



# LIVE OAK SCHOOL

## *Middle School Head*

### SUMMARY

**Location** | San Francisco, CA

**Post Date** | February 3, 2022

**Application Deadline** | March 4, 2022 at 5:00pm PST

**Remote Semifinal Round** | March 12, 2022 (Saturday)

**On-site Final Round** | Week of March 21

**Decision Announced** | April 4, 2022

**Start Date** | July 1, 2022





## SUMMARY

Live Oak School, a K-8 independent school in the heart of urban San Francisco, believes that the best learning happens when students are actively engaged in the process — thinking deeply, exploring ideas, and trying on strategies for solving problems. The school's approach to teaching and learning is deeply rooted in progressive tradition and informed by contemporary research. Live Oak anchors its instructional program around the students as individual learners, determined to prepare them for the opportunities that will define the lives of graduates in the twenty-first century.

As the current middle school head prepares to depart at the end of this school year after a successful 18-year tenure — including five years as middle school head — Live Oak will welcome a new leader for a division that has nearly doubled in size over the last several years. This exciting growth period included campus and program expansions. As a result, the incoming middle school head will have a larger and even more diverse student and professional community to lead. The middle school head reports to the head of school and serves on the leadership team.

## MISSION

Live Oak School supports the potential and promise of each student. We provide a strong academic foundation, foster skills to effect change, and develop courageous and conscientious learners from all backgrounds. We inspire students to advance equity and inclusion, to act with compassion and integrity, and to pursue a lifelong passion for learning.





# VISION AND VALUES

## VISION

Live Oak School's vision—to know a child well—is our foundation for providing an education that prepares children for success in an increasingly complex and diverse world. Knowing a child well is the responsibility of all members of the Live Oak community. We work to understand who each student is now and together explore his or her promise for the future. We use our understanding to inspire, support and challenge students to be powerful learners.

Students, too, are challenged to know themselves. By developing an understanding of their own identity and the identities of others in the community, our students grow as individuals and gain a deep appreciation for the value of diversity. We create a place where children see themselves reflected in the curriculum. Within Live Oak's supportive but challenging environment, active engagement and academic risk-taking become possible and expected for all. Each student is empowered to reach his or her full potential.

Excellent teaching requires knowing a child well. Live Oak teachers set firm academic and behavioral goals while providing flexible paths for achieving those goals. Using a broad variety of tools, our teachers assess not only students' understanding, performance and growth over time, but also their learning styles, background and interests. The faculty collaborates to ensure that the students benefit from continuity in curriculum and approach across subjects and grades, requiring students to apply their learning to real world challenges. As a learning community, teachers engage in on-going professional development to ensure that our students receive the benefits of the best educational practices.

Parents play a central role in the Live Oak community as the bridge from school to home. They work in partnership with faculty to support their children's academic and social goals. Through volunteer engagement, they provide practical support while also contributing to the learning environment by modeling desired values and behaviors.





Live Oak extends the school experience beyond our walls by taking advantage of its particular neighborhood and the rich cultural life of San Francisco. Our service-learning program builds on students' knowledge of themselves through participation in the larger community, fostering in them the courage to be change makers and leaders in putting values into action.

A Live Oak education builds strong foundational skills—academic, behavioral and physical—along with higher order skills including collaboration, critical thinking, and innovation. Our students are known well and learn to know themselves well. They demonstrate self-esteem, social and emotional maturity, and a sense of responsibility to themselves and their community. Live Oak graduates leave our school as confident, life-long learners, prepared for success in higher education and life in our rapidly changing world.

## VALUES

Live Oak promotes four values from the classroom to the boardroom:

- A **rich curriculum** that provides access and challenge for every student, supporting deep thinking, self-expression, and new perspectives.
- An **inclusive school community** that explores and appreciates the differences that define us as individuals.
- **Empathy** in our personal relationships to encourage responsibility and integrity in our actions.
- **Joy and humor**. In this we find the willingness to learn from mistakes, the desire to take healthy risks, and the curiosity of childhood.





## FIVE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

A yearlong, community-wide strategic planning process revealed five key areas of focus for the years ahead. These strategic directions were adopted in 2018, and all of them call for extending the potential and promise of Live Oak School in new and exciting ways. The entire community is thrilled by the vision that emerges for the future of Live Oak.

### 1. Inspire every learner

Live Oak believes that human potential is richly diverse, that learning is a complex act, and that students take different paths as they secure new knowledge and understandings. Live Oak will continue to value a wide range of learners and nurture a growth mindset, while expanding its capacity to support each student's needs and help students follow their interests. The school will identify ways that its curriculum should evolve to provide broad exposure and opportunities for specialization.



*Next steps:*

- Establish a culture of data collection and analysis to inform the development of programs and practices that challenge all students to reach their full potential.
- Design and implement a school schedule promotes equity, agency, understanding, joy, and creativity.
- Concretize constructivist practices in all disciplines, divisions, and departments of the school.

### 2. Activate changemakers

Live Oak has always strived to support students' development of strong identities and equip them with skills to navigate complex social and societal issues. Now the school will build upon this foundation to create robust and deeply considered social-emotional and service learning curriculum. A Live Oak education will secure for students the full benefits of strong self-knowledge in the context of an affirming school community. A curriculum that challenges students to identify injustice and assume responsibility to affect change will deepen engagement with learning and provide the sense of meaning that is vitally important to well-being.



*Next steps:*

- Develop a robust service learning program that shows the ways in which the curriculum is connected to the world outside school, showing students a breadth of service opportunities and integrated into our trips and travel programs.
- Understand the scope of social issues we want our students to engage with during their time at live oak and develop authentic relationships with community based organizations that allow students to experience leadership in their communities.

### **3. Advance equity, increase diversity, deepen inclusion**

Live Oak knows that the ideal learning environment for students is one filled with varied and multicultural perspectives, and that its community must reflect a diversity of race, ethnicity, gender identities, and positions on the socio-economic spectrum. An inclusive school community whose members possess a multitude of perspectives will offer students the ideal environment for learning about themselves, others, systems, and cultures.

*Next steps:*

- Strengthen the school's commitment to enrolling and supporting students and families from communities traditionally underrepresented in independent schools.
- Improve policies and practices to ensure all students experience a strong sense of belonging and see themselves reflected in the curriculum, the faculty, and the community.
- In a city of increasing socio-economic disparity, be ever more intentional about ensuring that families at all points on the socio-economic spectrum feel fully included in the school's curriculum and community.

### **4. Promote the Live Oak way**

Live Oak's mission, vision, values, and school culture are deeply intentional, and its constructivist pedagogy demands the highest quality of student engagement, critical thinking, and development of relevant skills. By leading the conversation about the quality of a Live Oak education and the importance of the school's shared values—including the non-negotiable value of diversity and inclusivity—Live Oak will better unite its community in a shared understanding of what Live Oak offers and a commitment to maintaining its values over time.



*Next steps:*

- Ensure that the power and promise of a Live Oak education are well understood.
- Develop orientation programs for new faculty, students and families.
- Create a parent education curriculum that connects parents to the core values and educational philosophy of the school.
- Thoughtfully evolve school rituals and traditions to stay true to their purpose in light of the school's expansion.
- Promote Live Oak in San Francisco and beyond as a provider of an exceptional education.

## **5. Secure assets to support priorities**

Live Oak's most valuable resources are the people who bring the school to life every day, and the greatest gift to future students is caring for the school well beyond the timelines implied in this plan. With a strong financial foundation Live Oak can continue to attract and retain the highest quality educators and provide students with the most enriching programs, while securing this vision for the Live Oak of the next decade and beyond.

*Next steps:*

- Increase support for the highest quality educators so that their quality of life, professional and personal, can be prioritized in compensation and work environment practices.
- Secure assets so that Live Oak can be nimble in the face of future opportunities for facilities and strategic projects that enhance the quality of programs, and be protected from unseen risks.





## EXPANSION

Live Oak School has completed an expansion of its campus and facilities to enable the school to make a Live Oak education more accessible to more students. Over the course of five years, the campus nearly doubled in size. The project included the addition of 12 new classrooms including a new middle school wing and Middle School Commons area. The school has also added two new classrooms dedicated to lower school art and music classes.

This project also included the expansion of the school's library to double its size, the addition of a school kitchen to serve lunch to all students daily, and the opening of Live Oak's ChangeMaker Lab, a Center for Values Driven Innovation. The expansion project was ultimately completed when Live Oak's Rooftop Playground opened in November of 2019. The 6,000-square-foot expanse boasts beautiful views of San Francisco and includes a basketball court, an activities area, and a shaded picnic corner.

A bigger facility enables the school to realize the vision of a larger, more diverse student body with plenty of space for the critical thinking, collaboration, and innovation necessary to inspire life long learning. Live Oak is thrilled by the lasting, positive impact that growth will provide for the long-term health and well-being of the community and the school.







# BACKGROUND AND OPPORTUNITIES

## A SCHOOL ON AN EXCELLENT FOUNDATION

These are exciting times at Live Oak School. Having finished a major growth period right before the pandemic hit, the school is now almost twice as big as it was about a decade ago, and the facilities have expanded and been remodeled. The six-person program leadership group — which comprises the director of curriculum design and continuity, the director of diversity, equity, and inclusion, the director of instructional innovation, the head of school, the lower school head, and the middle school head — is a high-functioning, experienced, and collaborative group of academic administrators. Several positions are cross-functional and support multiple areas of operations and innovation. For example, the director of curriculum design and continuity oversees both high school placements and all-school curricular arcs. Meanwhile, the director of instructional innovation oversees the technology and maker/design programs, while also serving as an innovative instructional design partner to faculty.

Several organizational structures and administrative roles are in place to support faculty and students, including grade-level teams, departmental teams, and a director of wellness. These structures have translated into thoughtful curriculum conversations, domain expertise, and departmental ownership of instructional practices. Meanwhile, external indicators are very positive. Parents are highly satisfied and eagerly recommend the school to their peers, all of which has resulted in robust admission numbers. Students are happy and stress indicators are low, with high school placement and preparedness going exceptionally well. In sum, the backbone of the school is solid, and the next chapter of school will involve building upon that foundation.



## ABOUT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

The middle school is truly about supporting students as the best versions of themselves. Middle school students are seen as leaders in the school, and they maintain close relationships as mentors to lower school students. The entire school is in the same main building, so a student that transitions in fifth grade to middle school does not leave their core roots. However, the start of middle school does come with some exciting transitions, from lockers to multiple classrooms and teachers to major schedule changes.



The current middle school head will be departing to pursue opportunities in larger nonprofits after 18 dedicated years of service to the school, including five as middle school head. Her stable, calm, and servant leadership style has been admired and appreciated by parents, faculty, and staff alike. Thus, for Live Oak this transition symbolizes an opportunity to build on her good work and initially fine-tune small changes. However, in the long-term the school has some major initiatives on the horizon, and in those changes hopes to integrate creative ideas in its continued pursuit of excellence.

One major change will be a complete schedule overhaul. This will be a 2-3 year project that puts many different ideas on the table. In an ideal world, the next middle school head would have some experience with schedule change, or at minimum bring an organized and systematized mindset that can help explore and design thoughtful but potentially complex schedules. Another major initiative would be to develop a student portfolio program, to help middle school students capture their own work and articulate their own learning experiences. Other goals do not necessarily involve wholesale change but instead involve enhancements to areas such as service-learning, student activities, and advisory. Much of that work would seek to leverage creative thinking about how to integrate and connect the various student life programs and experiences.





## WHAT LIVE OAK SEEKS IN ITS NEXT MIDDLE SCHOOL HEAD

When asked what they are seeking in the next middle school head, the program leadership team provided numerous thoughtful examples, characteristics, experiences, and mindsets. Those included:

- Someone who's attuned to youth development
- Someone who's not averse to implementing change
- Someone with deep, meaningful middle school experience
- Someone who is exceptional at designing professional growth paths for faculty, as well as helping individual teachers set and achieve personal goals
- Someone who brings a joyful approach to school leadership and will make an effort to be present in the classrooms and hallways
- Someone who is a clear and concise communicator to and with parents and guardians, students, and teachers
- Someone who is ready to dive into the details of meaningful and impactful work in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Someone who is highly collaborative and brings a trove of knowledge around constructivist practices and curriculum development
- Someone who is practical, thoughtful, and super organized, particularly as it pertains to problem solving
- Someone who is relational, and through individual partnership is able to motivate and hold others to high expectations
- Someone who is able to put ideas into action, empowers others to do so as well, and supports and roots for colleagues when they struggle



These are indeed exciting times at Live Oak. The pandemic has not dampened any of the school's ambitious goals or positive culture. When the next middle school head steps onto the campus, the excitement level will likely rise even higher as the community prepare to welcome, support, and learn from its newest academic administrator.



## KEY STATISTICS

**Founded:** 1971

**Location:** 55,000 square foot campus in the heart of urban San Francisco; to accommodate a growth in enrollment, the School undertook a four-phase expansion project that nearly doubled the original size of the campus

**Students:** 425 students in kindergarten through eighth grade; 47% students of color; 7% of families identify as LGBT

**Faculty and staff:** 60 full- and part-time teachers, plus 18 administrators and staff members; 46% of faculty and staff identify as people of color

**Accreditation:** California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS)

**Relevant Associations and Memberships:** National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS), California Teacher Development Collaborative (CATDC), People of Color in Independent Schools (POCIS), California Independent Schools Business Officers Association (Cal-ISBOA)

**Tuition:** K-5 tuition ranges from \$500 - \$37,580; 6-8 tuition ranges from \$500 to \$38,075; 25% of families participate in the Adjusted Tuition program

**Financials:** Operating budget \$13,500,000; endowment approximately \$2,500,000 as of June 2019

**Website:** [www.liveoaksf.org](http://www.liveoaksf.org)



## QUOTE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

*"Every day, Live Oak's middle school program demonstrates the courage and capacity that young people have to envision and actualize a world in which a shared pursuit of the common good elevates equity and multiplies agency. It's a privilege to be proximate to the work of our middle school students and their teachers."*

Virginia Paik, Head of School



# MIDDLE SCHOOL HEAD

## SPECIFIC DUTIES

### Middle School Program and Student Life

- Lead the middle school faculty in the implementation of an identity responsive educational program that nurtures the diversity of the student body as a resource for excellence.
- Evaluate the middle school curriculum and overall teaching and learning program, and design and oversee initiatives to continually develop and improve the program.
- Oversee major operational initiatives, including: formal assessments of students, student report cards, parent conferences, special programs and events, class scheduling, and duty scheduling.
- Keep communications about the program accurate and updated, including in curriculum collateral, in school handbooks, and on public websites.
- Promote an inclusive school climate where students develop a strong identity and are known well by their teachers and their peers.
- Counsel faculty and students through the resolution of social and emotional challenges.

### Faculty Supervision and Development

- Explicitly support the professional growth of the middle school faculty in order to provide a model for lifelong learning to our students, to provide career fulfillment to teachers, and to infuse the learning community with expertise.
- Recruit, hire, supervise and evaluate all middle school faculty including classroom teachers, specialist teachers, assistant teachers, counselors, and substitutes working in grades 5-8.
- Plan and lead middle school division meetings, grade level meetings, teaching team meetings and other student support meetings for faculty and students in grades 5-8.

### Leadership and External Affairs

- Build exceptional relationships with parents, guardians, and students in Live Oak's middle school in order to promote positive experiences in the school community.
- Plan and conduct group and individual parent meetings, including back to school night and teacher conferences.
- Partner with the Parent Guardian Association and other members of the leadership team to implement parent enrichment experiences.
- Represent program and faculty needs and interests to the admissions, development, and business offices, and to the board of trustees.
- Perform other duties as assigned.



## LIVE OAK SCHOOL IS LOOKING FOR CANDIDATES WHO CAN DEMONSTRATE...

### Professional Qualifications:

- Experience as a school administrator leading trainings and major initiatives related to curriculum, pedagogy, and student experience—preferably at a progressive school offering a K-8 program
- Experience designing, implementing, and improving co-curricular programs and events that connect directly to a school’s mission and values
- Immersion in diversity work—both in training and in implementation—and a commitment to fostering culturally competent and inclusive classrooms
- Experience guiding parents and guardians on sensitive student-related matters
- Multiple years of experience as a middle school teacher
- Possession of a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university, which is a minimum requirement, though preferably possession of a graduate degree

### Leadership and Personal Qualities:

- Inspirational, pragmatic, diplomatic, and patient leadership that honors the core values of Live Oak, but also encourages risk-taking aligned with the school’s strategic plan
- Authentic empathy, warmth, and collegiality, and an ability to spread these qualities across an entire staff
- A passion for inspiring programmatic change, balanced with a judicious understanding that successful innovation at a progressive school requires establishing lasting peer-to-peer relationships
- Savvy communication and dynamic presentation skills—both written and oral
- A collaborative, cooperative, and growth-oriented mindset
- Enthusiasm for students and teachers to pursue their passions, talents, and interests, both in and out of the traditional classroom
- A vision that is aligned with the needs of a dynamic and diverse staff
- A love of learning and love of school, and a willingness to support unique and unpredictable learning journeys of both young students and staff



## HOW TO APPLY

12M Recruiting is acting on behalf of Live Oak School to identify exceptional middle school leaders to fill this extraordinary opportunity. Please direct any inquiries to:

Gabriel Lucas  
Principal, 12M Recruiting  
[jobs@12MRecruiting.com](mailto:jobs@12MRecruiting.com)

### APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED THROUGH MARCH 4, 2022.

All applications must be submitted online, via:

[www.12MRecruiting.com/jobs/liveoak](http://www.12MRecruiting.com/jobs/liveoak)

An application requires submitting four PDFs:

- Cover letter introducing yourself to the Live Oak School search committee
- 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)
- A response to the following prompt:

*Talk about a major programmatic change that you led, coordinated, or helped to steer. What would be your framework for overseeing change at a progressive, K-8 school—particularly with respect to building consensus and implementing new initiatives?*

