



LIVE OAK SCHOOL

Lower School Head

SUMMARY

Location | San Francisco, CA

Post Date | January 9, 2020

Application Deadline | Wednesday, January 29, 2020 at 5:00pm PDT

Remote Semifinal Round | Saturday, February 1, 2020

On-site Final Round | February 10 – 13, 2020

Decision Announced | February 28, 2020

Start Date | July 1, 2020





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 assistant head of school, who has served the duties of a lower school head, departs after a successful nine-year tenure to become a head of school on the East coast this July, 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 lower school head will have a larger and even more diverse student and professional community to lead. The lower 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, develop personal confidence and the ability to collaborate with others, inspire students to act with compassion and integrity, and nurture a passion for learning to last a lifetime.





VISION AND VALUES

Live Oak School is a strong community of students, staff, and families. Each member of the community works to create a compelling and challenging learning environment inspired by progressive thought and grounded in shared values.

Vision of the school

To know a child well is Live Oak School's vision and the responsibility of the entire Live Oak community—faculty, parents, and the students themselves. In Live Oak's own words...

- We know children well, so **we can teach them well**, providing access and challenge for all students.
- We know them well, so **they can bring their whole selves** – all aspects of their identity – to school so they can be comfortable at school to take the risks that result in real learning.
- We know them well, so **they can know themselves well**, and grow into people who can advocate for themselves and for others.

Values of the school

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 each individual;
- **Empathy** in personal relationships to encourage responsibility and integrity in the actions of each community member; and,
- **Joy and humor**, which in turn inspire a willingness to learn from mistakes, to take healthy risks, and to explore 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:

- Audit the scope and priorities of the curriculum, with a focus on course content in science, technology, and math disciplines
- Explore new ways to address learning differences and advanced learners
- Support students to make choices about their learning experiences
- Determine how to use the bounty of the Bay Area to expand classroom walls

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:

- Reimagine Live Oak’s social emotional and service learning curriculums, while reassessing the school’s relationship with the ever-changing city of San Francisco
- Articulate a scope and sequence for K-8 social and emotional education that includes identity development, collaboration and leadership skills, and a service learning ladder that emphasizes meaningful engagement with the community and connections to broader curriculum
- Explore how Live Oak might more deeply participate in San Francisco life and engage changemakers already in the surrounding community

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 soft 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.



THE VISION FOR THE CHANGEMAKER LAB

In the fall of 2020, the school will officially open its new ChangeMaker Lab. This year, the director of strategic projects has been tasked with leading the effort to bring that lab online into its first iteration.

The ChangeMaker Lab will be a space where students will use their creativity and design-thinking skills to positively impact the world. Live Oak believes that learning is best when it is connected to the world that students experience. In this space, students will deepen their understanding of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as they create solutions to problems that they see in the world. At the same time, their work will affirm the school's value to inspire young people to take on issues of equity and social justice to make a positive change in the world.



BACKGROUND AND OPPORTUNITIES

Expansion and a new strategic plan

This is an exciting time at Live Oak. The school just wrapped up a major expansion—both physically and operationally—that resulted in a near doubling of space, which in turn has allowed for more students and curricular offerings. With a larger student body comes the opportunity to expand programmatically and develop new learning experiences for an even more diverse community of learners. Meanwhile, existing spaces—including the library, classrooms, and common areas—were remodeled to support flexible instructional practices.



In 2018 Live Oak developed a new strategic plan laying out an ambitious future for the school. Each pillar of that plan is a call to action to serve not just existing students, but future students and the surrounding community as well. As the school prepares for its next chapter, Live Oak is under the stable leadership of a head of school who is in her eleventh year in that role and nineteenth year at the school overall.

Forward-thinking initiatives

Live Oak has for many years launched and implemented initiatives related to instructional design, differentiated instruction, and curricular innovation. Project Zero, the educational research center developed out of Harvard University, has been adopted for many years as a guiding framework for Live Oak's teaching and learning program. All the faculty are trained in Project Zero's teaching for understanding (TFU) framework. Live Oak recently created a part-time curriculum design leadership role to lead the documentation of the school's curriculum and to coach faculty in the use of the TFU framework in the development of new interdisciplinary curriculum.

In all classrooms from kindergarten through grade 5, two master educators serve as co-teachers. This special arrangement not found at many schools has allowed Live Oak to differentiate instruction and plan more dynamic learning modules. With now two sections per grade, the possibilities are even greater for creating unique professional development experiences for faculty and customized learning outcomes for students



Coming this fall

Next fall, the school will welcome to the leadership team a director of instructional innovation—a new role at Live Oak—to oversee areas such as instructional technology, instructional design, and pedagogical innovation. Thus, the leadership team—which also includes a director of diversity, equity, and inclusion—will be an excellent arena for strategic collaboration for the next lower school head as cross-divisional initiatives are designed and explored.

Finally, the latest and perhaps most highly anticipated investment of resources in the area of curricular innovation is the launching of the Live Oak ChangeMaker Lab. The lab's space is in transition now and will be fully online in the fall of 2020. Many schools create maker or design spaces that



are simply add-ons with little or no connection to the overall teaching and learning program. For Live Oak, the ChangeMaker Lab will truly be an extension of a culture, values, and mission—and the impact the school wants to have on the surrounding community.

To put the vision of the lab in context requires an understanding of how Live Oak has for years been inspiring and honoring its graduates. The Live Oak Alumni ChangeMaker Award, which started in 2014, is given yearly to an alum who models empathy and responsibility, demonstrates the capacity to create change in the community, and inspires action in others. Past recipients include:

- The founder of an arts empowerment program to help young girls develop positive identity through journaling and performance;
- The founder of a soccer program that empowers youth with a toolkit to overcome obstacles to growth and personal success;
- A researcher who works to improve the experience of immigrants in South America by examining social problems from forced migration; and,
- An assistant director of a jazz dance company who works to promote Deaf culture and challenge stereotypes of those who are hearing impaired.

With this long-standing commitment to social and humanitarian justice, the goal of the ChangeMaker Lab goes far beyond teaching students the basic principles of maker and design. Rather, the hope is to inspire as many young students as possible to investigate their communities near and far, identify problems as opportunities, design creative solutions, and ultimately make a difference in this world. In essence, the mission of the ChangeMaker Lab is to help develop the next generation of ChangeMakers at Live Oak.



The opportunity

The outgoing assistant head is a dynamic, highly respected leader who next year will become a head of school on the East coast. As the school has expanded and a middle school head was recently hired, the assistant head focused her attention on curriculum and instruction related to the lower school program. Live Oak has made the strategic decision to keep this position focused on the lower school going forward. As a result, the next lower school head will have a chance to concentrate even more on the core responsibilities of this position. Given that the school is now bigger than it was just a few years ago, this re-focusing feels appropriate and well timed for everyone involved.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice are fundamentals in the lower school and throughout Live Oak. The outgoing assistant head's connections in the community—and particular those she made with parents and guardians of color—were invaluable as the school has tried to live out its mission of serving all families and advancing principles of DEI and social justice. On campus, creating inclusive communities and employing equity pedagogy are core approaches to instruction and student learning. The school is hoping to find another division head for whom these areas of leadership are both a passion and a strength.

With more faculty and more students, the lower school is a bustling division of progressive learning and experiential activity. This is a time to reflect on existing traditions and potential future changes. This is a time for a highly organized, systems-minded leader who can facilitate change, evolution, and group discussions and decisions within an even larger division. This is a time for a curriculum-minded leader who wants to work with a diverse, collegial, and collaborative faculty on a variety of exciting initiatives as the school emerges from a period of rapid growth. This is an exciting time at Live Oak!





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

Faculty and staff: 56 full- and part-time teachers, plus 16 administrators and staff members; 37% of faculty and staff identify as people of color

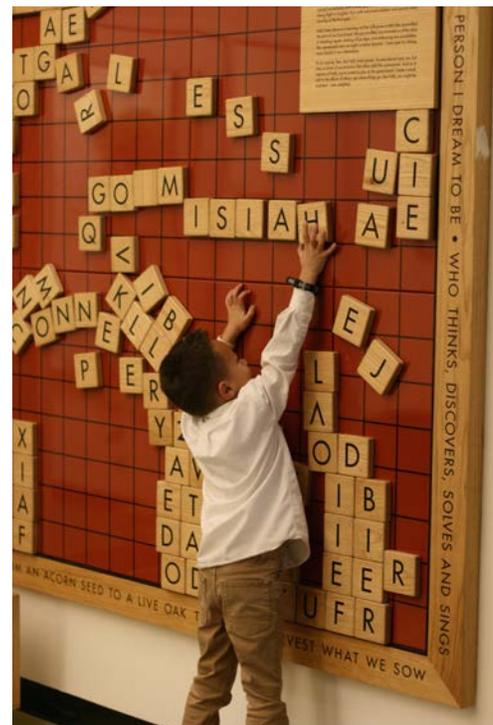
Accreditation: California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS)

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 \$1,713 to \$34,250; 6-8 tuition ranges from \$500 to \$34,700; 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



QUOTE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

"A Live Oak education teaches children to recognize and relish opportunities for learning, to build relationships that result in new perspectives, and to act with integrity in the ongoing decisions that define their lives. The lower school is the essential starting point for developing and instilling these values in the youngest of learners."

Virginia Paik, Head of School



LOWER SCHOOL HEAD

SPECIFIC DUTIES

Lower School Program and Student Life

- Lead the lower 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 lower 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 lower 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 lower school faculty including classroom teachers, specialist teachers, assistant teachers, counselors, and substitutes working in grades K-4.
- Plan and lead lower school division meetings, grade level meetings, teaching team meetings and other student support meetings for faculty and students in grades K-4.

Leadership and External Affairs

- Build strong relationships with parents, guardians, and students in Live Oak's lower 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 lower 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 elementary school leaders to fill this extraordinary opportunity. Please direct any inquiries to:

Gabriel Lucas
Principal, 12M Recruiting
jobs@12MRecruiting.com

APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED THROUGH JANUARY 29, 2020.

Candidates should email the following four separate PDF attachments to jobs@12MRecruiting.com with the subject heading **Live Oak LSH**:

- 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)
- Statement of leadership and educational philosophy

