

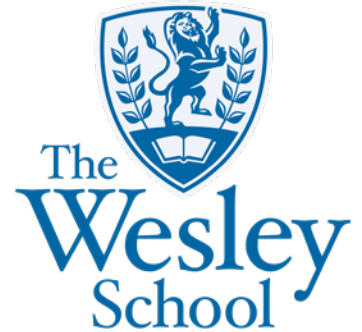
HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

THE WESLEY SCHOOL

North Hollywood, California

wesleyschool.org

Start Date: July 2024



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

CARNEYSANDOE.COM

MISSION STATEMENT

Within a community of belonging, we nurture joyful, confident learners to think critically, creatively, and compassionately.

AT A GLANCE



Established
1999



Enrollment
300



Financial aid awarded
\$1.6 million
(2023-2024)



Students receiving aid
25%



Student-faculty ratio
7:1



Students of color
40%



Total faculty and staff
71



Faculty of color
39%



Faculty with
advanced degrees
45%



Campus size
4 acres



Annual operating budget
\$10.5 million



Most recent accreditation
2022



OVERVIEW

Celebrating its 25th anniversary during the 2023-2024 school year and poised to write its next chapter guided by an inspiring and engaging new Mission Statement, The Wesley School is a remarkable place for children from Kindergarten to Grade 8 to learn and grow. This dynamic yet down-to-earth school—which enrolls 300-plus students on its charming, red-brick campus, crisscrossed by tidy walkways and highlighted by a tranquil fountain courtyard on four acres in North Hollywood, CA—seeks a new Head of School, effective July 1, 2024.

The new Head of School will lead Wesley on the adventure of realizing the potential of the new Mission Statement and soon-to-be-completed strategic plan, becoming even more fully the school it aspires to be, while ensuring the institution retains its trademark modesty and institutional humility. Central to those aspirations is a close-knit, warm, and welcoming community in which students recognize that they are known and respected for the individuals they are, strive to reach their fullest potential shoulder-to-shoulder with a talented, passionate, and committed faculty, and cultivate confident and compassionate voices to take out into a challenging wider world.

Wesley actually has a considerably longer history as a school community, beginning at St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Studio City. When that association came to an end in the late 1990s, a group of committed families and faculty, staff, and administrators found a new home on the grounds of the First United Methodist Church. While the school has no religious affiliation with the church, the warm relationship established in 1999 remains to this day and finds continued expression in its name, after John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. The school's current long-term lease on its facilities runs for another 20 years, and school leadership is deeply invested in planning for the most effective use of current instructional and community spaces, while simultaneously building a vision for the campus of tomorrow.



While it continues to draw strength from its founding generation, Wesley has the vibrant feel of a younger community. Wesley's new Mission Statement, which was developed during the 2022-2023 school year, has generated broad enthusiasm and found universal support. As one individual noted, the statement is inspiring, succinct, and, tellingly, accurate. Students, parents, and faculty and staff are intent on continuing to nourish a community of belonging, one in which students are uniquely kind to one another, the faculty and staff deliver a top-notch curriculum that joyfully inspires, and everyone is committed to living Wesley's expressed values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. These intentions are evidenced by twice-weekly, student-led community gatherings; a buddy system that pairs older students with younger learners to ensure they are woven into the life of the school; and Mornings on the Commons, where parents, faculty and staff, and students convene for coffee and conversation before the start of the day, furthering the school-family partnership. Many members of the community characterize the school as "unpretentious" and note that, while the physical plant may lack some of the "bells and whistles" of larger independent schools, it nonetheless accommodates a truly remarkable program that prepares young people to think critically, creatively, and compassionately and to achieve success in competitive secondary schools and well beyond.

This Head of School position should be particularly attractive for an exceptional educator who will flourish within the embrace of the Wesley community while also continuing to develop the strong academic program and administrative structures that will shape Wesley's maturity as a school. There is widespread recognition that Wesley is at an important and exciting moment in its history that will usher in a promising post-founding stage of its development, honoring what this school community has accomplished in its first quarter-century while positioning it for a future that is both fresh and new, while remaining distinctly Wesley.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

At what is widely regarded as a pivotal time in its development, The Wesley School seeks a leader who can balance academic program excellence with the warm and welcoming sense of community that has distinguished the school since its founding, one who recognizes that a school need not—indeed, cannot—choose between those two core strengths of a superb educational environment. That academic program excellence must be rooted in mission, designed to "nurture joyful, confident learners to think critically, creatively, and compassionately." Wesley exists in the competitive independent school marketplace of Greater Los Angeles. While parents and other community members take pride in the warmth and authenticity of Wesley, the small class sizes and low student-teacher ratio, and the strong relationships that result, there is a sense that Wesley must "up its game" to be competitive in that marketplace.



Wesley is a wonderful place for children to be children, for them to grow up in a safe learning environment that cares deeply about their social-emotional well-being and cares less about bragging rights. While intent on celebrating, maintaining, and even enhancing those qualities, respondents to a recent survey placed that intention side-by-side with the need for the right administrative organization, the processes and structures that can promote and support a strong academic program, and the determination to continue to attract, retain, and compensate high-quality members of the faculty, staff, and administration.

Community members, parents and faculty and staff alike, speak of the schoolwide need for clear, open lines of communication and accountability, characterized by access and approachability. From a structural standpoint, many suggest that the reliance on a “band” system for organizing the grade levels (Kindergarten-Grade 2, Grades 3-4, Grades 5-6, and Grades 7-8, each overseen by a dean), rather than a division structure, has impeded achievement of that goal.

Wesley created a new Mission Statement last year, referenced above, and will continue that purposeful work with a strategic planning process in the second half of the 2023-2024 school year. Wesley offers a below-market tuition, is without debt, attracts Annual Fund participation from close to 100% of its parents in support of its \$10.5-million budget, and is some years out from its last, \$3.5-million Capital Campaign. It is indeed a forward-looking place, eager to capitalize on the many strengths that have defined and sustained it during its first quarter-century while also answering the question: What’s next?



Specific Opportunities include:

- Entering into, and continuing to nourish, a school community characterized by warmth and welcome, one that is deeply invested in maintaining a sense of belonging for all students and families and faculty and staff;
- Building on the pride evident among community members in the relationships that develop across the school and the passion they bring to their involvement with Wesley;
- Within a community that centers the work of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice, developing, implementing, and assessing an age-appropriate curriculum across grade levels that reflects the importance of that work to Wesley and in the lives of its students;
- Partnering with a forward-looking Board of Trustees, as evidenced by the intentionality of its mission focus and strategic planning role;
- Clarifying Wesley's unifying educational philosophy to ensure pedagogical consistency within and across grade levels without compromising faculty autonomy;
- Continuing to develop and articulate academic scope and sequence and the means of measuring program success.

Specific Challenges include:

- Maintaining Wesley's impressive socio-economic diversity in the face of upward pressure on the school's operating budget and, in turn, tuition;
- Envisioning, designing, and implementing new administrative structures and processes that have not been firmly in place during Wesley's early years;
- Securing budgeted enrollment, with mission-appropriate students, and limiting attrition in a competitive independent school marketplace;
- Ensuring that classroom teachers and learning specialists have the training and resources necessary, given the increasing student neurodiversity in independent schools;
- Building an endowment to promote Wesley's financial sustainability as it matures as a school.



QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

The Wesley School seeks a talented educator with wide-ranging experience in Kindergarten-Grade 8 settings, including significant administrative leadership, program development and evaluation, and classroom teaching. It will be important to pair that professional expertise with a way of being that exudes a deep and energetic commitment to the important work to be done at Wesley and an essential warmth, accessibility, authenticity, and joy in accomplishing it. The community will welcome an individual who can engage and inspire its various constituencies, communicate clearly, and collaborate effectively across those constituencies, and become a champion for Wesley within the community and well beyond.

The following qualities and characteristics will be important for the next Head of School:

- A highly relational leader with strong emotional intelligence, particularly as an authentic team-builder, relationship-builder, and community-builder;
- Demonstrable experience in a dynamic setting with many constituents and the ability to draw a community together in support of institutional goals;
- The determination to become a close partner with the Board of Trustees in articulating and achieving Wesley's strategic objectives;
- A textured understanding of the forces that promote institutional sustainability, including strategic financial planning, enrollment management, philanthropic giving, and faculty and staff recruitment, development, and retention;
- An abiding commitment to the work of diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and social justice and its effective advancement in a Kindergarten-Grade 8 setting;
- With deep experience in Kindergarten-Grade 8 program and pedagogy, the determination to develop an exceptional academic program and the teaching faculty who will animate it;
- Strong oral and written communication skills, including the capacity to tell the Wesley story both internally and externally.

LEARN MORE

Click on the links below to learn more about The Wesley School.

[School Website](#)

[High School Placement](#)

[Long Range Plan](#)

[About North Hollywood, California](#)



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, addressed to the Search Committee, expressing interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- A completed Candidate Questionnaire (to be provided by consultants);
- 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:

Peter Barrett

Senior Consultant

peter.barrett@carneysandoe.com

Cathy Shelburne

Consultant and Coach

cathy.shelburne@carneysandoe.com

The full-time equivalent salary range for this position is \$275,000 - \$325,000. The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to, several factors that include years of experience, education level, and expertise.