



**CROSSROADS SCHOOL  
FOR ARTS & SCIENCES**  
Santa Monica, California

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**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HEAD**

Start Date: July 2022

[xrds.org](http://xrds.org)



Carney  
Sandoe  
& ASSOCIATES



## **CROSSROADS** SCHOOL FOR ARTS & SCIENCES

*Crossroads School strives to prepare students to think critically, express themselves openly, and commit themselves to lives that value community, justice, and activism. At Crossroads, you'll find strong bonds between students and teachers; a welcoming, inclusive environment; and a joyful and diverse student body that approaches education with curiosity, creativity, and courage.*

## **OVERVIEW**

Crossroads School for Arts & Sciences, a K-12 coed day school in Santa Monica, CA, believes in a progressive, developmental model of education. The School is as committed to the emotional and social well-being of every child as it is to strong academics. Further, Crossroads dedicates itself to helping young people become forces for positive social change. Crossroads continually strives to be on the cutting edge of education.

Crossroads was founded upon five basic commitments: to academic excellence; to the arts; to the greater community; to the development of a student population of social, economic, and racial diversity; and to the development of each student's physical well-being and full human potential. The three divisions of the School—Elementary, Middle, and Upper—create and deliver age-appropriate content and curricula that nurture the academic, creative, social, and emotional growth of every child.

In the Elementary School, staff and faculty foster in students a profound love of learning within a supportive and non-competitive environment. To this end, Elementary School students are not graded. Instead, teachers provide substantive narrative feedback about each child, and they and the school administration work closely with parents as partners in the educational journey, working to support children when challenges emerge. Students flourish in this educational environment where the process of learning is more important than its outcome.

At this time, Crossroads seeks a thoughtful, progressive educator/administrator to join the School as its next Elementary School Head, effective July 2022. The successful candidate will continue to put children at the center of progressive, constructivist education and will embrace and embody the values and commitments that define the philosophy of the School.

## FAST FACTS

- K-12 enrollment: 1,206
- K-5 enrollment: 316
- Faculty: 132 full-time, 36 part-time
- Student/teacher ratio: 8:1
- 50% students of color
- 38% faculty of color
- Athletics: 73 league championships, 21 CIF championships, 6 state regional, and 3 state championships
- Unique programs in Environmental and Outdoor Education (grades 4-12) and Life Skills (K-12)
- 98-100% of students matriculate directly into college
- \$62 million operating budget and \$30 million in endowment
- Over \$10 million allocated to the Financial Aid Fund with 25% of students receiving financial support
- More than 4,900 alumni

## SCHOOL HISTORY

A small group of visionary educators and parents at St. Augustine Elementary School, searching for new and innovative approaches to educating the whole child, founded Crossroads in 1971. The School began with 32 students in Grades 7 and 8 and quickly outgrew its original rented facilities at a Baptist Church on Pico Boulevard. In 1972, Crossroads moved to a leased building on 21st Street, within a mixed-use warehouse district in Santa Monica, and by 1976 consisted of grades 7 through 12. In the early '80s, the former St. Augustine Elementary School merged with Crossroads.

The student body continued to expand as more families were attracted to the rich programs in academics, the arts, athletics, human development, and outdoor education. Over the years, Crossroads leased or purchased additional properties along the 21st Street "Alley," creating an eclectic, urban campus for the Middle and Upper Schools. In the 1990s, the school acquired a 3.5-acre site a short distance away on 18th Street. The Norton Campus on 18th Street is now home to the Elementary School, as well as many K-12 athletic facilities, including a gymnasium, swimming pool, and playing field. The close proximity of the two campuses and the presence of Middle and Upper School students on the Norton Campus P.E. and athletic spaces allow for frequent collaboration among all three divisions.



## THE SCHOOL TODAY

Today, true to its founding values, Crossroads provides a developmentally appropriate education that respects the different learning style and pace of each student. Throughout their time at Crossroads, students are given the tools and support to find their passion and express themselves in meaningful ways. Teachers are well-trained to anticipate the academic, social, and emotional challenges inherent at each grade level and help students navigate their journey.

The curriculum is inherently college-preparatory; each year, 98-100% of graduates matriculate directly to colleges and universities across the United States. However, at Crossroads, education is not a race for the accumulation of facts, but an enriching end in itself. At every level, and in every aspect of school life—from the classroom to the sports fields, labs, studios, and stages—the School provides an environment in which students are able to thrive. Indeed, Crossroads believes the uniqueness of children is revealed in their very existence and it is the School’s responsibility to foster their innate sense of the mystery and joy of life.

In 2018, the School established the Equity & Justice Institute, an endowed program designed to support faculty and student-led initiatives around social justice, support the creation of an intentional K-12 curriculum in equity and justice, and create its own initiatives to have a greater impact in the local, national, and global communities. Its annual speakers series brings national and international thought leaders to campus, and in the past two years have included such notable authors and activists as Ibram X. Kendi, Winona LaDuke, Angela Davis, and Dolores Huerta. Beginning in the summer of 2021, the Institute began hosting a Children’s Defense Fund Freedom School, serving 50 students of color in grades 1-8 from the local community on the Crossroads campus. In 2019, the School launched its new strategic plan, “One School. One Community. One Vision.”



## THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Crossroads' Elementary School program embodies the School's overarching philosophy. A dynamic program emerges from social studies; language arts; the performing and visual arts; mathematical thinking and problem-solving; service learning and social justice; hands-on science; environmental awareness; responsible use of technology; conversational Spanish and culture; health and fitness; and Life Skills for social and emotional wellness. The continued growth of the whole child—emotionally, physically, socially, and spiritually as well as intellectually—is of paramount importance at each grade level.

At the heart of the Elementary School program is the belief that children construct their own understanding of the world around them based on what they already know. Teachers apply a constructivist approach to education, helping students rely on themselves and their peers to solve problems across all curricular areas. Constructivist principles indicate that learning happens most effectively when academic programs challenge students to first grapple with big ideas and then to discern for themselves and question thoughtfully, with a teacher's guidance, which aspects require more investigation. Teachers take to heart the belief that the curriculum must be relevant to each student, and they view children as thinkers with emerging theories about the world rather than passive recipients of knowledge. Learning in the Elementary School is integrated, experiential, child-centered, and socially mindful. Students are encouraged to be inquisitive and take initiative and ownership as they develop basic skills in reading, writing, math, speaking, and listening.



Elementary School students enter at various stages of development in kindergarten, where they are introduced to the concepts of ownership, involvement, elaboration, and reflection. In first grade, students are introduced to the formal process of reading and writing; teachers take great care to preserve each student's self-esteem and honor differing levels of literacy and learning styles. In second grade, students develop and expand their emergent literacy skills and hone their abilities to stay on task. Third grade is a transitional year at Crossroads, and students face more consistent learning expectations as their basic skills of information management become more firmly cemented. In fourth grade, students apply what they have learned to the exploration and expansion of content areas. They become responsible for their own learning through independent and collaborative projects. Their responsibilities and independence are expanded in fifth grade, as students prepare to transition to Crossroads' Middle School.

Crossroads School has a deep commitment to the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The youngest learners are taught to embrace differences, including those based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity and expression, family structures, and much more. The division uses the Southern Poverty Law Center's anti-bias school curriculum, with a focus on its four pillars: identity, diversity, justice, and action. During Monday Morning Meetings and Friday Gathering, K-5 students enjoy a presentation of the Elementary School's All-School Reads, which reflect the four pillars. Students are taught to recognize injustice and empowered to be "upstanders" who use their voice their stand up for what's right.

Unique programs distinguish the Crossroads curriculum and underscore the School's commitment to its founding values. The Elementary School's Environmental and Outdoor Education program ensures that care and concern for the ecology of the Earth is an essential component of the curriculum. Beginning in kindergarten, no-waste lunches are emphasized, and sustainable gardening is a weekly activity. In fourth and fifth grades, students embark on three- and five-day camping trips that allow them to experience the natural environment with the guidance of their teachers and bond with one another through a joint appreciation of the outdoors.



Additionally, service learning is embedded in the Elementary School program; each classroom features a curricular component that embodies service. For example, second graders study famous Americans and family members who have made significant contributions to their communities, then visit senior citizen homes to bring joy to others in their community. In fifth grade, students explore and celebrate different abilities through their support of the Special Olympics. Through the Student Council, all students have the opportunity to work with various organizations in service projects throughout the year, while giving the rotating Student Council representatives from each grade the opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

The Life Skills program nurtures the social, emotional, and spiritual development of each child. In Council, students and teachers sit together in a circle, taking turns sharing their thoughts and feelings and listening with respect and empathy. Conflict resolution is taught and practiced through a common procedure at all grade levels. Each week begins with Monday Morning Meeting where children and teachers greet one another, make announcements, and sing together. The end of the week features Friday Gathering, where children, teachers, and parents gather to celebrate events and hear presentations, which are usually student-led.

Students develop an early appreciation for arts and athletics, which strengthens and grows throughout their tenure at Crossroads. Fifth grade students may participate on several interscholastic athletic teams, including basketball, volleyball, flag football, and soccer to learn the values of safety, fair play, participation, self-confidence, skill-development, and fun.



Crossroads' commitment to the arts begins in the Elementary School. Students complete a creative dance program in kindergarten and first grade, through which they learn to understand their bodies in action, strengthen the connection between body and mind, and increase their self-esteem, kinesthetic awareness, and social skills. In second through fifth grades, students participate in the drama program, where they are encouraged to play. The overall goal of the drama program is to teach children to feel comfortable in the public self-expression of their feelings and ideas.

Each child's inherent musicality is awakened and developed early through the Orff Schulwerk process. Students learn about the rhythm, texture, form, expression, and color of music, exploring music through singing, creative movement, percussion, and folk dancing in kindergarten through second grade and refining their skills on the soprano recorder in grades three through five. Students may elect to sing in the Elementary School chorus or gain additional instruction in instrumental music beginning in first grade.

The visual arts present yet another avenue for self-expression. Specialists collaborate with homeroom teachers to introduce students to various media, from clay and found materials to printmaking and photography. Students at Crossroads are encouraged to be creative, expressive, joyful learners who learn the value of collaboration and diverse points of view in a school where it is safe to take risks and learn from mistakes, starting from the youngest ages.



## CAMPUS

Crossroads School is situated on two campuses in Santa Monica. The Elementary School (Kindergarten-5th Grade) and K-12 Sports Center are housed on the Norton Campus, just a few blocks away from the 21st Street Campus, which houses the Middle School (6th-8th Grade) and Upper School (9th-12th Grade).

Opened in 1997, the Norton Campus features spacious, child-friendly classrooms; an extensive library; special rooms dedicated to music, art, Spanish, and drama/dance; a science laboratory; and a STEAM computer lab for the integration of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. It is a cheerful, exciting place for the youngest students to start exploring the world. Kindergarten and first grade students share a designated play yard with a play structure, climbing wall and sandbox, while second through fifth grade students enjoy their own play space that includes basketball hoops and a rock-climbing wall.

The nearby Middle and Upper School campus has evolved as the school has grown. Notable buildings include a black box theater, music recital hall, computer centers, a digital arts media lab, a photography lab, the Peter Boxenbaum Arts Education Centre (with two dance studios, art studios, a community art gallery, and a screening room), the striking 32,500-volume Paul Cummins Library, and a 25,000-square-foot Science Education & Research Facility, which includes a fume hood room for advanced chemistry experiments, a Monarch butterfly habitat, and a two-story Projects Pavilion for independent study.

The School is in the midst of creating a new Performing Arts complex, with the ground-breaking tentatively scheduled for the spring of 2022.



## SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA

Santa Monica is a coastal city within Los Angeles County, directly adjacent to the City of Los Angeles. Diverse, vibrant, and expansive, Los Angeles is an attractive destination for tourists each year. The city offers robust opportunities in business, entertainment, culture, media, fashion, science, sports, technology, education, medicine, and research, and has been ranked sixth in the Global Cities Index. Los Angeles is world-renowned for its television, movie and music industries and is home to some of the most famous cultural icons in the country. Known as the “Creative Capital of the World,” LA is well-defined by its performing arts culture. The Los Angeles Philharmonic performs in the Frank Gehry-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall, one of the finest concert halls in the country.

Dry and sunny, LA is warm year-round; outdoor enthusiasts enjoy easy access to the beaches of Santa Monica and Malibu and abundant recreational opportunities in the Pacific Ocean and in the surrounding mountains and desert. Sports lovers cheer on several major athletic teams, including the Dodgers, Angels, Clippers, Lakers, Sparks, Rams, Chargers, Galaxy, Kings, and Ducks.

Cultural attractions dot the city, including more than 800 museums and art galleries. The nearby Getty Museum & Villa and the LA County Museum of Art together house one of the finest art collections in the world, while Bergamot Station, a complex housing numerous art galleries and the Santa Monica Museum of Art, is a short walk from Crossroads.

Education is a top priority for residents of Los Angeles County, which features numerous public and private universities, including the University of Southern California (USC), UCLA, the American Film Institute (AFI), Occidental College, and California State University, among many others.



Santa Monica is renowned for its beautiful beachfront location. Its pleasant climate has made it a famed resort town, and tourists flock to the city’s beaches and famous pier each year. Santa Monica and neighboring Venice Beach have increasingly attracted many start-up tech companies to the area, earning the nickname “Silicon Beach.”

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

As Crossroads approaches the celebration of its 50th anniversary in the 2021-22 school year, the School continues to challenge itself to provide the best progressive educational program. Opportunities for meaningful leadership work in the Elementary School include:

- Sitting on the School’s senior leadership team, known as the Administrative Planning Committee (APC), sharing wisdom with and learning from colleagues as the team guides the School and executes the strategic plan.
- Collaborating with the heads of the Middle and Upper Schools to address the needs of each division and align curricula to ensure a coherent educational journey across divisions.
- Staying current with best practices in progressive education.
- Assessing and deploying resources effectively across the Elementary School.
- Nurturing faculty and supporting opportunities for growth and leadership across the arc of a teacher’s career.



## DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

In the next Elementary School Head, Crossroads seeks an experienced administrator who possesses the leadership and interpersonal skills to preserve a child-centered, kind, and inclusive culture while facilitating the inquiry that makes Crossroads a leader in progressive education. Strong candidates will understand the particular needs of elementary students, parents/guardians, and teachers within the context of a K-12 institution. The School is most interested in candidates who possess the following qualities and qualifications:

- Expertise in elementary education and developmental milestones.
- Deep immersion in progressive pedagogy and practice.
- Love of children and commitment to constructivist, student-centered education that honors children's passions and sense of discovery.
- Ability to communicate effectively in person, in writing, and during weekly gatherings that include students, faculty, and parents/guardians.
- Willingness to honor school culture and history while gently guiding the division into the future.
- Ability to skillfully facilitate difficult conversations and hold boundaries with compassion.
- A track record of building collaborative approaches to assessing and refining the program on an ongoing basis.
- Desire to lead a relational community grounded in traditions like Council and weekly gatherings.
- Commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.



## TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position.
- A current resume.
- A list of five professional references with the name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each. (References will not be contacted without the candidate's permission.)

Please send materials to:

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