



# KEYS SCHOOL

## DIRECTOR OF ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

**LOCATION**

Palo Alto, CA

**APPLICATION DUE**

February 21, 2022

**SEMIFINAL ROUND**

Early March

**FINAL ROUND**

Week of March 21

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

April 4, 2022

**START DATE**

July 1, 2022

**REPORTS TO**

Head of School

**GRADES SERVED**

Kindergarten to Grade 8

Guided by respect for every child's life experience, Keys School provides young people an opportunity to develop a keen intellect and a generous spirit, to advocate for themselves and others, and to honor curiosity and reflection in a dynamic K-8 learning environment. Keys is seeking a director of admission and enrollment to develop and implement principles and practices that center equity, justice, and the social-emotional wellbeing of students. Funding exists to support participation in professional development and personal growth opportunities such as conferences, workshops, and professional associations. Application instructions are on the last page of this opportunity statement. All applications must be submitted online at [www.12MRecruiting.com/jobs/Keys](http://www.12MRecruiting.com/jobs/Keys).

# SUMMARY + MISSION

Founded in 1973, Keys School is a two-campus, grades K through 8 independent school in Palo Alto that not only upholds high academic standards for students but also nurtures the whole child. Because Keys School holds the developmental needs of students at its core, the school maintains an exceptional curricular program that celebrates the life of the mind. A visit to either campus will find: impassioned educators working to ensure that every student is seen, known, and valued in a supportive and dynamic learning environment; engaged, kind students who are critical thinkers, able-problem solvers, and nimble learners and leaders; and the preservation of the magic of childhood through an educational program that promotes wonder, inspiration, inquiry, and exploration.

Now, Keys School is seeking a passionate and strategic director of admission and enrollment to partner with the school to develop and implement principles and practices that center equity, justice, and the social-emotional well-being of students. The director of admission and enrollment will grow and help to sustain a community of students and families in which respectful play, thoughtful explorations of science, literature, current events and history, quantitative reasoning and communication, and

the performing and multimedia arts are all valued as ways to help children make sense of the world and to connect with others at school and in the broader world.

Keys represents a collective of educators who support, learn, and act in partnership with minoritized communities. The director of admission and enrollment will ensure that enrolled students and their families value a school where each person seeks to know and be known in the community, to listen to one another and be heard, and is ready to dive into meaningful social, intellectual, and emotional experiences that cultivate students who are compassionate, curious, and confident changemakers.

The director of admission and enrollment will bring an open mind toward enrollment management and current trends in admission, an ability to inspire others, and a passion for engagement in all aspects of school life. Candidates must demonstrate prior experience with and an ongoing commitment to equity, justice, and social-emotional well-being. As a member of the senior administrative Leadership Team, the director of admission and enrollment will be involved in every aspect of the school's program.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Keys School challenges students to develop a keen intellect and a generous spirit, to advocate for themselves and others, and to honor curiosity and reflection in an increasingly hurried world.



# ABOUT THE SCHOOL



## History

Keys was founded in 1973 by Betsy Danon and Inge Zumwalt, two Palo Alto school teachers who had a vision of creating an independent school that focuses on the development of the “whole child.” With only seventeen students, these teachers built a home-like place where curious students could become thoughtful, responsible, and caring individuals. From these simple beginnings, Keys School has matured, without losing sight of our core values and mission. Today, a school of more than three hundred students on two campuses, Keys provides an unique educational experience, preparing students to be confident problem solvers, exceptional communicators, and self-aware individuals who are ready for whatever their futures hold.

**1973**

Founded school with 17 students and 3 teachers behind First Christian Church on Middlefield Road, with focus on “whole child”

**1990’s**, added middle school grades gradually

**1996**

Expands from K-6 to K-8 due to market demands to create a better high school entry point



**2009**

Opened new Middle School Campus on El Camino Real to enhance long-term sustainability; began gradual increase from one to two sections per grade level, beginning with kindergarten and middle school grades

**2013**

Completed enrollment expansion to include two sections in every grade, K-8



# STRATEGIC GOALS

## Our Educational Program

### GOAL

Guide students to develop curiosity, reflection, and both the academic and social emotional skills to become critical thinkers and community leaders.

## Our Community

### GOAL

Foster thinkers and leaders of all ages who invest in their ongoing personal development, who practice inclusivity, who challenge assumptions, and who strive to create a more just world.

## Professional Expertise

### GOAL

Attract, develop, and promote a community of diverse professionals who are committed to Keys' mission, their own lifelong learning and the quest for continuous growth.

## Financial Strength & Facilities

### GOAL

Increase the long-term financial sustainability of Keys while continuing to provide current support for its programs and its people.

## Institutional Advancement

### GOAL

Articulate and communicate the lasting power of a Keys education.



# GROWING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

## A Student-Centered Approach

Even the best teaching methods succeed only when students feel comfortable, confident, and supported in their own interests, passions, and goals. At Keys, we appreciate each child's unique strengths and needs, especially through the lens of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ). Students know that they are seen, heard, and valued for who they are by their teachers and classmates. Faculty foster strong relationships with students and among peers, so our students feel safe to stretch themselves, seek new horizons, and make the mistakes that lead to true learning and social and intellectual growth.

## How That Happens Academically

Teachers, students, and families work in partnership, maintaining open channels of communication as they strive toward the shared goal—to see each student thriving and growing.

Faculty and support specialists meet weekly to consider how they can best support each child's interests and needs in the classroom and beyond. Along with each family, including the student, we practice reflection, action, and advocacy for each child and our community of children.

Our Learning Specialists and School Counselors work with faculty to develop differentiation strategies for individual students. The support team also works with parents, sharing observations and providing consultation.

Teachers know their students deeply and adapt instruction to meet individual learning needs and specific academic and social-emotional goals. Teachers also embed reflection in their classrooms and conversations with students, seeking their perspectives in ways that reinforce to students the value of their voices as they learn how to advocate for themselves.

## On the Role of Playtime/Freetime

At Keys, we know that play and choice are essential learning opportunities. Morning and lunch recess, Quiet Time, "D" Day activities, and classroom choice allow time to play, imagine, move, reflect, rest, and socialize. These breaks from structured learning create time for students to use their developing emotional intelligence and critical thinking in real-time. Whether expressing and regulating their emotions, engaging in our unique conflict-resolution processes, or balancing one's own wants with those of a group, Keys keeps a keen focus on capitalizing on these times as essential to social-emotional growth.



# OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE

## Keys Inclusivity and Diversity Statement

We know that a diversity of thoughts, experiences and backgrounds is necessary for our students to learn deeply and engage meaningfully in the world. We work to build a supportive, respectful, caring community of adults and children that reflects and affirms all aspects of identity. At Keys, every voice matters.

We embed conversations about identity in curriculum and policy. We cultivate an environment where we seek and embrace the diverse perspectives and experiences of our global community; where each seeks to know and be known.

We commit to engage fully in the daily, courageous, complex, messy work of hearing and valuing each other. We aspire to foster thinkers and leaders who invest in their ongoing personal development, who practice inclusivity, who challenge assumptions, and who strive to create a more just world.

Know and be known. Listen and be heard. Dive in...



## Our new director of admission and enrollment will be eager to support Keys' efforts to:

- Explore myriad inclusive, responsive, and respectful ways to make a Keys education accessible and affordable to any family who identifies with the school's mission.
- Research, advocate for, and implement best practices for inclusion and belonging to create and sustain an inclusive student and family community reflective of the broader Peninsula / Bay Area community.
- Engage in anti-racism training and professional development for all faculty, with options for family participation.
- Increase recruitment of diverse faculty and staff by expanding where we look for candidates and attracting them with our DEIJ commitments.
- Seek input from all stakeholders on creating affinity groups within our community.
- Establish metrics to measure our success in these initiatives.



# KEYS SEL SPECIFICS

True learning – the kind that happens when students stretch themselves to the point of making the mistakes that let them learn – can be messy. We know that learning to love that messiness is critical in these early years. Our teachers embrace a growth mindset, encouraging effort, challenge, mistakes, and persistence.



## Lower School

For younger students we focus on coping strategies for managing stress, peer pressure, conflicts, decision-making, and developing a greater understanding of and appreciation for others. SEL-centric approaches in the lower school help students:

- Learn value of self and others
- Celebrate differences and identities
- Build and nurture friendships
- Identify and manage feelings
- Work collaboratively
- Resolve conflicts through communication



## Middle School

Middle school students build on the foundations established in the lower school, delving into more advanced topics through reflection, discussion, and project work. This helps them connect their growing self-knowledge to their academic lives, as they learn what they need in order to continue growing into balanced, successful, and inspired individuals. Focus areas for middle school students:

- Demonstrate situational intelligence
- Practice self-advocacy and personal responsibility
- Develop strategies for time and stress management (organization, prioritization)
- Problem-solve issues related to peer pressure, bullying, and conflict resolution
- Identify and nurture positive friendships



# OUR COMMUNITY



**JASMYNE SANDERS**

Keys Parent ('20, '27)

Trustee

## **How did you become a part of the Keys family?**

We joined Keys four years ago when our middle daughter was going into sixth grade. We didn't think transitioning into a K-8 school in 6th grade would be a positive experience. We were wrong! Keys turned out to be a perfect fit for her. A year later, our youngest, who's now in third grade, started kindergarten.

## **Why was the middle school at Keys such a great fit for your daughter?**

We moved here from Arizona and saw that she wasn't being challenged. There were too many kids in her class, and teachers were stretched. We began looking for a more nurturing environment. As a young Black girl, she needed a really safe environment to embark on a self-discovery journey. At Keys, we felt she'd be safe, and challenged academically, and she'd be around open-minded people with the opportunity to go really deep in her learning.

## **When your middle daughter graduated Keys last year, what told you that you had made the right decision?**

Two things. First, her self-advocacy. There's a noticeable difference with how she communicates with her teachers. Second, her confidence. She deeply knows herself as a student and owns her learning journey.

## **Some parents are torn about whether to leave after fifth grade. What are your thoughts on that?**

It's a missed opportunity to not stay. Keys allows kids to still be children a little bit longer. Kids are exposed to so much, and so many of those external factors are pushing them to grow up fast. There was a beautiful innocence with my daughter staying through eighth grade. It is a little bit of a bubble, but they come out of that bubble so confident, so independent. They are ready to tackle high school. It's so worth it.

## **What was the admission process like?**

We had no clue what to expect. My husband and I both went to public school, so we weren't familiar with the

process. During the admissions process we didn't see a lot of Black representation, so I was paying close attention to who was speaking on behalf of the school and how they engaged with us. Hearing the parents' perspectives made a huge difference when it was time to make a decision. Now, I volunteer for the school and at admissions events to be there for other families of color.

## **What type of volunteering have you done?**

First I was a room parent, then later I joined the KSA (Keys School Association). Now, I'm in my second year on the board.

## **What's your vision for the Keys of the future?**

It's such a magical place. Our family was entirely welcomed into the community, which is so open. I hope this opportunity can be afforded to more people of color.

## **What do you hope for Keys?**

I hope it stays a close community and attracts families that will align well with the philosophy and the mission. I think we can make some updates to the campus and still keep the charm of the school. I also hope the school stays intentional and focused on diversity. A lot of that begins with admission, including representation at events like the open houses. We can't continue to do things the way they have always been done and expect to suddenly have more diversity on campus.

**“Keys is a place where your child can flourish. It really feels like an extension of your home.”**

Jasmyne Sanders



# OUR COMMUNITY



**MARISA HODGETT-  
CHIANG**

Lower School Music Teacher (15 yrs)  
Keys Parent ('25)

## **Tell me about your relationship to Keys.**

This is my 15th year working at the school. I was the K-8 music teacher for one campus, then for both campuses. Now that we've grown in size, I focus entirely on the lower school music program on the lower school campus, which serves grades K-4. I'm also a parent: my daughter is in fifth grade and has been here since kindergarten. My husband works here, too. He teaches 7th and 8th grade history.

## **You and your family are clearly "all-in" to Keys. Why?**

As a teacher, I really believe in the mission. Lots of schools say they teach the whole child, but at Keys it's so real. Keys has a beautiful way to educate children. As a teacher, I have a lot of freedom and support to experiment. At some schools, music is the first thing to be cut. But at Keys, so many programs—music, visual arts, theater, self-science, world languages, technology, and maker—all matter just as much as any other subject. I feel like an equal here; my subject is a valued part of the curriculum and is what's needed for our students to be whole people.

## **Tell me about the students.**

The students here are quite easy to teach. They love learning and are excited. It's a culture of learning and joy. They start talking right in kinder about how to have a growth mindset. I've seen that in my child. She can make mistakes and take feedback. It's happening in every classroom.

## **What do you know about the Keys community that might not be so obvious to the outside eye?**

The typical family at Keys is quiet, kind, and humble. The school sometimes has trouble putting into words what makes it special. There's a real humility about that. Everyone here is humble and has trouble tooting their own horns.

## **Go ahead and toot the Keys horn.**

Our lower school is old, and we still love it! The experience here is joyful. It's about creative exploration. The school has been intentional about child development and what is appropriate for kids. We're constructivist. We solve problems that make sense to kids. We're not trying to put kids into an educational box; all of them are dramatically different. They lead their parent-teacher conferences. In the process, they talk about how they're doing and get to know themselves, while the teachers get to know their students even better. Meanwhile, there's great work here being done with conflict resolution, finding compromise, and fixing hurts. We all have off-days, and we stay in touch with each other to know when to stop pushing and allow for a pause.

## **What are the opportunities for growth or improvement at Keys?**

The school has always put its money toward its people, not its place. It sounds so cheesy, but there's a magical feel here. If I had to dream big...we've started some DEI work, but there needs to be a lot more of that. We have opportunities to bring in so many more students of color and connect with some surrounding communities. Our Black and LatinX communities are not here as much as we'd like.

## **Any final words of advice for the next admission director?**

Get to know the people well here. Come see all the magic that is happening in the classroom. Observe what makes our teachers so incredible. They are hard-working, have high morals, and are so kind. Learn how to put into words what is happening in a Keys classroom. But at the end of the day, the admission director has to put fit ahead of finances. It's not about needing to win over someone to come to our school. It's about selling what we have and inviting the families who believe in that to apply.



# AT A GLANCE

**FOUNDED IN**  
**1973**

**STUDENTS**  
**319** students from the  
greater Bay Area

**ACCREDITING  
BODIES**  
California Association  
of Independent Schools  
(CAIS)

## ADMISSION

Acceptance Rate:  
**49%**

Admission Entry Points:  
**K & 6**

Re-enrollment (other grades):  
**91%**



## MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS

BADA, NAIS, NBOA, Palo Alto  
Chamber of Commerce,  
cal-ISBOA, CAIS

## ENDOWMENT

**\$3.6 million**

## FINANCIAL AID

Just under **\$1 million**,  
with a commitment to increase  
it annually

## OPERATING BUDGET

**\$14 million**



## SIZE OF CAMPUSES

Lower School Square Footage

**16,113**

Middle School Square Footage

**23,473**

## MATRICULATION

Our 8th graders move on to attend a wide variety of high schools. For example, a recent class of 32 students enrolled at 26 different schools. Approximately two-thirds of our graduates attend local independent high schools, while one-third choose to attend either their local public school or a boarding school farther afield.



# DUTIES

- Work with the head of school and the leadership team to provide strategic leadership in an effort to strengthen admission initiatives and build an environment for sustained growth.
- Regularly share admissions data and assessment with the head of school, the director of finance, the director of advancement, the director of communications, division heads, and the board of trustees when appropriate.
- Manage the admissions process from inquiry to enrollment, with a special focus on outreach and yield strategies, particularly in relation to students from minoritized social groups.
- Hire, train, and mentor admission colleagues, and work closely with support staff to ensure an exceptional experience for students and families as they engage in the admission process.
- Track national and school-specific admission trends and analyze data to continuously improve recruitment, enrollment, and retention, particularly for students and families of color, LGBTQIA+ and working-class students and families.
- Use the academic, athletics, and arts programming of the school, as well as its co-curricular and local community initiatives, to help promote the school and ensure prospective students and their families understand a Keys education.
- Interview and assess interested students and their families seeking admission to Keys School, and make recommendations regarding admissibility based on a holistic review process.
- Coordinate and manage financial assistance policies and programs.
- Attend school fairs, visit and present at feeder schools, serve regularly on related local and national panels and committees, and attend other admissions events within public and independent school education.
- Develop and maintain relationships with feeder schools, consultants, and current families to determine effective practices and significant areas of recruitment.
- Submit reports to the head of school, director of finance, and board of trustees when required.
- Commit to ongoing professional development, and maintain a presence for Keys at the annual National Association of Independent Schools and the NAIS People of Color conferences in addition to conferences and events hosted by the California Association of Independent Schools.
- Partner with the school's technology team to analyze website traffic and the effect of special recruitment initiatives.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

## Additional Insights from the Head of School

The educational career of Head of School Heather Rogers, M.Ed., spans diverse experiences in both public and independent schools, as well as a wealth of real-world wisdom attained through athletic competition and musicianship. Heather is known as a visionary and changemaker within the institutions she has served, championing emotional intelligence to help students develop empathy, contribute to a more just world, and lead fulfilling lives. Heather's thoughts on this critical position for Keys:



*"The personal values of our director of admissions and enrollment candidates are a critical component of our selection process. They recognize relationships and emotions matter. They have a commitment to SEL and DEIJ and understand the importance of these values in making admissions decisions, ensuring student success, and building and fostering an inclusive community. At Keys, teaching students how to respect each other and communicate across differences are essential life skills children need to navigate today's complex world. While academic success is a given at Keys, social and cultural sensitivity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and advocacy inform our overall curriculum."*

# QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

## REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university
- An understanding that the admission of a child to a school is also the enrollment of a family in the life of a school
- A readiness to engage in the social-emotional development of students and educators, based in emotion science, and programs such as Responsive Classroom, YCEI (Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence), SELA (Social-Emotional Learning Assessment), and Bank Street's ERP (Emotionally Responsive Practice), among others
- Respect for the life of the child
- The ability and desire to work across differences, both intellectually and socially
- Joy and a respectful sense of humor
- Compassion, integrity, and open-mindedness in all interactions
- Collegiality, approachability, flexibility, and adaptability
- An interest in and willingness to use new and different approaches to recruitment and enrollment
- A commitment to using respectful, and gracious interpersonal and professional communication
- A collaborative approach with all faculty and staff at the school
- Outstanding communications skills in writing and public speaking
- Exceptional organizational skills and impartial professional practices
- Efficient and effective approaches to spending and deploying resources
- Adept use of multimedia
- Creative and unique approaches to the promotion of the school, recruitment, enrollment, and retention

## ABILITIES AND WILLINGNESS

- An ability to learn and manage all aspects of a K-8 admission cycle, which can be fast-paced and complex at times
- A willingness to embrace, develop, and implement creative forms of financial assistance admission policies
- A willingness to leverage data systems for managing, planning, and evaluating both the admission and enrollment processes
- An ability to design and implement robust recruitment and sustained enrollment at an independent school, including: developing a blueprint to attract prospective students; managing an admission office; and establishing guidelines and requirements for recruiting, admitting, and enrolling students



# HOW TO APPLY

12M Recruiting is acting on behalf of Keys School to identify exceptional educational 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 February 21, 2022.

All applications must be submitted online:  
[www.12MRecruiting.com/jobs/keys](http://www.12MRecruiting.com/jobs/keys).

An application requires submitting four PDFs:

- A cover letter addressed to Heather Rogers (she/her), Head of School, describing your interest, experience, and commitment
- 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:

*How would you strategically approach designing and delivering outstanding results in the areas of recruitment, enrollment, and retention at Keys?*

Keys School is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Qualified applicants are considered for employment without regard to age (40 and older), race, color, ancestry, religion, gender identity & gender expression, national origin, disability: physical or mental, sexual orientation, citizenship status, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions), medical condition, AIDS/HIV, genetic information, marital status, military or veteran status, political affiliations or activities, and status as a victim of domestic violence, assault, or stalking. For more information on the school, please visit [keysschool.org](http://keysschool.org).

