Millennium School
San Francisco, California
Head of School
Start Date: July 2020
www.millenniumschool.org
OVERVIEW

The Millennium School is one of the initiatives of Millennium.org, a non-profit foundation whose mission is to create and share developmental-science-based methods and models of education that advance human well-being. The foundation integrates Millennium School, research, and professional development programs to broadly promote conscious social and emotional development in teachers and students. Millennium School aspires to be a model lab school that showcases best practices for educating whole students in an innovative and diverse middle school learning environment.

Millennium opened its doors three years ago and graduated its first class of eighth graders in June of 2019. With the planned departure of Founding Head of School Chris Balme in July of 2020, Millennium seeks a leader who is passionate and knowledgeable about early adolescent education and who places self-awareness and social and emotional well-being at the very center of the learning experience.

THE MILLENNIUM SCHOOL STORY

The two founders of Millennium School, Jeff Snipes and Chris Balme, were drawn together through a persistent and urgent question: “How do we create an education model that shifts away from content acquisition alone to better prepare students for the skills they need to lead happy, successful lives and become conscious leaders in the 21st century?” They believed it was time to apply modern developmental science to advance an education that explicitly develops individual and social wisdom, compassion, and purposeful wellbeing.
Following in the footsteps of Dewey, Montessori, Steiner, Maslow, Rogers, and other alternative education and psychology pioneers, Jeff and Chris spent three years researching and developing their vision before Millennium School opened its doors in August 2016. They traveled across the U.S. and visited schools in other countries to observe successful models, study best practices, and meet with leading professors, researchers, scientists, and thought leaders in education. Together, they created a school that prepares students for the 21st century workplace (learning agility, innovation, design and systems thinking, collaboration, complex problem solving, and global perspectives), while also helping them develop a deep connection to their inner sense of self. Millennium School actively fosters students’ exploration of their authentic self and the adoption of a wise, compassionate worldview.

THE MILLENNIUM CURRICULUM

Millennium School focuses on creating a safe, socially-embedded environment, connecting learners to the real world through open-walled opportunities and providing the necessary tools for learners to fully understand themselves. Through Socratic Seminars, project-based learning, and apprenticeships, learners are consistently engaged—developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will propel them into a world of possibility.

Millennium School is guided by a set of general principles for how to put a developmental science model into practice—the specifics of which are continually explored and tested. Key model components include:
**Inner World & Skills Focus:** Developing skills in areas like self-awareness, executive function, emotional awareness and self-regulation, social awareness, and conflict resolution.

**Guides vs. Teachers:** Shifting the model from teachers as content-holders to Guides with the ability to Mirror, Model, and Mentor the personal needs of each student.

**Living Village:** By involving the students in appropriate leadership roles in the school—leading tours, planning expeditions, preparing meals, managing chores and equipment—students develop responsibility and ownership of their lived community experience.

**Experiential Learning Design:** Shift from lecture-based, passive classrooms to project-based learning, Socratic seminars and Apprenticeships as core learning modalities.

**Integrated Curriculum:** Students engage in six-week projects, all oriented around personally relevant, authentic questions aimed at solving real-world issues. This approach integrates a rigorous three-year academic curriculum into social impact projects that feel real and relevant to adolescents, tapping into intrinsic motivation and generating high levels of engagement.

**Real World:** Millennium takes advantage of its surrounding urban community each week, teaching global citizenship, civic participation, and applied learning in real-world settings, while bringing outside professionals in to teach, evaluate, and motivate student work.

Student learning is largely oriented around Quests—interdisciplinary projects rooted in either humanities or STEM disciplines that faculty, or Guides, craft based on student interests, world trends, or special opportunities for learning. Quests are also augmented with an integrated math, creative and physical expression, and immersive foreign language program.
In practice, learners engage in each Quest for six weeks. Using guiding questions, students are encouraged to run with these topics in a variety of directions based on their unique interests. At the end of each Quest, students display their learning and gain real-world speaking experience in front of the community.

**PARTNERSHIP WITH MILLENNIUM.ORG**

As Millennium School matures, Millennium.org is developing two other program areas: Research & Design and a Professional Development program called Forum. A key link in educational transformation today is the translation of leading research into practical teaching techniques applied in a real-world context. Millennium.org seeks to partner with university professors to evaluate and codify Millennium School’s whole-child development techniques, and then translate key findings into applicable instructional design for scalable and sustainable professional development.

Millennium believes that teachers are the most critical change agents in schooling and is working closely with representatives from local public-school districts and charter management organizations to identify the specific practices that are most transferable to individual teachers.

The future of education is exciting. As a society, we are at an inflection point of transforming education to better prepare our children to lead meaningful lives, able to make conscious contributions to society that we need now more than ever. Millennium hopes to serve as an innovative model and testing ground for the latest advances in developmental science-based adolescent education.
**Key Characteristics and Qualifications**

Millennium’s next head of school will be a passionate spokesperson for Millennium School’s vision and mission, as well as an institution builder who will help a young school mature. With a track record of working effectively with middle school faculty and a belief in the unbounded potential of middle school students, Millennium School’s next leader will bring authenticity, mindfulness, and compassion to the shared work of creating a learning environment where middle school students thrive.

**Aligned Psycho-Spiritual Perspective**

Millennium School is first and foremost an environment designed to foster the full human well-being of teachers and students. The School seeks to integrate a secular spiritual dimension of authentic-level awareness into other more traditional aspects of human development (cognitive/achievement, social-emotional/affiliative, executive functioning/self-discipline), along with a healthy sense of humor. The community embraces contemplative practices, and the head of school is asked to embody these principles to the best of his/her/their ability.

**Commitment to Equity, Inclusion & Social Justice**

Millennium School celebrates diversity as a portal to itself and a peaceful global community. Millennium knows that it takes commitment and prioritization to offset systems of oppression and implicit bias. The school is committed to becoming a fully Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization helping to transform society. This means Millennium is constantly learning about systemic, cultural, and personal barriers to equity in diversity, and creating structures of accountability that disrupt and uplift. The Head of School is a leader and ambassador in creating peaceful and equitable communities.
Expertise in Adolescent Development
Early adolescence is a magical period in human development and a pivotal chapter for individual identity formation, particularly as informed through a social lens. Millennium’s cultural norms and educational methods seek to provide an educational experience designed specifically for the needs of students age 11-14. The head of school should demonstrate significant experience, knowledge of adolescent developmental psychology, and an authentic love for connecting with this age group.

Innovative Educational Design & Instructional Fidelity
Millennium is experimenting with a wide range of progressive instructional methods (Quest-based projects, Harkness, 1:1 Mentoring, Real-World Apprenticeships, Forum/Councils, among others) and cultural designs inspired by Adolescent Montessori Programs (village roles, unstructured time, self-constructed learning goals and self-evaluations, and wilderness programs). Many of these methods follow emerging research in neuroscience and student-centered learning practices; some are Millennium’s own iteration. Behind them all is Millennium’s belief that the teacher is the central agent of change, and critical to creating relational trust, fostering intrinsic motivation, personalizing learning, and cultivating break-through moments of insight. The next head of school will feel comfortable exploring, evaluating, and guiding the community through these innovative methods.

Foundation Coordination
Millennium School is integrally connected to smaller but emerging Millennium.org program efforts to evaluate and share educational practices more broadly. These supplemental programs (research and professional development) afford Millennium access to funding and expertise in its related fields of whole-teacher and whole-student development. They also provide the rigor of program evaluation and codification, and a method for distributing instructional techniques to others (www.millenniumforum.org). While the HOS will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school, he/she/they must also collaborate closely with these other program areas and be excited about learning from and partnering with other leaders in the field of developmental-science based education.
Because of the partnership with Millennium.org, some traditional operationally-focused HOS functions are managed by the foundation, including board and governance relations, board committee management, large grant fundraising, financial modeling and budgeting, facilities management and planning, strategic partnerships, audits and reporting, technology and communication systems, and developmental science research and measurement. While the HOS will help manage these functions, he/she/they will have more latitude to focus on the strength of the instructional program and the well-being of the students and educators.

**Strong Verbal & Written Communication Skills**
The head of school must provide the inspiration and clarity to keep the community aligned. As the School’s primary voice, the HOS must communicate the Millennium vision and values to prospective and current parents each week, and to the broader educational field as needed. It is critical that the HOS be comfortable with active daily communication, from inspiring weekly blogs to 1:1 parent/student guidance sessions, all from a wise and loving yet firm presence.

**Team Leadership**
As the School grows and matures, it is ready to implement the organizational structure, roles and processes to support its mission. Millennium values a collaborative team-based approach, where each person can contribute in meaningful ways to the School’s evolution beyond their classroom or job title alone. Millennium seeks to embrace more diverse resources, and sustain its inclusive, heart-based culture. The community hopes to continue to increase its levels of instructional mastery, clarity of focus, and implementation consistency in this next chapter. Millennium seeks a leader who can lead in a dynamic environment, with the agility to facilitate emergent learning innovation and develop top tier teaching professionals, without losing our student-centered focus and commitment to educator well-being.

The next Millennium head of school will inspire and lead to the community to address these meaningful challenges and opportunities:

- Guide faculty and staff, providing motivation, mentorship, and coaching to support a culture of continual growth and learning.
- Support a faculty culture of creativity and collaboration while developing protocols to assess and share best practices.
- Guide parent community involvement and facilitate parent-teacher-student communication in alignment with the School’s mission and values.
- Envision and guide the School toward its aspirations as a lab school, where Millennium teachers continually build and share their expertise in development-science based instruction.
- Serve as the spokesperson for the School—consistently and compellingly articulating Millennium’s mission and core values—advancing its reputation and appeal to a broad range of students, their parents, and other stakeholders.
- Partner with university researchers and leading national foundations to evaluate leading methods of whole-teacher and whole-student developmental instruction.

Strong candidates will be approachable, warm and empathic; committed to authenticity, cultural competence, diversity, and inclusion; and will balance a nurturing personality with the ability to make and communicate clear decisions. Millennium Guides are a dedicated and resourceful bunch, who enjoy intense student-focused innovation. They look forward to meeting interested candidates.
TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically in one email and as separate documents (preferably PDFs) the following materials:

- A cover letter expressing interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- A statement of educational philosophy. Millennium is particularly interested in how candidates foster students’ exploration of their authentic self and the adoption of a wise, compassionate worldview;
- A list of five professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate’s permission) to:

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