

# LIVE OAK SCHOOL



## LOWER SCHOOL DIVISION DIRECTOR

**LOCATION**

San Francisco, CA

**REMOTE SEMIFINAL ROUND**

December 2 & 3, 2024

**REPORTS TO**

Associate Head of School

**POST DATE**

October 23, 2024

**ON-SITE FINAL ROUND**

Mid-December

**SALARY RANGE**

\$155,000–\$175,000

**PRIORITY DEADLINE**

November 18, 2024

**DECISION ANNOUNCED**

January 9, 2025

**START DATE**

July 1, 2025



# SUMMARY

## Live Oak will be hiring for a lower school division director (LSDD) to start July 1, 2025.

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.

This year, Live Oak transitioned to a new program leadership model to provide even greater support for day-to-day divisional management, while still allowing for continued progress on strategic program priorities. Both division directors (Lower School and Middle School)

report to the head of divisions, who next year will become the associate head of school. Because this model was finalized only late in the spring earlier this calendar year, the school appointed one-year acting directors for both divisions from within the faculty for the 24-25 school year.

Now, open application calls for both permanent division directors are running concurrently this fall, in advance of the 25-26 year. The LSDD supervises, coaches, and evaluates all faculty in grades K-4, and oversees several areas of the lower school academic program, including: implementation for curricular and student strategies; communication and engagement with guardians; and student success and restorative practices. With a highly interconnected educational environment, Live Oak is excited to run both these searches at the same time—to identify mission-aligned divisional leaders eager to collaborate with each other and other members of the Program Leadership Team, which starting in 25-26 will be led by the associate head of school.



## MISSION

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



# HISTORY



In 2021, Live Oak celebrated its 50th year. Founded as a small progressive school in 1971, Live Oak has grown in size and place over the course of its history while remaining true to its founding commitment to child-centered pedagogies and inclusive community.

The school's first site at St. Francis Church in San Francisco's Balboa Terrace neighborhood gave the school its name. A live oak tree provided shade in the churchyard where students would play. The school first expanded its campus, enrollment, and programs at its site on Diamond Street in the Castro, but outgrew that site by 2001 when the school had grown from a K-6 to a K-8 and increased its middle school enrollment to two sections per grade.

In 2002, Live Oak moved into its current building at 1555 Mariposa Street in Potrero Hill adding dedicated spaces for art and music classes, a science lab, and a library. The school thrived on Mariposa Street as San Francisco's eastern neighborhoods were growing and demand for the school consistently outweighed its capacity. Driven to make a Live Oak education accessible to more students,

in 2014 the school began the nine-year expansion of enrollment and facilities to accommodate the addition of a class to every grade level, growing the lower school to two sections and the middle school to three sections.

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 commons area. This project also included the expansion of the school's library to double its size, the addition of a school kitchen to serve lunch to all students daily, and the opening of Live Oak's ChangeMaker Lab. The expansion project was ultimately completed when Live Oak's Rooftop Playground opened in 2018. 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. Live Oak is thrilled by the lasting, positive impact that growth has and will continue to provide for the long-term health and well-being of the community and the school, while making a Live Oak education accessible to more students.



# YOU NEED, THE WORLD NEEDS

We believe deeply in the symbiotic relationship between each individual and their communities — their school, their neighborhood, their city, and ultimately the whole world.

Our Mission and Values emanate out from that essential truth — helping the individual access everything that they need to flourish necessarily benefits the entire group, and practicing compassion for those around us necessarily benefits each individual.



## 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.



# KEY STATS



**426**

Total enrollment

**37**

Zip codes represented

## Lower School (K-5)

Two classes per grade, averaging 22 students per class

**55%**

Students of color

**55%**

Faculty/staff of color

## Middle School (6-8)

Four sections in each grade averaging 16 students per section

**85%**

Faculty who have at least 5+ years of teaching experience

**35-40**

Extended Day clubs and classes throughout the year

**80+**

Field trips attended from K-8 (including Civil Rights trip to the South)

**30**

Fruit and vegetable plants in our community garden

## 2024-25 Tuition

K-5th Grade: \$500 – \$43,815

6th-8th Grade: \$500 – \$44,395

**25%**

of Live Oak families participate in our Adjusted Tuition Program. Our Adjusted Tuition Program makes a Live Oak education accessible for families.

## Relevant Associations & 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)

## Accreditation

California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS)

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



# OUR CAMPUS

Live Oak's urban campus features a four-story building that houses all K-8 classrooms, faculty and staff office spaces, learning and breakout rooms, and community gathering spaces.



## Courtyard

The Courtyard is a learning and play hub for our youngest learners, as well as a space for PE classes, group meetings, family events, and more. Kindergarten through second grade classes use the Courtyard daily as they build, explore, and create with our AnjiPlay program, which encourages playful independence, constructive collaboration, and imaginative risk-taking.

## ChangeMaker Lab

Opened in 2021, the ChangeMaker Lab is an integral part of Live Oak's design and innovation curriculum. The space is designed for exploration of science and engineering concepts in an open, hands-on way. Students collaborate on creative projects, learn by doing, and think critically about solving problems.



## Grand Hall

Serving as the primary community gathering space, the Grand Hall is home to lower school assemblies, drama productions, parent and guardian enrichment programs, and daily lunch. Every day, the Grand Hall is transformed into a cafeteria with fresh, simple, and delicious food that fuels our students' full and busy school days. Live Oak's robust and delicious lunch program furthers our commitment to wellness, inclusion, sustainability, and community.

## Learning Garden

Jackson Park is home to our organic garden, a shared neighborhood resource. The garden provides an extension of the classroom by giving students a place to learn about the living world, to reflect and write in their journals, or to practice their artistic expression. Faculty, staff, parents, and students all contribute to the maintenance of the garden through regular garden workdays. Our goal is to highlight and deepen the connections between food, health, and community.



# EQUITY & INCLUSION

Our students' ideas, experiences, and perspectives matter in our program



**ADRIAN TAKYI**  
 Director of Diversity,  
 Equity and Inclusion

Digging into conversations about identity and equity has long been a central theme at Live Oak; an essential practice as we strive to know our students well and create a community where they feel comfortable bringing—and sharing—their multifaceted selves to school. Simply put, we are dedicated to ensuring that every student who walks

through our doors has a strong sense of belonging, a voice that is heard and respected, and a welcoming sense of place.

Building a community where belonging is centered is no small feat. It takes purposeful effort and reflection, along with a willingness to self-critique and embrace

opportunities for growth. It can be hard to measure in quantitative ways, and often requires openness to the experiences and stories of others, even when they seem completely counter to our own.

Our dedication to this work is rooted in the knowledge that students learn best in a diverse educational environment, one that welcomes children and adults from every race, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic circumstance, and gender expression.

At Live Oak we know that this pursuit takes many hands and requires commitment from all of us. We must be very aware of the language we use, stay attuned to the authors of our books and stories, and model for our students how to lead with empathy and openness. DEI work by definition insists that everyone be included on this journey toward shaping the community we hope to build.

## AFFINITY SPACES

Affinity Spaces at Live Oak provide opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and families to have their identities affirmed and to be their authentic selves in the company of others who share a common identity. These spaces deepen belonging by giving groups who have not historically been served by independent schools time to connect over their common experiences at Live Oak and in the world at large. Groups formed around a variety of identities are supported for our lower and middle school students, our faculty and staff, and our families.

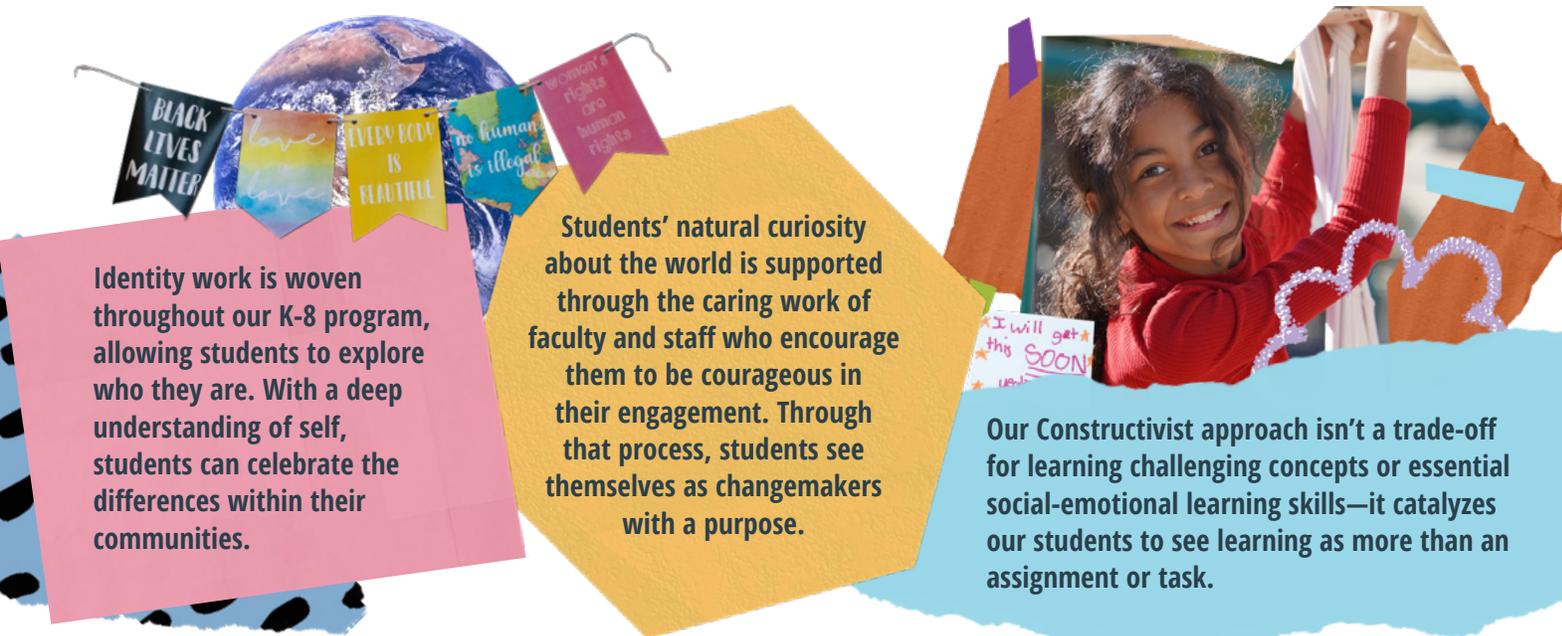
## SEED

Live Oak is a member site for The National SEED Project. SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) is a peer-led professional development program for faculty and staff that creates conversational communities to drive personal, organizational, and societal change toward greater equity and diversity. Monthly meetings engage participants in sharing, storytelling, and reflection with an aim to create the most effective environments for learning and flourishing, considering the need for curricula, teaching methods, and workplace practices that are gender fair, multiculturally equitable, socioeconomically aware, and globally informed.



# ACADEMIC PROGRAM

In the lower school, students learn reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, and social emotional skills. In addition, students have an arts rotation that meets 4x/week for classes with art and music teachers. They all have a library class each week and physical education 3x/week.



Identity work is woven throughout our K-8 program, allowing students to explore who they are. With a deep understanding of self, students can celebrate the differences within their communities.

Students' natural curiosity about the world is supported through the caring work of faculty and staff who encourage them to be courageous in their engagement. Through that process, students see themselves as changemakers with a purpose.

Our Constructivist approach isn't a trade-off for learning challenging concepts or essential social-emotional learning skills—it catalyzes our students to see learning as more than an assignment or task.

## Program Spotlights

### INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

An education built on curiosity and inquiry feeds a meaningful learning experience. By considering their own needs and strengths, Live Oak students are encouraged to ask big questions about the broader world. Students are partners in the learning process as they explore the curriculum in their own ways. We know that our students will go on to face challenges and help solve issues in their communities, and that creative, problem solving process begins in our classrooms where students drive their learning.

### IN THE CLASSROOM: CO-TEACHING MODEL

Our co-teaching model provides all students with the support that they need. Every lower school classroom is led by two fully qualified teachers who work in collaboration to plan and deliver engaging lessons, formulate valuable and genuine assessments, and respond to student needs.

### GROWTH MINDSET

We hold firm to the belief that learning is a continuous process. Live Oak faculty and students alike share in the constant push to explore, be curious, and grow. Building our classroom experience around the growth mindset puts our students' natural curiosity at the forefront of their academic development. Teachers encourage students on a daily basis to ask questions, take risks, and look at the world through a critical lens - this is where true growth takes place.

One of the overarching components of our academic program is that our teachers know our students well so they can foster a sense of joy, curiosity, and success that is responsive to each student. This co-teaching structure ensures that each individual learning style can be met and students can be challenged in a way that is appropriate for them.



# ON THE HORIZON

Live Oak's leadership team, the Strategy Steering Team (SST), establishes strategic goals and priorities for the school by routinely reviewing the Strategic Directions document. Most of the future priorities for

the development of the school's instructional practices revolve around data collection practices. Below are a few examples of specific goals Live Oak plans to implement in support of the school's overarching strategic plan:

## STUDENT LEARNING

Live Oak is in the process of selecting and adopting new tools for the collection and assessment of student learning data to help understand student performance against learning goals across the curriculum and in their social / emotional development. As a next step, lower school faculty will be trained on a tool to conduct reading assessments this fall. Consistent data tracking, across disciplines, will enable the school to see how our students perform on assessments throughout the year and provide the opportunity to evaluate the school's program and tools accordingly. This will also help inform future professional development for faculty.

## SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Live Oak has implemented several strategies to better understand and respond to student and community culture and connection. For several years, the school used the Making Caring Common school climate survey, administered to students, staff, and parents. The survey focused on fostering a sense of belonging and care within the community. By analyzing the results, student leaders helped organize activities to promote connection. More recently, Live Oak adopted the Relationship Mapping Strategy to identify relationships between students and adults, ensuring that each student feels known and supported. Beginning this year, Live Oak will participate in the NAIS Assessment of Inclusivity and Multiculturalism, a school climate survey that will enable the school to set DEI goals for the next three school years.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Live Oak is expanding the tools and resources to understand its teaching and learning practices through a data lens. Last year, Live Oak piloted using Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) data collection in conjunction with Orton-Gilligham's multisensory reading program in grades K-4 to collect a robust dataset on student reading and literacy skills. Live Oak is building on that work this year with new digital data collection tools to help make the DIBELS data more meaningful to teachers and enhance instruction. These new tools will support teachers to implement regular benchmark and progress assessments more easily, and turn the learning from those assessments into actionable instructional changes.

### INITIATIVES IN PROGRESS...

Beginning in the fall of 2025, Spanish instruction will start in kindergarten and continue through eighth grade.

We are building a third middle school science lab to expand innovative inquiry and collaboration.

To promote accessibility and inclusivity, Live Oak no longer charges application fees for prospective students.



# VOICES OF LIVE OAK

## VIRGINIA PAIK

Head of School



Virginia Paik is in her sixteenth year as Head of School at Live Oak School in San Francisco. During her tenure at the school, she has led mission-driven change to evolve the educational program, to expand the school's enrollment and facilities, and to develop administrative practices that advance inclusivity. Virginia has served on the Boards of CAIS, CATDC, Redwood Day School, The Bay School, and is currently a trustee at St. Paul's Episcopal School. She holds a BA from Pomona College and an MA from Teachers College, Columbia University. She also has the pride and privilege of being an independent school parent.

## ADRIAN TAKYI

Director of Diversity,  
Equity and Inclusion



Adrian has been Live Oak's Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion since 2019. After joining the community in 2015, he held several different roles including 1st and 2nd grade teacher, faculty trustee, and Strategic Planning Committee member. Adrian also currently serves on the People of Color in Independent Schools (PoCIS) board of directors, where he works to support the achievement and well-being of students, families, and educators of color in Bay Area independent schools. Prior to Live Oak, Adrian taught and coached at San Francisco Day School and Wilmington Friends School. A native of Chatham, NY, he holds a BA in history and education from Haverford College. When he's not at school, Adrian can be found playing basketball, eating tacos, and relaxing in the East Bay.

## SHARON LEE

Fourth Grade Teacher



Sharon was born in Seattle, Washington but spent most of her life on the east coast in New Jersey. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Michigan (Go Blue!) in Brain Behavior and Cognitive Sciences and her Master's degree in Teaching Elementary Education from Montclair State University. She previously taught third and fifth grade at a public school in New Jersey. She enjoys reading, iced lattes, trying different cuisines, traveling, and spending time with family and friends. She is excited to become a part of the Live Oak community and to get to know her students this year!



# ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

Last spring, Live Oak thoughtfully and intentionally put in place an interim divisional leadership model for the 24-25 school year. Live Oak's previous program leadership structure had included a lower school head and a middle school head, both of whom reported to the head of school. This year, that structure includes a head of divisions, who reports to the head of school. In turn, the head of divisions supervises the lower school and middle school division directors. The head of divisions had been serving as the middle school head prior to her new appointment this year. To help get this model off the ground, which was finalized only late this past spring, Live Oak made two internal, one-year, acting divisional director appointments for the 24-25 year from within the faculty—with the intention of running full searches for both divisional director roles this fall.

This leadership structure was designed to allow for the continued progress on strategic K-8 program priorities while ensuring day to day support to faculty in meeting the needs of their students and in the development of their instructional practices. With this model underway,

Live Oak has been able to increase the frequency of formal classroom observations and informal classroom visits, provide a more active and visible presence in the life of students and faculty, open leadership opportunities for faculty growth, and open space for additional voice and perspective on the program leadership team, particularly from those holding the closest connection to the classrooms.

This successful model will continue in the 2025-2026 school year and beyond, and the head of divisions will be retitled to associate head of school to align with industry norms. Furthermore, the lower school division director will continue to be a key member of Live Oak's Program Leadership Team (PLT), which provides strategic and logistical leadership for the implementation of the educational program. Beginning in the 2025 school year, this team will be led by the associate head of school, and comprise the lower school division director, the middle school division director, the director of DEI, and the director of instructional innovation.

## STRATEGY STEERING TEAM (SST)

Live Oak's leadership team is known as the Strategy Steering Team (SST). They establish strategic goals and priorities for the School.

- Associate Head of School
- Director of Advancement
- Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Director of Enrollment Management and Admissions
- Director of Finance
- Director of Instructional Innovation
- Head of School (*Team Lead*)
- Operations Manager

## PROGRAM LEADERSHIP TEAM (PLT)

The PLT provides strategic and logistical leadership for the implementation of Live Oak's educational program.

- Associate Head of School (*Team Lead*)
- Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Director of Instructional Innovation
- **Lower School Division Director**
- Middle School Division Director



# AREAS OF FOCUS

## FACULTY MENTORSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

The academic leadership model piloted this year allows the division directors to be more involved in the day-to-day administration and support of classroom teachers. Live Oak School conducts observations of faculty throughout the year, ensuring that teachers are working towards their personal goals as well as honoring the mission, vision, and values of the School. A strategic goal is to more formally connect professional development opportunities to both teacher-set and school-set goals so that the experience students have with the curriculum aligns with Live Oak's constructivist, project-based philosophy while honoring SEL and DEL initiatives. The lower school division director will support this goal by providing personalized professional development recommendations for teaching staff within the division.

## CROSS-DISCIPLINARY CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Last year, Live Oak underwent a K-8 report card standard review process to strengthen the vertical and horizontal alignment of the curriculum. The goal was to track students' year-over-year learning from lower through middle school. By diving deeper into the year-by-year progression, Live Oak continues to refine its schoolwide curriculum to provide a cohesive learning experience from kindergarten to eighth grade graduation via thoughtfully crafted throughlines. The lower school director will have the opportunity to build upon this cross-disciplinary curricular alignment in the lower school, in partnership with the associate head of school and middle school division director.

## LITERACY CURRICULUM AND DATA

With the recent pilot of the DIBELS literacy assessment and Orton-Gillingham training for faculty and staff, the lower school division director will continue to oversee Live Oak's literacy program and ensure that student data is collected and analyzed as part of the program and curriculum evaluation. Further, the lower school director will assist with faculty training and development with these new literacy programs.

## VIDEO INTERVIEWS



**VIRGINIA  
PAIK**  
Head of School



**TANYA  
SUSOEV**  
2024-25 Acting  
Head of Divisions  
2025-26 Associate  
Head of School



**LIANNA  
KALI**  
Director of  
Instructional  
Innovation

We invite you to [watch our interview](#) with Tanya and Virginia, who share insights into Live Oak's culture and community, and discuss the changes to Live Oak's new academic leadership model.

Next, [watch our interview](#) with Tanya and Lianna, who discuss current and future academic goals, and their partnership with the lower school division director.



# DUTIES



## Divisional Oversight

- 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.
- Ensure the implementation of a cohesive and engaging program for lower school students that follows an agreed upon scope and sequence and provides access and challenge for every learner.
- Oversee formative and summative assessments of student performance against established learning goals including on-going data collection, portfolio assessments, and student report cards.

## Faculty & Staff Leadership

- Explicitly support the professional growth of the lower school faculty in order to provide a model for lifelong learning for students, to provide career fulfillment to teachers, and to infuse the learning community with expertise.
- Plan and lead division, grade level team, and individual meetings with faculty that support the success of our students by elevating the expertise in the community while nurturing collaboration and cohesion in the lower school division.
- In partnership with the associate head of school, contribute to the supervision, professional development, and evaluation of the lower school faculty through the Professional Growth Program (PGP).
- Partner with the program leadership team on the recruitment, hiring, and support of new faculty in the division.

## 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.
- Partner with other administrators in the planning and implementation of community experiences at the school including assemblies, Groves, Camp Live Oak, Grandparent & Special Friends Day.
- Support parents and guardians to develop their understanding of the school's purpose and programs including through Back to School Night, parent enrichment events, and in individual meetings.
- Support the work of the admissions office in their efforts to recruit and retain new students and their families to the school community.

## General Leadership & Administration

- As a collaborative member of the Program Leadership Team, develop and implement curriculum and program initiatives that advance the strategic directions of the school.
- Work with the administrative team to strategically manage the resources allocated to the implementation of the lower school program including budgets, supplies, and schedules.
- Report to the associate head of school, and perform other duties as assigned.



# QUALIFICATIONS & QUALITIES

## Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree required; master's degree preferred
- Understanding of child development that guide decisions for a lower school program
- Leadership experience in curriculum and/or pedagogy, preferably at a K-8 school
- Experience guiding parents and guardians on sensitive student-related matters
- Multiple years of experience as an elementary or middle school teacher, preferably at a progressive school
- Demonstrated success in working collaboratively and flexibly with colleagues, staff, parents, volunteers, and the broader community



## Professional & Leadership Qualities

- Capacity to build supportive relationships with individuals and teams while leading through the challenges and opportunities in the life of a school
- Tendency toward a problem-loving, empathetic, joyful, inclusive, and mission-driven leadership style
- An interest in developing leadership capacity in yourself and others
- Outstanding communication, both written and verbal
- A genuine belief in Live Oak's mission and an excitement to join a supportive community of educators, staff, and administrators



# HOW TO APPLY

12M Recruiting is acting on behalf of Live Oak School to identify exceptional academic leader to fill this extraordinary opportunity. Please direct any inquiries to: [jobs@12MRecruiting.com](mailto:jobs@12MRecruiting.com)



**Applications submitted by November 18 will receive priority review.**

All applications must be submitted online:

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

1. Cover letter introducing yourself to the Live Oak School search committee
2. CV or résumé
3. 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)
4. A response to the following prompt:

*Please share a one-page statement of educational philosophy that demonstrates your experience with, and commitment to, progressive education and equity & inclusion.*