

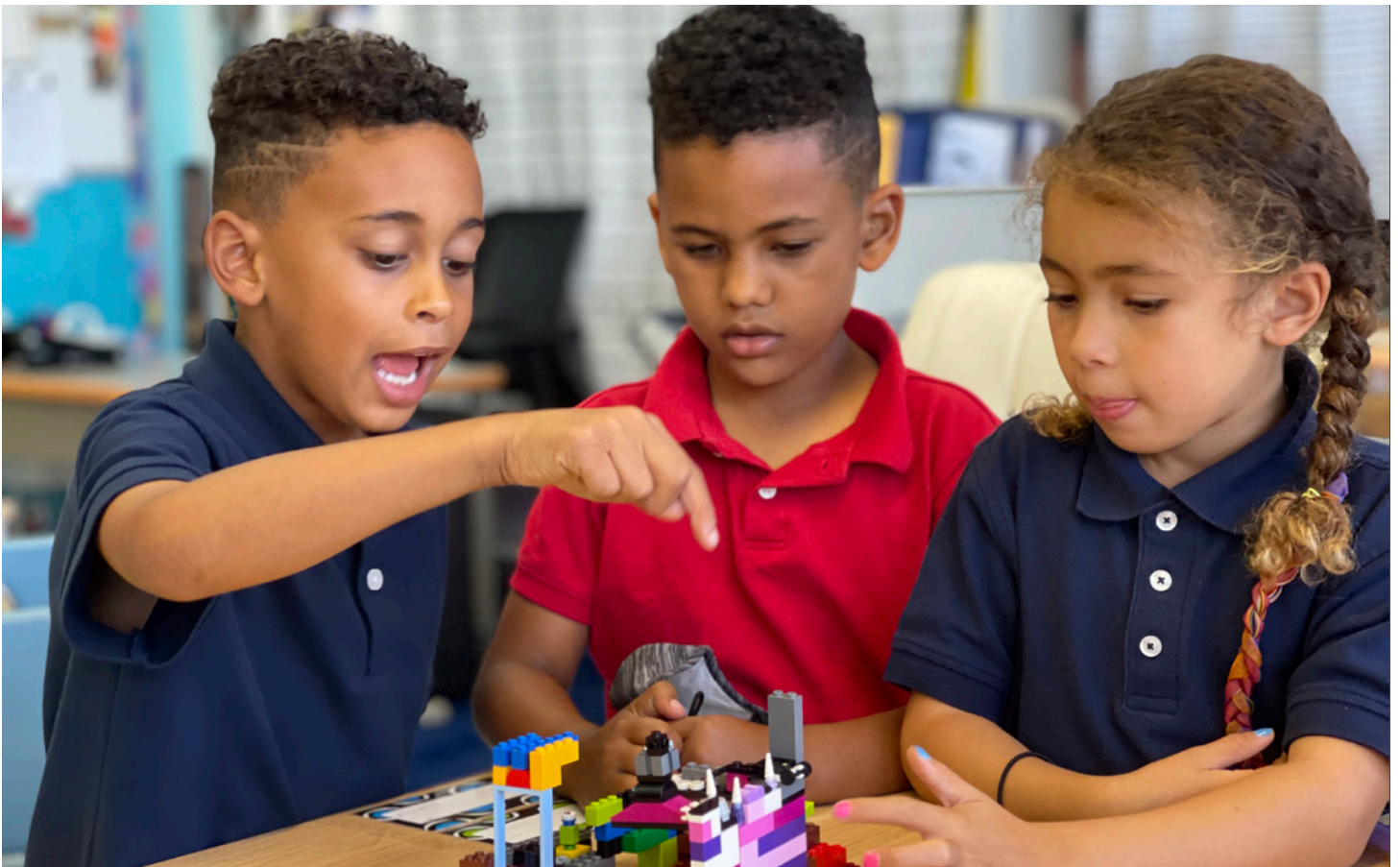
HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

NORTHERN LIGHT SCHOOL

Oakland, California

northernlightschool.com

Start Date: July 2025



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

CARNEYSANDOE.COM

Mission Statement

Northern Light School is committed to providing a high quality education for children from all socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. The faculty and staff create an atmosphere where every child can grow academically, emotionally, physically, and spiritually, to become healthy, productive members of their families and communities. The focus is on academic excellence as well as non-violence, acceptance of differences, respect for the environment, and the moral advancement of humanity—so that the children develop an understanding that they have a responsibility to make a difference in the lives of others.

At a Glance



Established
1989



Total enrollment
160



Endowment
\$3.9 million



Student-teacher ratio
8:1



Students of color
96%



Financial aid awarded
\$1.25M



Faculty with advanced degrees
43%



Campus size
10 acres

Languages spoken: 21
Faculty of color: 60%
Average class size: 15

Students receiving aid: 77%
Annual operating budget: \$4.2 million



Overview

Northern Light School is a leading independent Oakland, CA non-profit, preschool through grade 8 organization that provides excellent education to children from across the Bay Area. Founded in 1989 by four women with a calling to provide a whole child education for children who would not have the opportunity for a private school setting, the school has embodied the basic premise that it does indeed “Take a Village to Raise a Child.” At Northern Light School, the “village” is so much more than the community of students, educators, and families who call this school home. Students are reminded daily that they are part of the global village of the world, and that because they live in an interdependent global society, they have an obligation to make the world a better place.

At Northern Light School, we are committed to being a Bay Area school that builds a school family and is dedicated to offering children an excellent education that will enhance not only their academic growth but also their emotional, physical, and spiritual development. Students are taught and encouraged to embody the four essential traits of a North Light School graduate, to be: compassionate, courageous, confident, and creative — four essential traits of a Northern Light School student and graduate. Northern Light School students know that their actions create consequences — that what they do and how they do it matters — and they are taught daily to give rise to that which will generate the most positive outcomes and opportunities for everyone, everywhere.

As Northern Light looks to the future of what is next for the school, the Board of Trustees and school community are looking for an innovative leader who can help usher them, along with a strong administration and faculty into the next phase of the school’s history. In particular, the Northern Light School is excited to find a Head of School who is a servant leader, deeply committed to fostering a culture of trust, transparency, and inclusivity. Working with the Board of Trustees, the next Head of School for the Northern Light School will bring a strategic and visionary mindset, ensuring that the school’s mission remains at the forefront while securing financial sustainability and long-term growth.



Opportunities and Challenges

The opportunities and challenges for the next Head of School at Northern Light School include:

- **Financial & Operational Stability** – Securing sustainable funding, diversifying revenue sources, and strengthening financial planning.
- **Campus Location & Facilities** – Obtaining a permanent school site, enhancing infrastructure, and improving campus safety.
- **Faculty & Staff Retention & Support** – Recruiting, retaining, and supporting strong educators with competitive pay, professional development, and well-being resources.
- **Academic Excellence & Curriculum Growth** – Elevating academic rigor, updating and providing enhanced curricula, and enriching student learning opportunities.
- **Community Engagement & Trust-Building** – Fostering transparency, strengthening parent and community partnerships, and re-establishing a collaborative school culture.
- **Leadership Stability & Strategic Implementation** – Providing strong, transparent leadership, implement a long-term strategic plan, and ensure operational efficiency.

Qualities and Personal Attributes

Northern Light School is looking for a Head of School who embodies the following qualities and personal attributes:

- **Servant Leadership & Authenticity** – An experienced leader who drives change with humility, prioritizing the well-being of students, faculty, and the school community. Cultivates a culture of trust, transparency, and approachability, fostering an environment where all voices feel heard and valued.



- **Strategic & Visionary Leadership** – A strategic and visionary leader who can develop and implement a clear, future-focused vision that aligns with the school’s mission. Ensures financial sustainability, resource allocation, and strategic planning to propel the institution forward.
- **Decisive & Action-Oriented Leadership** – A determined and decisive leader who demonstrates the confidence to make difficult decisions in the best interest of students and the school. Manages conflict with courage and fairness while fostering a culture of accountability and responsiveness.
- **Exceptional Communication & Collaborative Engagement** – An excellent communicator who serves as the primary voice and representative of the school, ensuring clarity and consistency in messaging. Builds strong relationships with faculty, families, trustees, and the broader community through active listening and collaborative decision-making.
- **Expertise in Education & Child Development** – An experienced educator who possesses deep pedagogical knowledge and an understanding of child growth and development. Ensures that instructional practices, curriculum, and policies support the highest standards of learning and student well-being.
- **Accountability & Strong Boundaries** – An accountable leader who sets clear expectations for faculty, staff, and families, ensuring professional conduct and alignment with the school’s values. Holds employees accountable for performance while maintaining positive, professional relationships.
- **Change Management & Systems Thinking** – A change agent who recognizes the complexities of leading a school and proactively implements improvements that drive long-term success. Navigates change with foresight, ensuring seamless transitions and growth.
- **Passion for Education, Diversity, & Lifelong Learning** – A lifelong leader who holds a deep love for children and education while fostering an inclusive and diverse school culture. Leads with empathy, cultural competency, and a commitment to continuous learning for both personal and institutional growth.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about Northern Light School.

[School Website](#)

[About Oakland, California](#)

[Virtual Campus Tour](#)



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 résumé;
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission) to:

Brandon Jacobs

Consultant, DEIB Practice Group Leader
brandon.jacobs@carneysandoe.com

Cathy Shelburne

Consultant and Executive Coach
cathy.shelburne@carneysandoe.com

The full-time equivalent salary range for this position is \$180,000-\$200,000. The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to, several factors that include years of experience, education level, and expertise.