, a well-equipped science lab, a “Maker Space”, a music classroom, a gymnasium, and much more.

Culver City, an incorporated municipality within Los Angeles County, CA, is easily accessible because of its prime western Los Angeles location. Culver City has been a significant center for motion picture and television production, having been home to MGM Studios and Sony Pictures Entertainment, among others. Hughes Aircraft was once headquartered there. Currently, National Public Radio West is based there, and Google, HBO, and Amazon have just opened major offices near the new light-rail station. Today, Culver City hosts robust shopping and entertainment, exciting nightlife, and first-class restaurants and businesses. It is situated near major freeways and is only minutes from Los Angeles International Airport.

THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND ITS PROGRAM

There is an unmistakable warmth, sense of connection, and energy at Park Century School. Whether in the classroom or out on a science adventure or a community service project, all members of this vibrant community embrace their distinctive agenda with a sense of purpose and vitality. The mission of the school serves as an imperative call for educational excellence by intentional design, collaboration, effective action, and continual assessment for neurodiverse students.



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The Faculty

The school attracts teachers and staff who love and care about students and are not only skilled in effective student engagement, but, most importantly, are well versed in aspects of differentiated instruction and specialized teaching. The full and part-time teachers work individually and in teams and model strong collegiality and trust, thereby promoting and advancing the important mission of the school. Each is competent and dedicated to Grade 2-8 education, whole-child, and distinctive learning models, successful differentiated learning practices, character development, and complex, yet highly active and collaborative learning.

Mathematics, Reading, Physical Education, Science, and Art Specialists, along with Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists complement the instructional teams and are integral to the school's successful approach to whole child teaching and learning.

Faculty members are treasured by the students and appreciated by the entire parent body for their commitment to quality LD education, current well-researched practices and protocols, and instructional excellence. The small size of the school allows teachers to know the students well, and support them in an individualized manner. Faculty and staff interact with parents on a regular and ongoing basis, and maintain strong relationships and active lines of communication.

In addition, faculty and staff are intensely committed to collaboration with colleagues, dedication to expert pedagogical practices, professional growth, strong reflective practices, thoroughness and thoughtfulness in implementing methodologies, and differentiating instruction. The efficacy of the pedagogical program is continually evaluated. It is truly evident that the key to the school's success is its vital commitment to ensuring a supportive, caring, and enriching learning environment.

The Administration

The school maintains an administrative leadership team that includes a Head of School, Chief Operating Officer, Dean of Lower School, Dean of Upper School, Dean of Admissions and High School Placement, and Directors of Innovative Learning and Remote Instruction, Communications, Community Outreach and Development, and Human Resources. Complementing this leadership team are the School Counselor, Administrative Assistant, Athletic Director, Receptionist, Business Manager, IT Director, Security Manager, Director of Health and Safety, and Facilities Manager.

The Board of Trustees

The school's 17 trustees are a dedicated and competent group of parents, former parents, former faculty, community members and alumni who love and appreciate the school's mission and the dedicated educators who implement it. Each is well prepared to govern the school and is committed to implementing best practices in governance, leadership, and communication. Trustees maintain a fundamental, yet dynamic, relationship with school leadership. Singularly apparent is their loyalty to the institution. Each volunteer board member clearly understands the appropriate scope of work of independent school trusteeship. In addition, the commitment of the trustees is remarkable and is evidenced by their generosity with their time, resources, and talent.

The Students

Students at Park Century are extremely well-served and are a

happy, motivated, and engaged group. A walk through the school evinces active student learning, strong engagement, and a joyful quality to the myriad lessons and activities at hand. The 100 students comprise a wide and diverse range of abilities and motivations.

Strong intellectual development and academic growth are evident at all grade levels. The small class sizes and flexible individual and small group instruction encourage interaction, conversation, and collaborative work. This translates to respect for student individuality and appreciation for unique student learning styles. There is a constant “hum” of exploration that envelops the entire school culture.

The Families

Families at the school are guided by the premise that quality teaching,

strong and engaging relationships, and effective learning go hand-in-hand. Families make a personal sacrifice for independent school education via their financial and volunteer commitments to the school. The evidence of successful outcomes is clear: students leave PCS as motivated, confident, and educated young people, who understand their roles in a larger, ever-changing global society, and who easily advocate for themselves as they transition to high school, college, and beyond.

Parent volunteers are an important part of the school’s culture. Families clearly understand that Park Century School is committed to making each child’s individual and group experience rich, personalized, and focused on the outcomes that will serve him or her for a lifetime. They recognize that the school values and

encourages parent engagement. The Parent Association is an active and robust one that works in partnership with the school’s administration. The Parent Association hosts class coffees, a book fair, logo clothing sales, and many other activities, feasts, and special luncheons. Successful fundraisers are also hosted by the Parent Association, including the annual Fall Carnival and the Spring Benefit.

The Program

The school’s educational program – its curricular and co-curricular offerings --clearly embody the values and purposes articulated in its mission. The faculty and administration take the lead in shaping the program, and it is designed to deeply engage students. The goal is to assist them in developing the capacities and acquiring the knowledge that will prepare them not only for their future education, but also for constructive and fulfilling lives. The successfully tailored educational program is the focus of constant assessment and adjustment, since the students for whom it is designed, as well as the society in which those students live, continue to pose new questions and challenges for their learning environments.

Learning and attention issues are more common than many people may know. Converging evidence indicates at least 1 in 5 children in the United States has learning and attention issues. Prevalence estimates vary for conditions such as dyslexia because different studies use differing definitions, but an accurate diagnosis involves comprehensive



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assessment protocols that look at many kinds of behaviors and skills.

These issues are brain-based difficulties in reading, writing, math, organization, focus, listening comprehension, social skills, perceptual motor skills, or a combination of any of these difficulties. Learning and attention issues are not the result of low intelligence, poor hearing or vision, or lack of access to instruction. If a child is struggling with academics or behavior, it is imperative to find out why and to provide targeted, evidence-based instruction and intervention as early as possible. PCS also embeds social-emotional learning techniques into the curriculum, tailoring it specifically for students with learning and attention issues. This program will help develop important life skills, such as managing emotions, encouraging motivation, and learning perseverance.

Assisting PCS students to understand how they learn and how to ask for appropriate accommodations is essential for their success. These skills are fostered through thoughtful mentoring and modeling. Teaching students to be effective self-advocates will help them adjust to changing expectations and develop resilience as they transition to high school and beyond.

The faculty and administration actively engage in the process of curricular and co-curricular reflection, review, and evaluation across grade levels and subject areas to improve students' learning outcomes. There is clear evidence of ongoing instructional planning and resultant successes at PCS. Recently, the school embraced the Wilson Reading Program, an intensive three-tiered program for students with word-level deficits. The faculty is also trained in the highly structured

Orton-Gillingham style of learning that employs multiple pathways to assist learners.

Park Century School has a written, published, and comprehensive curriculum guide that details the school's curricular and co-curricular programs. The curriculum is designed to address the cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and creative needs of all students. The goal is to engage, challenge, motivate, and support all learners at the school. The curricular and co-curricular offerings at PCS evidence a clear understanding that the school's graduates will inhabit a world that will require them to navigate complex multicultural, global, environmental, and technological realities. PCS prepares them to meet these challenges.

The complex daily schedule at Park Century School is also



designed to target the academic, social, physical, and emotional development of all students. Students have an individualized schedule and personalized agenda that melds group learning with the individualized support that students need. Every student works with a reading and math specialist (in small groups) daily to address academic functioning. Park Century also has a staff of speech and language professionals who work with the students. All students are taught to identify their own learning differences and how to self-advocate for the accommodations they need. The goal is to teach to student strengths while remediating deficits.

The Lower School emphasizes skills-based learning through collaboration, relationships building, individualized and tailored instruction, and keen appreciation for learning styles. A high level of student engagement translates to successful learning outcomes in mathematics, literacy, science, and technology. In addition, physical education and visual arts programs



are integrated to allow students multiple modalities to express their knowledge, creativity, and understanding. The innovations of caring and dedicated educators lead to remarkable opportunities outside the curriculum and classroom, as well. It is abundantly clear that the extraordinarily well-prepared faculty makes for joyful and authentic learning daily.

The Upper School is characterized by friendships, creativity, and a quest to establish independence, interpersonal skills, and identity. It is an important time in the life of a student. The upper school programming, schedules, and practices drive a rich student life. Classroom work, art and woodshop studio, physical activity, and field experiences cultivate intellectual curiosity and inventiveness, foster

empathy and individuality, encourage imagination and perseverance, and nurture self-reliance, self-advocacy, and self-confidence. Core studies in the upper school include reading, writing, mathematics, science, history, technology, and art. Students advance in essential reading and writing strategies and content-specific knowledge; expand their mathematics, inquiry and critical thinking skills; improve organizational competence, and develop strong academic strategies. Upper school students incorporate new information into what they already know, gaining confidence in their abilities to reason, make sound decisions, solve problems, and communicate. Physical education and visual arts are integrated in the daily schedule.

In addition, the school sponsors regular class field experiences/trips, a Summer Program (SCAMP), and an extended-day option/after-school tutoring for students.



FINANCES

The school's annual operating budget is approximately \$8,200,000. Tuition and fees comprise 93% of net revenue and approximately 7% is raised from fundraising and investment income. Park Century School also maintains a tuition assistance program. The budget is monitored continuously to sustain all facets of operations and financial commitments.

Park Century School's educational model is expensive because of its commitment to small class sizes and individualized instruction delivered by competent faculty and highly credentialed specialists and therapists. The school has placed a priority on increasing financial aid, so more middle- and lower-income families can benefit from the outstanding program and academic offerings.



THE STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

The new head of school will benefit from many strengths at Park Century School. They include:

- Happy and active students who thrive academically, socially, physically, and emotionally and who exhibit a strong love for their school and their teachers;
- A large, comfortable, and well-stewarded educational facility;
- A committed and dedicated board of trustees that knows and understands independent-school governance and best-trusteeship practices;
- A caring and loyal faculty skilled in Grade 2-8 education that actively promotes mutual respect, active learning, and responsibility in and out of school for all students;
- A competent and skilled administrative team comprising individuals who wear many hats in their commitment to making the school operate smoothly;
- A dedicated parent community that strongly supports and understands the mission and philosophy of the school and embraces inclusion, academic excellence, and community service;
- A learning community dedicated to research-based curricula and continual school improvement; and
- An advancement/development program that supports school initiatives and fundraising.

THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Enrollment, high tuition, and recruitment and retention of quality faculty are the most pressing challenges facing Park Century School. Like many independent schools, Park Century is faced with the need to right-size to meet expenses. Family retention and active student recruitment, tuition-assistance management, and quality faculty retention and development are formidable tasks, given the goal of sustaining a premier-quality, LD, grade 2-8 program in a high-cost-of-living area with evolving demographics. In addition, PCS is close to completion of a capital campaign designed to construct an outdoor play area and underground parking, which has been on hiatus due to the pandemic. With these challenges comes a unique and important opportunity to clearly identify, promote, and market the benefits of a vibrant, research-based, independent LD program for children throughout the greater Los Angeles area.

While the new head will be welcomed and supported by an abundance of school strengths, it is critical that the head of school possess:

- Expert knowledge of current and effective LD protocols, research, and practices, and the necessary knowledge and experience in leading personalized elementary and middle-school neuro-diverse curricula and teaching methodologies;
- Successful record of demonstrated leadership skills in the management of a complex organization and in setting a strategic and enduring action plan that aligns with the school's mission, purpose, and philosophy;
- A collaborative leadership style characterized by seeking input from others and willingness to delegate, while being able to make challenging decisions and lead difficult conversations;
- Keen perspective on independent school education and school administration;
- Understanding of child and adolescent development and respect for students with learning differences and their families;
- Prior teaching experience and genuine appreciation and respect for teachers;
- Authentic "people person" qualities, in order to manage complex relationships among faculty, parents, students, and other stakeholders;
- A relevant advanced degree;
- Ease in marketing and branding, fundraising, and public speaking;
- Energetic and compelling communication skills, with the unique ability to captivate others with PCS's history, story, and mission, and proficiency and drive to become the chief marketer of the School;
- Astute and trustworthy leadership skills with a proven record of fiscal management, fundraising skills, and development success;
- Budgetary acumen and plant oversight experience;

- Ability to strike the right balance between a warm, compassionate, approachable demeanor and firm, decisive judgments and actions;
- Patience and a sense of humor;
- Commitment to stay at PCS to appreciate the results of collaborative and successful planning, improved fundraising, effective faculty/staff appointments and retentions, and development, school growth, and execution of the school's Strategic Plan;
- Vision for the judicious use of technology in schools;
- Friendly manner and outgoing personality; and
- Active involvement and visible presence in the school and local community.

The Search Committee encourages educational leaders to consider this important and unique opportunity. Park Century School is committed to providing competitive compensation and benefits commensurate to area schools of this nature, scope, and grade levels.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Park Century School has retained Doreen Oleson, Ed.D., from Resource Group 175 to lead the search. To apply, interested and qualified candidates should submit a cover letter expressing interest in the position, a current resume, a personal statement and/or writing sample, and no fewer than five references online at:

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

Deadline: July 16, 2021

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Park Century School does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other classifications protected by law, in all of its operations.