



Small School. Big Education.

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Start Date: July 2028

Lake Tahoe School

Incline Village, Nevada | laketahoeschool.org



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES

MISSION STATEMENT

To create a joyful and academically challenging learning environment that echoes the wonder of Lake Tahoe, cultivates community, and sparks personal discovery that leads to an extraordinary future for every student.

At a Glance



1997
established



246
total enrollment



47
total faculty



8:1
student-faculty ratio



64
Parent Net Promoter Score
(Industry benchmark: 50+ is considered excellent; independent school averages range from 30 to 45)



OVERVIEW

Core Values: Community, Creativity, Critical Thinking, Empathy, Optimism

Founded in 1997 on the Nevada side of the Lake Tahoe Basin, Lake Tahoe School is an independent PreK–8 school serving approximately 250 students. The school sits along a creek a short distance from the lake, and its extraordinary natural setting is integral to its mission and experiential learning philosophy. Learning for the Lake Tahoe School's Bobcats reaches well beyond the classroom with a robust outdoor education program that allows students to explore the Tahoe Basin and the world beyond. Families are drawn to the school's dedicated faculty and staff, strong academics, vibrant arts and athletics programs, and warm community.

In the 2019–2020 school year, the school enrolled 135 students. As young families moved to the Tahoe region during and after COVID, enrollment grew by more than 80 percent, and the school now consistently operates near the 250-student capacity set by local zoning, with a waitlist for most grades. The administrative team has grown alongside enrollment and includes an Assistant Head of School along with directors of admission, development, marketing, human resources, technology, and operations. A significant philanthropic gift in 2022 eliminated the school's property debt and established two small restricted endowments, one for professional development and one for tuition assistance. Today the debt-free campus includes the academic building, Duffield Hall for athletics and the performing arts, three playing fields, and three outdoor classrooms. The school is guided by a recently revised mission and a five-year strategic plan for 2023–2028. It completed its NWAIS self-study and accreditation visit in spring 2026 and now approaches its 30th anniversary in 2027.

Lake Tahoe School seeks a proven independent school leader to guide its transition from rapid growth to lasting strength. Bolstered by a three-year average student retention rate exceeding 90% and a debt-free campus, and new endowments, the next Head will honor the school's warmth and its high academic expectations while building the school's collaborative senior team, systems, and practices a larger school now requires. Partnering closely with the Board of Trustees, the Head will carry the current strategic plan to completion and shape the one that follows. The school also seeks a leader who will communicate openly with every constituency and embrace life as a visible, engaged member of the Tahoe community.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

In the 2019–2020 school year, enrollment stood at 135 students—a level that fell short of operational sustainability. Through intentional, strategic expansion to reach fiscal and programmatic health, Lake Tahoe School is now well positioned to enter its next phase of institutional maturity. Partnering with a joyful, mission-driven community and a dedicated faculty and Board, the next Head of School will manage these opportunities and challenges:

Foster transparent communication and trust: Faculty and staff care deeply for the school and for one another. The next Head will have the opportunity to build a culture of openness and healthy feedback, including regular gatherings of the professional community to share information and work collaboratively on all-school initiatives.

Build a cohesive senior leadership team: Lake Tahoe School’s administrators bring commitment and skill to their roles, and colleagues describe strong individual performances across the school. The opportunity now is to coordinate that talent by clarifying roles and agency and building a shared sense of purpose.

Professionalize systems for a larger school: With its expanded enrollment and staff, Lake Tahoe School is now building the systems a larger school requires. Important work is in progress: codifying job descriptions, formalizing an evaluation and growth system for all employees, and strengthening onboarding. The next Head will see this work through so that every employee is supported by clear expectations and consistent practices.



Advance academic excellence and curricular

coherence: The next Head will support the development of a documented, aligned curriculum framework with a clear scope and sequence. This work also includes consistent structures for academic leadership and an intentional professional development program with thoughtful guidance on emerging education best practices.

Deepen the Board–Head partnership: Working from a solid governance framework, the next Head of School will actively partner with the Board to model high-trust, collaborative leadership. Essential to this work will be maintaining clear boundaries between governance and operations, providing transparent and consistent reporting to trustees and the community, and upholding accreditation standards that ensure long-term institutional health.

Secure long-term financial sustainability: Lake Tahoe School is debt-free, has built reserves, and has established small endowments for professional development and tuition assistance. There are numerous opportunities to leverage the philanthropic nature of the school community, and the school's approaching 30th anniversary offers a natural moment to engage all constituents in its future.

Cultivate community across the Tahoe Basin:

Belonging is a defining strength of Lake Tahoe School, expressed through cross-grade traditions, advisory, and the school's Cultivating Community work. The next Head will serve as a warm, visible ambassador and help keep the school accessible and welcoming to families and educators across the region.

Shape the next strategic vision: The school's 2023–2028 strategic plan concludes as the next Head arrives, and enrollment is near the 250-student limit set by zoning. Constituents are asking what thriving looks like for Lake Tahoe School in its next chapter. The next Head will lead an inclusive planning process that brings the full community into charting the school's future.



\$1M+

financial aid budget



26%

students receiving aid



\$6.99M

annual operating
budget



5 acres

campus size

QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES



Professional Qualifications

The successful candidate will demonstrate many of the following:

- Proven leadership and management experience in an independent school
- PreK–8 leadership experience, skilled across the academic, social, and emotional needs of each grade division
- A record of building organizational systems, including job descriptions, evaluation and professional growth, onboarding, and clear decision-making structures
- Demonstrated success recruiting, developing, retaining, and supporting exceptional faculty and staff
- Experience building and leading a collaborative senior leadership team, delegating with clarity and holding colleagues accountable
- Skilled in leading and navigating conflict, with the ability to lead and manage through crisis, and the ability, as well as the confidence, to make difficult decisions
- Experience building and sustaining collaborative organizational cultures characterized by trust, transparency, and shared responsibility
- Experience partnering with a Board of Trustees, clarifying governance roles, and leading inclusive strategic planning
- Proven track record in identifying, qualifying, and cultivating prospective donors, with demonstrated experience in campaign planning, case statement development, and establishing the foundational strategy for capital initiatives
- Financial, strategic, and operational acumen to support institutional priorities such as endowment growth, resource stewardship and long-range planning
- Ability to serve as a compelling ambassador, communicator, and relationship-builder with families, alumni, donors, and community partners
- Understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing independent schools, including demographic shifts, affordability, enrollment trends, and emerging technologies
- Appreciation for student-centered education and relationship-driven school culture



Leadership Style and Personal Qualities

- Approachable, accessible, collaborative, and visibly engaged in the daily life of the school
- A transparent, open communicator with poise and presence
- Exceptional listening skills, emotional intelligence, and empathy
- Enthusiasm, optimism, a sense of humor, and an appreciation for Lake Tahoe School's uniquely playful and adventurous culture
- An authentic champion and keeper of the school's core values, protective of a joyful, grounded childhood experience while preparing students for the world beyond it
- Energetic and open to new ideas
- Responsive and action-oriented, modeling the follow-through expected of others
- An advocate for faculty and staff who values them as educators and supports their growth
- At home in a small mountain community
- Embraces the spirit of a mountain community with energy and joy, championing experiential, outdoor learning while maintaining proactive risk management and safety protocols

LEARN MORE

- [School Website](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [Outdoor and Adventure Learning](#)
- [High School Matriculation](#)
- [About Incline Village, Nevada](#)





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;

Selected candidates may also be asked to provide:

- Writing samples specific to this search
- 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:

KAREN WHITAKER

Senior Consultant

karen.whitaker@carneysandoe.com

LISA PARSONS

Senior Consultant

lisa.parsons@carneysandoe.com

The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to, several factors which include years of experience, education background, and expertise.



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES