

Mid-Peninsula High School



Director of Innovation and Design

**LOCATION**

Menlo Park, CA

SEMIFINAL ROUND

Late March – Early April

START DATE

Summer 2026

POST DATE

February 13, 2026

ON-SITE FINAL ROUND

Week of April 17

REPORTS TO

Head of School

PRIORITY DEADLINE

March 13, 2026

DECISION ANNOUNCED

April 27, 2026

ANNUAL SALARY RANGE

\$120,000–\$150,000



Summary

Mid-Peninsula High School is an independent, non-profit, non-sectarian, coeducational college preparatory high school in Menlo Park, California. Intentionally small by design, Mid-Pen is built on genuine connection. Each student has a daily home base with a trusted adult who helps them get organized, set goals, and navigate the week, so students are supported, challenged, and guided toward greater independence.

Mid-Pen offers a college-preparatory program that includes a full range of high school experiences. Students have options for accelerated and honors classes, visual and performing arts, and a robust and inclusive athletics program. Mid-Pen's distinctive program is shaped by signature experiences such as the daily Core Program, DragonWeek intersession, and Dragon Workshops. Alongside a dedicated learning support program and a college advisor, these experiences help students build skills, confidence, and purpose.

At this exciting moment in the school's 47-year history, Mid-Pen seeks a director of innovation and design (DI&D) to start this summer. This is a new role that seeks a creative, inspirational, and ambitious educational leader who wants to help a small, relational school explore pedagogical innovation across all disciplines and areas of school life. The DI&D will have a chance to help make that innovation come alive via staff/faculty partnerships and direct student instruction. Reporting to the head of school, the DI&D will serve on the administrative team, supervise the director of technology, and teach two elective courses each year. The successful candidate will bring a love of teaching, an experienced instructional design toolkit to inspire other educators, a passion for and fluency in one or more innovation-related domains (such as design, maker, fabrication, robotics, computer science, or applied engineering), an eagerness for helping to establish a new role in a small teaching community, and an understanding for how to develop multiple learning pathways for a neurodiverse, motivated, and intellectually curious student body.



MISSION

Dedicated to the belief that all students belong with expert and compassionate teachers, Mid-Peninsula High School empowers students with the knowledge and purpose to impact a complex world.

CORE VALUES

Respect. Kindness.
Responsibility.
Belonging.

Around here, these aren't just nice ideas, they're the way we keep our community strong. These values remind us that learning isn't just about grades or tests; it's about becoming confident, compassionate people ready to make an impact. They give our students the freedom to take risks, the courage to grow, and the confidence to know they belong.

They show up in the little things: the way we listen to each other, the way we cheer each other on, and the way we own our choices. Together, these values set the stage for the kind of learning that feels adventurous, challenging, and worth showing up for every day.



Signature Experiences

Mid-Pen's program invites students to learn in many modes. The school creates space for discovery, hands-on learning, community connection, and the kind of confidence that grows when students are trusted and supported.



Core Program

Core is the academic foundation of Mid-Pen and the daily home base for every student. Students meet in Core every day with a teacher who knows them well and has their back. Core is where students check in, set goals, get organized, celebrate wins, work through challenges, and build a sense of belonging.

DragonWeek

DragonWeek is Mid-Pen's beloved spring intersession: one week where students step out of the usual schedule into ungraded, immersive learning. DragonWeek blends real-world experiences with joy and adventure, from creative intensives to outdoor exploration and travel. Recent offerings include experiences like Marine Biology, The Art of Cooking, Joshua Tree Camping Trip, and Throw, Pound, Cut, Stitch, a hands-on course where students work with materials and tools to create tangible work they can call their own.



Dragon Workshops

Dragon Workshops are held throughout the year to foster belonging and personal growth. Workshops are designed by grade level so the experience matches students' developmental needs, from ninth-grade habits and learning strategies, to tenth-grade community and identity work, to junior-year leadership and planning for what comes next. Sessions focus on community and practical life skills, from organization and healthy living to finances and even the occasional salsa-dance workshop.

Visual & Performing Arts

At Mid-Pen, the arts are immersive, interdisciplinary, and driven by student voice. Whether in studio work, performances, or theater tech, students use the creative process to explore ideas and express who they are and what they want to pursue. Across the arts, students have opportunities to create in multiple mediums, including digital arts experiences such as 3D design and printing, as well as VR and AR explorations that expand what studio and storytelling can look like. The music program emphasizes confidence, collaboration, and identity, helping students learn to play with others and bring their whole selves to the work.

Learning Support & College Advising

Mid-Pen's Learning Support Program provides customized support so students can build the strategies, habits, and self-advocacy they will carry into college and life. Together with College Advising, these programs help students leave Mid-Pen prepared for what comes next and with a clearer sense of who they are.



Key Stats

FOUNDING YEAR

1979

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

116

STUDENTS OF COLOR

65%

NUMBER OF STAFFULTY

33

STAFFULTY OF COLOR

36%



AVERAGE CLASS SIZE

12

AVERAGE STUDENT- TEACHER RATIO

6:1

FAMILIES WHO PARTICIPATE IN FLEX TUITION

31%

ENDOWMENT

\$5M

ACCREDITING BODIES

Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)

Accredited by the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS)

www.mid-pen.org



Community Voices



Alex

GRADE 12 STUDENT

“Mid-Pen feels like a real community. I can talk to teachers, ask questions, and they will explain it. People are supportive and accepting.”

I'm a senior at Mid-Pen, and what I value most is how personal the day-to-day experience feels. I can talk openly with my teachers, ask questions when something isn't clicking, and feel supported. This year I've been able to go deeper in digital arts, and it matters to have a teacher who encourages curiosity and makes time to help when I get stuck.

I'm excited about a director of innovation and design who can help students and teachers use digital tools more smoothly, and who can help make learning materials easier to access and work with, so we can spend more time on our thinking and less time just trying to find what we need.



Meenu Baloda
Ph.D.

SCIENCE TEACHER

“I'm proud to stand behind the school. You see students change here.”

I'm in my eighth year at Mid-Pen, and I teach biology, biotechnology, and environmental science. I also serve as the STEM chair. I've grown genuinely proud of this community, in large part because of the growth I watch students make here.

Looking ahead, I'm excited about a director of innovation and design who can help teachers respond to a wide range of learning styles in ways that work in real classrooms and keep expectations clear for students. I also see a real opening to grow hands-on, real-world STEM learning through partnerships beyond campus, including speakers, local institutions, and industry, so students can connect what they learn to the wider world.



Randy Johnson

DIRECTOR OF
ADMISSIONS

“It's really special to know the kids can put themselves out there in a vulnerable way and try new things in a safe place, and the community will just hold them.”

I've been part of Mid-Pen for more than a decade, working closely with students and families. When I think of what makes this place special, I think of a moment at a talent show: a student decided to sing on stage even though he wasn't an experienced performer, and the room met him with kindness. Classmates turned off the gym lights and held up their phone flashlights as he sang. It was simple, and it said everything about the way Mid-Pen shows up for kids.

I'm excited about a director of innovation and design who can help teachers expand what is possible in the classroom in practical ways, and who can grow more hands-on learning so students can build, make, and learn a real design process over time.



Background & Narrative



Mid-Peninsula High School is an independent, non-profit, non-sectarian, coeducational college preparatory high school in Menlo Park, California, serving students in grades 9–12 in an intentionally small setting. Founded in 1979 by educators Phil Bliss and Herman Ohme, Mid-Pen began with three students around a kitchen table and has grown into a school built on genuine connection, academic purpose, and care.

Mid-Pen's program is anchored by signature experiences that invite students to learn in different modes.

Each student has a daily home base with a trusted adult who helps them stay organized, set goals, and build independence. DragonWeek offers immersive, ungraded experiences that blend joy, challenge, and discovery. Dragon Workshops create structured time for community, reflection, and practical life skills. Alongside a dedicated learning support program and college advising team, these experiences help students grow in confidence, skills, and self-advocacy. Students also have meaningful opportunities to create across disciplines and mediums, including digital arts experiences such as 3D design and printing, as well as VR and AR explorations that expand what students can make and how they can share their work.

At this exciting moment in the school's 47-year history, Mid-Pen seeks a director of innovation and design (DI&D) to start this summer. This is a new role for a creative, inspirational, and ambitious educational leader who wants to help a small, relational school explore pedagogical innovation across all disciplines and areas of school life. The DI&D will have a chance to make that innovation come alive through staffulty partnerships and direct student instruction, with real room to pilot, learn, and refine, then help the community carry forward what works.

Over the past year, the school invested in shared growth around teaching practice through a six-month partnership with Research for Better Teaching, including staffulty workshops, classroom observation, and coaching. That work strengthened a shared language for effective teaching and reinforced what Mid-Pen does

best: helping students grow into capable, self-aware learners through clear expectations and thoughtful support. Building on that foundation, a central part of this new role is instructional design: collaborating with teachers to design and refine lessons, units, and assessments so innovation shows up in daily classroom practice and in student work.

Reporting to the head of school, the DI&D will serve on the administrative team, supervise the director of technology, and teach two elective courses each year. The school is seeking an educator who loves teaching, brings an experienced instructional design toolkit to inspire and support other educators, and has fluency in one or more innovation-related domains such as design, maker work, fabrication, robotics, computer science, or applied engineering. The right leader will also be energized by helping establish a new role in a small teaching community, and will understand how to develop multiple learning pathways for a neurodiverse, motivated, and intellectually curious student body.

Because Mid-Pen serves students who learn in many ways, one of the most meaningful opportunities in this role is to make learning more accessible and more manageable. That can mean helping students access reading and class materials in formats that work for them, making it easier to capture and review key ideas, and choosing tools carefully so they support thinking rather than replace it. Early work will also include guiding school-wide norms for use of AI and related tools so expectations are clear, values-aligned, and supportive of student thinking and voice.

There is also real energy at Mid-Pen for learning that is hands-on and student-driven. Over time, the school hopes to expand maker-centered learning, potentially including a dedicated maker space as timing and space allow. In the near term, the opportunity is to begin with what is possible now, using flexible spaces, existing programs, and community partnerships. The DI&D will help pilot hands-on, design-oriented experiences that invite students to plan, build, test, iterate, and share their work. This can include pathways in STEM



and computer science, such as introductory coding or robotics experiences, shaped by student interest and the expertise the new director brings.

The role is designed to stay close to classrooms. The DI&D will teach two classes each year, including design thinking and a second elective to be determined based on program needs and the director's expertise, with possibilities such as computer science, robotics, or another design-oriented offering.

Mid-Pen is a one-to-one, bring-your-own-device school, and systems like Veracross and Google Classroom are used to share resources, communicate, and stay connected to classes and school information. The

director of technology leads day-to-day operations, including platforms, systems, and vendor coordination, and is the point person when students or staff need help. The DI&D will supervise and support this work, with a clear goal: keep the tools in service of learning.

With operational work led through the director of technology, the DI&D can stay focused on learning design, staff partnership, and school-wide guidance. This is also where Mid-Pen's commitment to neurodiverse learners matters most, because the right tools and routines can help students stay organized, engaged, and independent.

A unique role designed to have a big impact

PEDAGOGY

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

...like an academic program leader, by helping the head of school and director of teaching, learning, & equity define a clear approach to instructional innovation, choosing a small set of pilots, and building shared language for what students and families can expect.

CURRICULUM & LEARNING EXPERIENCES

...like a resident innovator, to inspire and lead conversations and learning journeys for teachers and other administrators, and to set norms and learning pathways for new tools, techniques, and emerging technologies.

IN PRACTICE

...like an instructional coach, by co-planning with teachers, supporting lesson and unit design, observing learning in action, and helping teachers reflect and iterate in ways that fit their style and students' needs.

...like a learning experience builder, by helping teachers and students use tools thoughtfully to support learning and access, and by piloting maker-centered and design-oriented experiences that can connect to arts, performance, DragonWeek, and STEM, including early computer science pathways as feasible.



Karen Eshoo,
Ed.D.
HEAD OF SCHOOL

Interview with the Head of School

The director of innovation and design will be a close partner to the head of school in advancing Mid-Pen's mission and supporting staff and students. Dr. Karen Eshoo has served as Head of School at Mid-Pen since 2021. A veteran educator and experienced independent school leader, she leads Mid-Pen with a clear belief that high school should be a place where students belong not because they have learned to blend in, but because they are seen, valued, and appreciated for who they are.

We invite you to [watch our interview](#) with Karen, where she reflects on Mid-Pen's close-knit learning community and shares what she will be looking for in the next director of innovation and design.



Duties



Innovation & Strategy

- In partnership with the leadership team, define and communicate a mission-based approach to innovation and design in teaching and learning at Mid-Pen.
- Set annual priorities and lead a small set of pilots and initiatives across the academic program.
- Work directly with faculty through co-planning, coaching, and practical support.
- Guide the development of values-aligned norms for student use of AI and related tools, and support their day-to-day use in classrooms.
- Teach two classes, including design thinking and a second elective aligned with school priorities and the director's expertise.

Leadership & Partnerships

- Supervise the director of technology and provide direction for the technology program through that role.
- Collaborate closely with the director of teaching, learning, & equity to support innovation work with student needs and teaching practice.
- Steward the student device approach in a way that supports learning and access.
- Establish and maintain local, regional, and national partnerships that expand learning opportunities for students and support the school's goals.
- Serve on the administrative team, report directly to the head of school, and perform other duties as assigned.

Maker-centered Learning

- Pilot and grow maker-centered and design-oriented learning experiences using existing spaces, programs, and partnerships.
- Identify near-term partnership opportunities and resources that expand hands-on learning.
- Work with staff to connect making to arts, performance, and DragonWeek, and to STEM learning as appropriate.
- Explore computer science pathways over time, such as coding or robotics.
- Contribute to longer-term planning for a maker-centered learning space as timing, space, and priorities allow, with a focus on building a program, not just a room.



Qualifications & Qualities

Professional Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree required. Advanced degree welcomed
- At least 5 years of experience in schools, including significant classroom teaching experience at the secondary level
- Demonstrated experience leading instructional innovation initiatives, including planning, piloting, and learning from results
- Demonstrated experience coaching teachers 1:1 through co-planning, observation, feedback, and reflection
- Experience supporting neurodiverse learners, including approaches that build access, independence, and self-advocacy
- Experience developing community-wide guidance and shared expectations, including clear guidelines for student use of AI and related tools
- Experience designing and facilitating professional learning for educators
- Project management experience, including managing multiple initiatives, setting priorities, and following through reliably
- Experience as a manager, including coaching and feedback

Leadership & Personal Qualities

- A warm, steady presence with students, staff, and families, grounded in listening and clear communication
- Credibility with staff and an ability to work alongside others in classrooms and planning spaces
- Judgment to hold varied perspectives, build shared direction, and move work forward at a sustainable pace
- Curiosity and humility, with a willingness to learn the Mid-Pen way before proposing solutions
- Comfort with iteration and reflection while keeping a clear throughline
- Care for student voice and integrity, including a thoughtful approach to emerging tools and AI guidance
- Visible engagement in the life of the school, including performances, exhibitions, and signature experiences such as DragonWeek



How to Apply

12M & Ed Tech Recruiting is acting on behalf of Mid-Peninsula High School to identify exceptional leaders to fill this extraordinary opportunity. Direct inquiries to:

jobs@EdTechRecruiting.com



Applications submitted by **March 13, 2026** will receive priority review.

All applications must be submitted online:

www.EdRechRecruiting.com/jobs/MidPen/innovation

AN APPLICATION REQUIRES SUBMITTING FOUR PDFS:

1. Cover letter introducing yourself to the Mid-Peninsula High School search committee
2. CV or resume
3. A reference list of four or more individuals who could speak on your behalf if you were to progress further in this search (include each person's name, current organization, title, phone number, email, and past connection to you; we will not contact anyone on your reference list without obtaining your permission first)
4. A response to the following prompt:

This role will be asked to teach two electives...a design-thinking class and another class aligned to your background and interests. What would you like to offer for that second course? In just a couple paragraphs, share a short overview of a course that you would be excited to bring to Mid-Pen.

Mid-Peninsula High School is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Mid-Pen adheres to an employment policy that prohibits discriminatory practices or harassment against applicants or employees based on race, color, creed, age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, religion, ethnicity, or national origin, sexual orientation, genetic information, pregnancy or pregnancy-related medical conditions, any protected military or veteran status, physical disability, or any other category protected by applicable Federal, State, or Local law.

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