



Westmark School

DIRECTOR OF IT AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

LOCATION

Encino, CA

PRIORITY DEADLINE

August 7

SALARY

\$140,000 - \$150,000

POST DATE

July 14

REPORTS TO

Chief Academic Officer

START DATE

Late Summer 2023



Summary

Westmark School is a creative and supportive college preparatory school dedicated to educating, empowering, and celebrating students with distinct learning styles, providing the tools necessary to achieve successful and fulfilling futures. Over the past forty years, the school has earned acclaim for transforming the lives of Grades 2–12 students with dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and other diagnosed language-based learning differences (LBLD). Situated in Encino, California, about ten miles north of UCLA, it currently serves approximately 250 students. A new facility for its Lower School, scheduled to open in fall 2023, will make it possible to expand enrollment in Grades 2–5 and deepen the school's commitment to early intervention.

The director of IT and information systems at Westmark School will play a crucial role in leveraging the school's brand new, state-of-the-art elementary building and cutting-edge technology infrastructure. With 1:1 devices provided to all students, faculty, and staff, the director will ensure the smooth operation of these devices and the overall IT infrastructure. This includes managing the school's network, servers, software applications, and user support systems. A full-time systems technician works in the department and will report to the director, who will also have support from a third-party managed services provider.

Reporting to the chief academic officer (CAO), the director will collaborate closely with a director of educational technology, who will also be a member of the CAO's cabinet. Both directors will forge a dynamic partnership to empower teachers and students to leverage cutting-edge technology and to align the IT services with the school's educational goals. By effectively managing and maintaining the technology resources, the director will help to create an environment that fosters innovation, enhances learning experiences, and meets the diverse needs of learners with language-based learning differences (LBLD). This is a new role that the school hopes to bring onboard at the start of the academic year, which begins in late August.



MISSION

Westmark School is a creative and supportive college preparatory school dedicated to educating, empowering, and celebrating students with distinct learning styles, providing the tools necessary to achieve successful and fulfilling futures.





HISTORY

Throughout its incarnations over nearly forty years, the mission and educational philosophy of Westmark School has remained the same: to empower students with language-based learning differences (LBLD) to successfully pursue their dreams.

In 1983, Landmark School of Massachusetts opened Landmark West in Culver City as a West Coast extension of their school. The Landmark Foundation purchased the Encino campus in 1994. In the fall of 1997, Landmark School was purchased by a nonprofit corporation, Learning with a Difference, Inc., to provide local control over the development and implementation of the program. These leaders renamed the school Westmark School.

In 2002, Westmark began its expansion, and over the next decade, added a Science, Technology and Media Building, a new classroom wing, an upgraded sports court, and a new Fine Arts building.

Westmark continued to transform itself with changes to its mission statement, curriculum, and administration. In March of 2005, the decision was made to become a fully independent school. This decision supported Westmark's goal of implementing more individualized programming to best serve its students.

Westmark also added a Student Life program to enhance the activities related to student life for the whole school, and integrated both service and experiential learning programs into the curriculum.

In 2013, Westmark School was granted a six-year accreditation term from the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS).





DEIB at Westmark

Westmark students learn differently and Westmark teachers teach differently. As a result, all students have equal access to curriculum and programming.

Students, faculty, staff, and families bring more than learning differences to Westmark. The Westmark community is diverse economically, racially, ethnically, religiously, and in sexual orientation and gender identity. The school's commitment is to embrace individual identity and ensure that everyone in the community feels welcome and has equal access to the best Westmark has to offer.

Westmark's DEIB leadership team works closely with teachers, advisors, administrators, curriculum team members, and school counselors to integrate multicultural practices into the classrooms and overall school culture. Westmark's work with students, teachers, and leadership positively impacts the community, promoting awareness of identity, equity, and inclusion across grade levels and throughout the community.

Central to preparing students for their futures is teaching them how to become responsible members of society. To succeed in this endeavor, students need to understand their own identities and the identities of others. Westmark embeds diversity work into the culture of the school so students can develop a strong self-concept by understanding and analyzing their own culture while learning to interact and relate with respect to other individuals, students, and cultural groups.



Key Statistics

FOUNDING YEAR

1983

GRADES

2-12

ENROLLMENT

253

students

80+

ZIP codes represented in the student body

AVERAGE CLASS SIZE

Lower School: **4-8**

Middle / Upper School:

5-12



ATHLETICS

17 Sports Teams

57% of students participate in athletics

21 Clubs

ACCREDITING BODIES

CAIS, WASC

ELECTIVES

Lower School: **11** Middle School: **15** Upper School: **14**

MATRICULATION TO 2-4 YEAR COLLEGES

97%

TUITION ASSISTANCE

26% of families receive tuition assistance each year

TRANSPORTATION

5 bus/transportation routes throughout Los Angeles

100% of students who choose to apply to 4-year colleges have been accepted

www.westmarkschool.org



The Westmark Difference

Today, Westmark School is a nationally recognized leader in language-based learning differences (LBLD) education. In recent years—under the leadership of its visionary head of school, Claudia Koochek—Westmark has distinguished itself especially for its deep commitment to bridging research to practice and pursuing the best academic and social-emotional outcomes for every student.

This commitment to offering an evidence-based curriculum and continually innovating upon its methodologies has established Westmark as a model for educating children with LBLD. This is made possible in large part by its investment in professional development and its partnerships with renowned experts at leading institutions. Throughout the year, faculty and staff benefit from ongoing training based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and the RULER approach (Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence), which translates directly into student achievement and well-being.



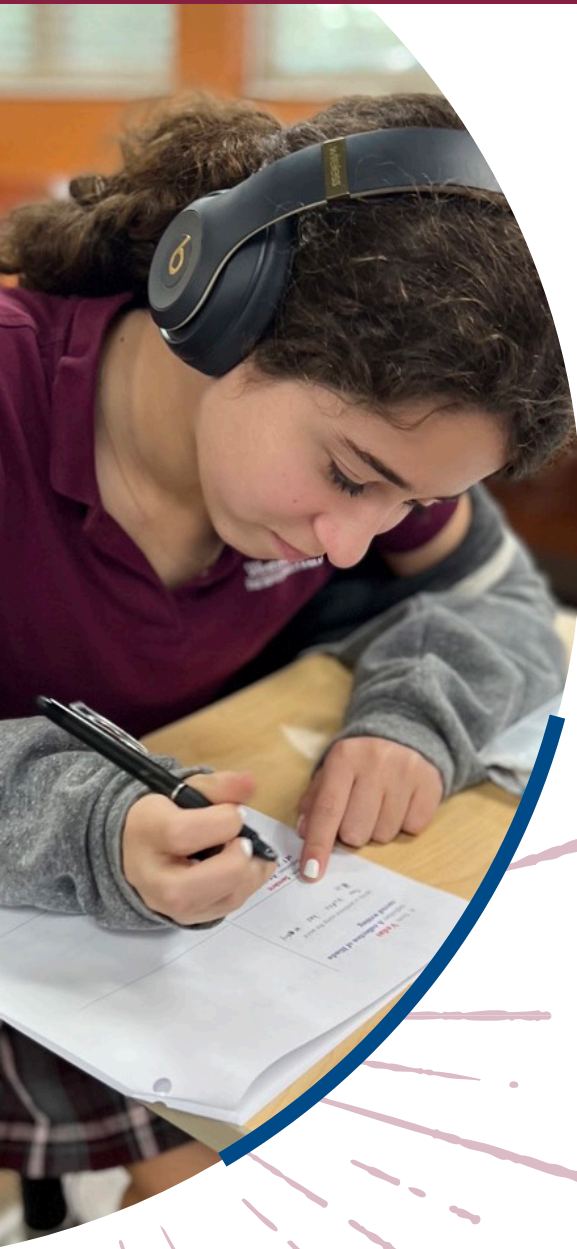
TEACHING STRATEGIES AND METHODOLOGIES

Explicit strategies and methodologies are used in Lower, Middle, and Upper School classrooms that enable students to effectively access the curriculum and find their strengths. These same explicit strategies and methodologies engage students so they enjoy coming to school each day.

Using the kinesthetic classroom model, students are often not in their seats, but walking, standing and moving during instruction time. Class sizes are small and instruction is individualized so each student is taught according to their personal learning profile. Westmark uses a multisensory approach, meaning teachers and students use multiple modalities as they teach and learn. Westmark teachers are trained to support students' executive functioning skills to help them stay focused and organized.

Throughout the curriculum, teachers scaffold instruction and support for students so that they can increase their independence in academic and executive functioning skills.





Expected Schoolwide Learning Results

Westmark School students exhibit self-confidence/self-esteem, and exemplify literacy as they become...

SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATORS WHO...

- Use oral, written, and creative forms of expression to communicate information, ideas, and emotions
- Utilize technology to enhance communication
- Receive and interpret the communication of others in an effective manner

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNERS WHO...

- Demonstrate responsibility for self and others
- Assess needs and learning styles while applying appropriate strategies to set and achieve goals
- Reflect on experiences and apply the knowledge gained to plan for the future
- Accept responsibility for their own behavior and actions
- Demonstrate ability to complete assignments and projects independently

RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS OF SOCIETY WHO...

- Contribute time, energies, and talents to improve the quality of life in the school, community, nation, and world
- Promote mutual respect, appreciation, and acceptance among people of different backgrounds, cultures, and abilities

CRITICAL THINKING / PROBLEM SOLVERS WHO...

- Use technology effectively
- Design, implement, and evaluate appropriate strategies to solve a wide variety of problems
- Use evaluation, synthesis, and analysis to establish and apply criteria to support judgment
- Apply complex problem-solving processing and critical thinking to real-life scenarios while cooperating and collaborating with others



Three Innovative Programs

Westmark School transforms the lives of students at every age and every grade level. Westmark sparks the imaginations of its youngest learners, ignites passions in its middle school students, and illuminates the future for its high schoolers. Since Westmark's students learn differently, Westmark teaches differently. And the difference is brilliant. Below are three examples of exemplary partnerships and programs that benefit Westmark's amazing and unique learners.



RULER FROM YALE UNIVERSITY

As a RULER school, Westmark implements an evidence-based SEL/DEI approach to social and emotional learning from Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence. Implementing RULER at Westmark strengthens community, improves educational outcomes, and fosters an equitable, meaningful school culture and environment. The RULER approach helps Westmark leaders, teachers, students, and families practice the skills to create and sustain a positive emotional climate within the school community.

RULER teaches 5 key emotional intelligence skills:

- R** Recognizing emotion in oneself and others
- U** Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions
- L** Labeling emotion with a nuanced vocabulary
- E** Expressing emotions in accordance with cultural norms and social context
- R** Regulating emotions with helpful strategies

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

Westmark also integrates these RULER skills into its Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach through the Harvard School of Education. UDL is a multipronged approach to whole-child, student-centered education and a means to provide opportunities for deep learning through the design of highly flexible methods, materials, and assessments. The goal is expert learning, which provides flexible options for Westmark's students. UDL teaches three principles:

ENGAGEMENT: The "Why" of Learning

REPRESENTATION: The "What" of Learning

ACTION AND EXPRESSION: The "How" of Learning

WESTLAB

Westmark Learning About Business (WestLAB) is a key component of the Upper School experience that inspires students to learn outside the classroom and prepare for life after Westmark. The program empowers Westmark's neurodiverse learners by teaching them to leverage their strengths as they gain a sense of project ownership and practical business and life skills.

Through Industry Chats and WestLAB Symposiums, students gain a sense of optimism about the future as they link their academic studies to practical experience. WestLAB teaches students to conduct research, write a paper, create a proposal, and deliver a presentation. Students have an opportunity to work with a local organization on a project of interest. The WestLAB experience concludes at the end of their senior year, when students share their achievements with their parents, mentors, teachers, and peers at the annual WestLAB fair.



A Bold Vision for the Future

CLAUDIA KOOCHKEK, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Claudia Koochek is an innovative and admired head of school. Her passion for social justice has led her to the creation of a strategic vision that aims to expand educational access to students with learning differences across the country.

Claudia has bold ideas for positioning Westmark as a private school with a public purpose. Over the course of the last several years, Westmark has become a national leader in utilizing neurodiversity research to tailor its educational programs to each individual student's needs. The school invests significant resources every year in faculty and staff professional development to help them understand at a neuropsychological and neurobiological level who they teach and how best to teach. Westmark's 253 students benefit from this investment in training each day, but Claudia's vision goes beyond the school.

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Westmark is partnering with universities across the country to stay on the cutting edge of neurodiversity research. The school recently formed a partnership with the UC San Francisco Dyslexia Center, whose mission is to eliminate the debilitating effects of developmental dyslexia while preserving and even enhancing the relative strengths of each individual. Furthermore, it aims to develop best practice protocols to implement individually catered interventions in classrooms throughout the country.

In addition, Westmark has partnered with the USC Mark and Mary Stevens Neuroimaging and Informatics Institute. The Institute applies innovative imaging and information technologies to the study of the brain. Its interdisciplinary team investigates brain structure, function, and disease, using techniques such as mathematics, genomic analysis, and ultra-high-field MRI scanning.

Each of these partnerships positions Westmark to continue making groundbreaking strides in the area of neurodiversity research, and remain a leader in changing the lives of its students and beyond.

Claudia's goal is to create an institute for research and training that will enable Westmark to use its knowledge and insights to impact the lives of more children and become a vital resource for the community. The institute will focus on early intervention through screening and assessment tools, reducing the stigma surrounding dyslexia and other learning differences, and providing training for Westmark's public school colleagues on best practices in teaching students with learning differences. This vision is fueled by Westmark's lower school campus project, and its external partnerships with universities, K-12 school districts, research institutes, and organizations across the country.





The Vision in Action

In the summer of 2022, Westmark School broke ground on a new and expanded Lower School campus. The promise of this long-planned project is bold: to create an optimal learning environment that matches the excellence of its academic programs for young learners with language-based learning differences (LBLD).

The Lower School Campus Project is the springboard for Westmark to extend its reach and grow its impact. Representing a major investment in early intervention, the new facility will enable the school to increase Grades 2–5 enrollment while maintaining small class sizes and low student-teacher ratios. Coupled with Westmark’s plan to increase tuition assistance, the school will be able to welcome many more neurodiverse learners from across the Greater Los Angeles area so that they can access Westmark’s highly specialized, research-based curriculum and thrive in the innovative, inclusive environment.

ABOUT THE DESIGN

To help Westmark achieve its vision for the Lower School Campus Project, the school engaged world-class architectural firm NBBJ and industry-leading builders Suffolk. Every square foot of the two-story structure has been designed with the student top of mind. Highlights of the inventive design include:

- Ten classrooms reflecting the ecology best suited for a variety of distinct learning styles and differentiated instruction
- Outdoor areas that promote a connection to nature
- A black box theater to encourage creative expression and build self-confidence
- A dedicated occupational and speech therapy room
- State-of-the-art technology to support teaching and learning
- LEED® certification



Additional Insights

The technology program at Westmark School encompasses a range of initiatives designed to enhance the learning experience. With a 1:1 iPad program in all grades and a 1:1 bring-your-own-laptop (BYOL) program in high school, students have access to technology that enables personalized learning and collaboration. The iPads provide students with a versatile tool for researching, creating multimedia projects, and accessing educational apps that cater to their specific learning needs. The BYOL program empowers high school students to utilize their own devices for academic purposes, fostering a sense of ownership and familiarity.

The director of IT and information systems should have excellent communication skills, to address and respond to the needs of a diverse set of end-users. The director should also be innovative and forward-thinking, to identify emerging trends and technologies that could support the unique learning needs of LBLD students. The director should be a creative problem-solver, to troubleshoot technical issues and implement effective systems that minimize disruptions to the learning environment. Finally, the director should be highly fluent in the area of information systems, which are the underpinning for not just academic divisions but also operational departments.

The director manages a full-time systems technician, who is primarily responsible for supporting day-to-day technology help needs. The school also leverages a third-party managed services provider, which helps with higher-level network engineering. The technology department also oversees A/V services, which at a busy school like Westmark involve dozens of events and gatherings each year. Westmark is a dynamic, diverse community where everyone is known, seen, and heard. The technology department contributes significantly to the success of the school, which is excited to welcome its next technology leader right as the school year gets underway.



“Westmark is like a new school in some ways. There are so many things happening. It’s a brilliant place. What we’re looking for is a director who can come in, appreciate what’s here, and help us to continually grow this program. Major technology decisions here are made collaboratively between the IT/IS and educational technology departments, with one shared goal: that our kids, faculty, and staff feel supported and empowered by technology.”

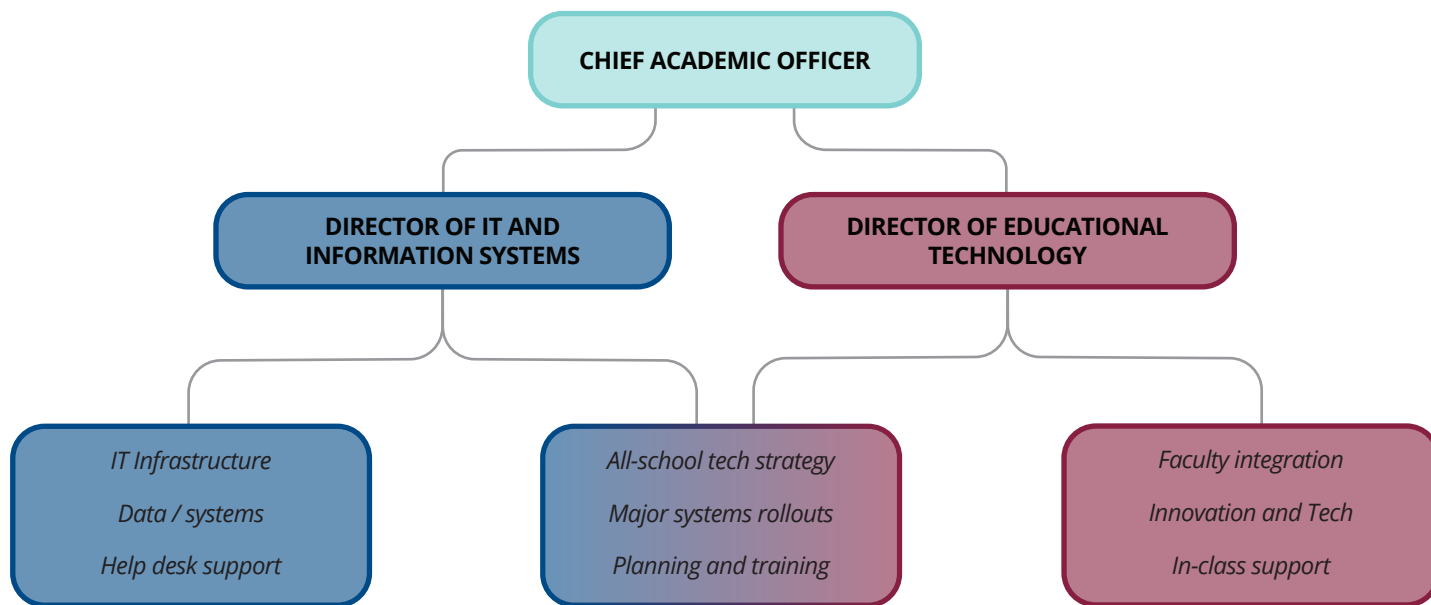
– AMY DUGRÉ, CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

We invite you to watch our [INTERVIEW](#) with Amy, who discusses why she just recently joined Westmark, a brilliant, dynamic, and diverse school, and the importance of finding a highly skilled, mission-aligned, servant-minded IT/IS technology leader.



Technology Governance

At Westmark Technology governance is a shared responsibility among three key administrators. Two directors report to a chief academic officer, who in turn reports to the head of school. The director of IT and information systems ensures that core IT services and the data / systems environment meets the day-to-day needs of a diverse set of constituents. The director of educational technology works with educators in an instructional design and coaching capacity to ensure the technology and teaching methods employed remain on the cutting edge. Together, all three administrators support the development of technology strategy, major systems rollouts, and overall planning and training.



TECHNOLOGY OVERVIEW

HARDWARE:

- ~300 iPads for students and faculty
- ~100 laptops (mostly Mac)
- ~60 SMARTBoards in classrooms
- Aruba switches, FortiGate firewall (2), Ubiquiti controller and APs (~40), ShoreTel, HP SAN, VMWare

SYSTEMS:

- Google Workspace for Education (Academics and courses)
- Blackbaud (SIS, LMS, Fundraising, Business)
- Kandji and Apple School Manager (MDM), Securly (Safety)



Major Areas of Oversight



TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY: Develop and implement a strategic technology plan aligned with the school's goals and objectives. Identify technology needs and propose solutions to enhance educational programs and administrative functions.

NETWORK AND INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT: Manage the school's core technology infrastructure. Ensure the network is secure, reliable, and scalable to support the needs of students, faculty, and staff.

HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE MANAGEMENT: Oversee the procurement, installation, maintenance, and replacement of hardware and software systems deployed to end-users, individual departments, and the entire school community.

DATA MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY: Develop and enforce data management policies and procedures, including data backup and disaster recovery plans. Ensure compliance with data privacy regulations, and protect sensitive student and staff information from unauthorized access or breaches.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND TROUBLESHOOTING: Oversee help desk services to students, faculty, and staff for hardware, software, and network-related issues. Ensure that needs and requests are addressed promptly and professionally.

USER TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Collaborate with the director of educational technology to develop and deliver technology training programs for faculty and staff. Stay updated with emerging educational technologies and provide recommendations for their adoption.

IT BUDGET MANAGEMENT: In coordination with the director of finance and operations, develop and manage the IT budget, ensuring cost-effective utilization of resources. Coordinate with vendors and service providers to negotiate contracts and ensure the delivery of high-quality services within budgetary constraints.

COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION: Collaborate with school administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders to understand their technology requirements and provide appropriate solutions. Communicate effectively about technology initiatives, upgrades, and outages to the school community.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT: In partnership with the director of educational technology, develop and implement IT policies, procedures, and guidelines. Educate the school community about these policies and evaluate them regularly.

STAY INFORMED AND INNOVATE: Stay updated with the latest trends and advancements in technology. Research and evaluate new hardware, software, and systems that could enhance the learning experience and improve the school's operational efficiency.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION: Supervise the systems technician, oversee all A/V support and services for events, and oversee the work of the managed services provider. Report to the chief academic officer, and perform other duties as assigned.



Qualifications and Qualities

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Possession of a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, with advanced coursework in information systems or a related field desirable
- Experience coordinating or managing technology projects and initiatives, preferably in an educational institution
- Experience designing and delivering technology workshops and trainings
- Experience administering data systems or enterprise applications
- Prior experience supporting IT operations, including: security, networking, backup, disaster and recovery planning, risk management, or hardware deployment
- Proficiency with sound and projection systems, and experience providing A/V support for events
- Immersion in diversity work and a commitment to fostering culturally competent trainings and work environments

LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL QUALITIES:

- An eagerness to step away from the office and seek out colleagues across campus, in the spirit of cultivating meaningful and supportive relationships
- Curious, strong passion for technology, and a highly skilled problem solver
- Excellent budgeting skills with the ability to plan strategically and cost-effectively, as well as prioritize resources
- Leadership and project management skills to successfully lead large-scale change initiatives
- Exceptional communication skills: written, verbal, presentation, and training
- An understanding of the diverse technology needs of an urban, independent school
- A commitment to the mission and vision of Westmark School
- Capability to lift up to 25 pounds and access hardware in hard-to-reach spaces



How to Apply

Ed Tech Recruiting is acting on behalf of Westmark School to identify exceptional IT leaders to fill this extraordinary opportunity. Direct inquiries to:

jobs@EdTechRecruiting.com



APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED BY AUGUST 7, 2023 WILL RECEIVE PRIORITY REVIEW.

All applications must be submitted online: www.EdTechRecruiting.com/jobs/Westmark/Technology

An application requires submitting four PDFs:

- Cover letter introducing yourself to the Westmark School search committee
- CV or resume
- 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:

Reflect on the governance structure outlined on page 12 of this document. The director of IT and information systems is one of two director-level positions in technology reporting to the chief academic officer. How would this governance structure influence your style of technology leadership, and what early reflections, comments, or questions do you have about this shared approach to overseeing the school's technology program?

Westmark School is an equal opportunity employer and makes employment decisions on the basis of merit and job performance. School policy prohibits discrimination based on race, color, creed, gender, gender identity or expression, religion, marital status, age, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical conditions (including genetic characteristics or information), sexual orientation, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, and local laws.

