

318 30th Avenue E • Seattle, WA • 98112
www.thevalleyschool.org

HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

Application deadline July 18, 2022
Start date July 1, 2023

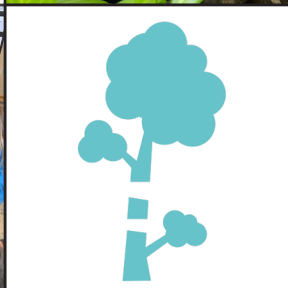
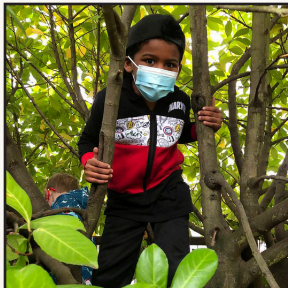
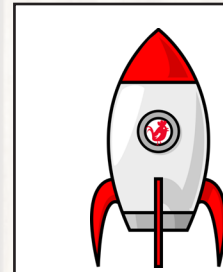
MISSION

At The Valley School, we ignite children's natural passion for learning. Our students develop an academic foundation and become joyful learners through playful work, purposeful play, and the practice of community.

VISION

The Valley School community—families, children, faculty and administration—puts the positive educational experience of children at the center of everything it does, guided by the following values:

- Collaboration
- Respect for individuality
- Kindness
- Creativity
- Equity and Inclusion
- Childhood



FACTS AT A GLANCE

Founded: 1985

Location: Seattle, WA

Campus: Co-ed Independent Day School

Grades: Pre-K through 5th Grade

Enrollment: 112

Students of Color: 34

Average Class Size: 16

(Teaching) Faculty: 21

Faculty with advanced degrees: 8

Student/Faculty Ratio: 8:1

Tuition: Pre-K Half Day: \$24,300

Pre-K Full Day and Kindergarten-5th Grade: \$30,872

Operating Budget: \$2,950M

Annual Giving: \$108k (2021)

Financial Aid: \$560k

Students (%) Granted Financial Aid: 26%

Professional Affiliations (Accreditations and Memberships): NAIS, NWAIS, ISM, WFIS, NBOA, PSIS, EMA, AISAP

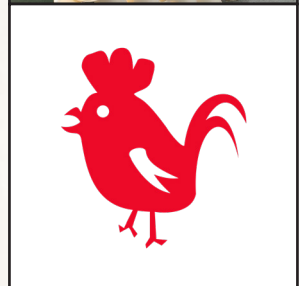
PHILOSOPHY

The Valley School's educational philosophy shapes every aspect of school life. From recess activities to thematic units, the principles behind the approach are apparent every day.

- Emotional and social intelligence go hand-in-hand with academic studies because children learn best when they are happy and secure
- Play, imagination, and exploration are vital to a child's development
- Children should be taught as individuals, in ways that best suit the child's stage of development and learning style
- Open-ended materials and inquiry in the classroom foster lifelong curiosity, creativity, and growth
- A love of learning is developed through experience, inquiry, and imagination, and results in independent and reflective thinkers
- A complete education cultivates depth of character including empathy, moral courage, sense of responsibility, and commitment to justice
- Effective teachers create an environment where learning is joyful and exciting, children are met with appropriate challenges, and independence and group cooperation are both highly valued

HISTORY

The Valley School campus is located in what was formerly a Madison Valley orchard in Seattle, WA. Founded in 1985 by Patricia Overy, the school expanded within ten years from a one-room in-home preschool of 18 children to a complete elementary school of over 100 students. The campus has experienced an equally impressive growth and now occupies eight city lots with enlarged classrooms, a library, a science room, art room, meeting hall, and an administrative building. The scale of the buildings is in character with the neighborhood in which the school resides. Much like other parts of Seattle, the community around Valley has changed over the years from a majority black neighborhood, and with the recent social justice movements, has been calling Valley to find its unique response. The growth and development of the campus have not changed the population the school serves or its mission.

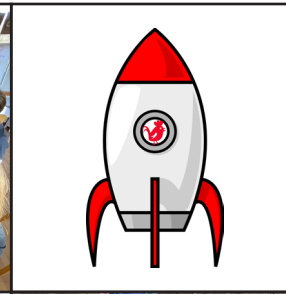


THE VALLEY SCHOOL **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Board, presently 15 in number, is composed of Valley School alumni, alumni parents, current parents, community members, and the Head of School. The committed, passionate, and well-trained trustees understand the line between the strategic role of the Board and the operational authority of the Head of School. The Board maintains an effective, trusting, and supportive partnership with the Head of School, and seeks to learn, grow, and develop itself for the benefit of the school's future.

The Board is committed to self-reflection and growth. Trustees engage in self-evaluation of their performance every other year, regularly attend NWAIS board training, engage in regularly scheduled board learning sessions, and work with governance consultants when appropriate. As the current strategic plan neared conclusion, the Board hired a consultant to work with the community on the development of a new strategic plan, scheduled for completion in June 2022.

The following committees are Board committees: Executive Committee, Philanthropy Committee, Finance Committee, DEIA Committee, and Membership Committee.



THE CAMPUS

The Valley School campus has grown over the past 35+ years and occupies four building structures on eight city lots used for classrooms, a library, a group meeting space, and administrative offices. The centerpiece of the school is the outdoor play space, which offers endless opportunity for imaginative thinking, invention, and exploration by children: trees can be climbed, boats can be "rowed," barrels can be wheeled around for construction. The faculty considers the school's play space an integral part of the curriculum.

Valley has two main play areas, the upper school playground, which is used mostly by grades three through five, and the lower school playground, which is used by all students. The area for the upper grades features monkey bars, a treehouse, and a paved area for basketball and four square. There is also a ramp and ample room for riding scooters and activities such as soccer. The area used by students across all grades has two playhouse structures, swings, a water pump, sandboxes, a track, and extra room for impromptu games of soccer or kickball, and the neighborhood favorite wooden rocket ship. Students have access to buckets, tools, building materials, and riding toys.

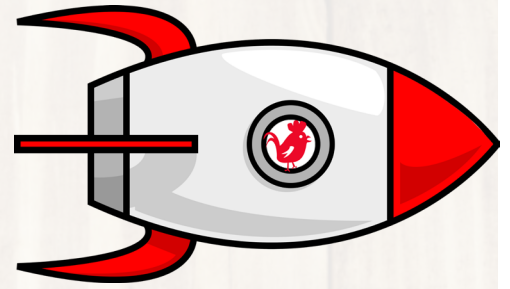
The campus is also home to three wonderful chickens, two of whom were hatched at Valley. Students routinely get to interact and engage with the chickens and learn more about what it takes to raise an animal. Rocket, Yoda, and Reddy Jr. are all happy to let the community know when they need something, especially a treat!

FACULTY AND STAFF

The Valley School currently employs twenty-nine faculty and staff members. A four-person Leadership Team is composed of the Head of School, the Director of Teaching and Learning, the Director of Finance and Operations, and the Director of Admissions and Community Relations. There are seven lead teachers, five specialist teachers, and many support faculty and staff that help to keep the purposeful play and playful work running smoothly.

PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM

Days at The Valley School are full of opportunities for children to investigate, create, and build friendships. The faculty carefully create experiences at Valley that feed children's curiosity and are full of challenge, adventure, and fun. They know that children learn by doing as well as from adult instruction. In every grade children learn through hands-on investigation as well as teacher-led instruction, beginning whenever possible with the children's interests. Knowing that educational institutions have a specific call to equity and access that commits them to teach every child well, both content and pedagogy are researched to meet that commitment.



YEARLY PROGRAM THEME FOR 2022: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

As part of Valley's program, time is spent discussing and selecting a yearly theme which unifies the school and creates rich opportunities for exploration throughout the curriculum. During 2020-21, the theme was Anti-Racism/Racial Justice. This year it is Environmental Justice. Whether exploring how much trash is created each day and where it goes, or discussing the disproportionate impact of climate change on communities of color, students have thrived by playfully examining topics that animate their activism and give them a sense that they can work to make the world a better place. At faculty meetings, teachers have expressed a desire to continue with themes that explore the intersection of racial and environmental justice.

LOWER SCHOOL (PRE-K through SECOND GRADE)

LITERACY • MATH • SOCIAL STUDIES - Lower school students enjoy stories and build literacy skills in all areas: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Teachers provide a holistic, balanced approach including whole-language instruction, phonics, and sight word acquisition. Students participate in book groups, read aloud, reading conferences, independent reading, and receive literacy mini-lessons every week.

The math program builds a foundation in all areas of elementary math and aligns with Common Core standards. There is a focus on communicating math thinking and strategies in addition to accurate computation and the application of new concepts and skills. Students learn math through a variety of methods including exploration, whole-class lessons, math games, flexible small-group instruction, and application.

Social Studies units integrate skills and knowledge from many disciplines. Students explore topics through literature, research, music, art, plays, field trips, celebrations, and discussions. Units frequently end with an interactive, culminating project, or experience, such as a classroom museum or play.

UPPER SCHOOL (THIRD through FIFTH GRADES)

LITERACY • MATH • SOCIAL STUDIES - Students become more independent readers and transition from learning to read to reading to learn. They engage in Reader's and Writer's Workshops. Through participation in read aloud, literature discussions, shared reading, independent reading, and small, flexible reading groups, students build strong reading comprehension strategies and read a variety of texts fluently. As writers, they engage in the entire writing process and practice narrative, expository, and persuasive writing. They learn cursive and keyboarding as well.

The math program follows the Bridges 2nd Edition curriculum and strengthens competency in all areas of elementary math including: Counting & Cardinality, Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Number and Operations in Base Ten, Measurement & Data and Geometry. They build computational fluency, strengthen their ability to communicate their math thinking, and learn to problem solve.

Social Studies themes relate to other areas of study in the classroom. Students learn about Washington State, Seattle, early U.S. history, and important local and global issues. Some topics emerge from student interest. Students transition from simply learning about a topic to becoming problem solvers, advocates and leaders. They explore topics through literature, research, music, art, plays, re-enactments, field trips, celebrations, discussions, and guest speakers. Units frequently end in an interactive, culminating project.

OUR “SECOND CLASSROOM”

Students at the Valley School spend time outdoors every day, rain or shine. What some schools refer to as the playground, Valley calls the “Second Classroom”— a place where students can practice skills from many disciplines while following their own questions, ideas, and desires. The playground is designed to meet the needs of young, growing students and to inspire unstructured, student-led investigations, creations, and play. Teachers provide seasonal “provocations” to help spark student inquiry, exploration, creativity, and collaboration. Valley School students get plenty of exercise and get plenty muddy too!

Playground Provocations include: Hay Bales, Water Play, Insect Hunting, Carpentry, Fairy Houses, Garden Maintenance, Obstacle Courses, Shovels & Tools, Tires, Tracks & Tarps, Orienteering, Pulleys, Loose Parts, Plant Arrangements, Water Painting, and more.

In the summer of 2022, a new outdoor classroom will be added to the lower school playground creating a covered play space with storage, amphitheater seating for ground level performances, and a second story open air classroom space.



SPECIALIST PROGRAMS

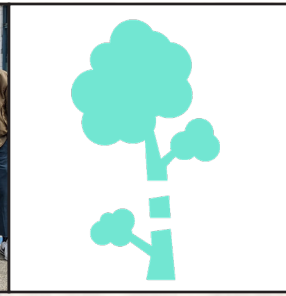
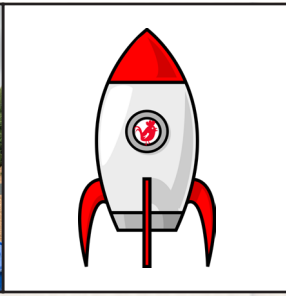
SCIENCE - Valley School students explore the world around them, ask questions, and conduct experiments. Every year students are exposed to topics from three branches of science: earth, life, and physical. Each unit connects to thematic units in the classroom. In the science lab, students have the opportunity to think like scientists as they are exposed to the language and process of the scientific method. Students in all grades engage in sustainability and stewardship practices, including time working in the school gardens and completing citizen science projects on the campus and in the community.

CREATIVE ARTS: ART, MUSIC, DRAMA - Valley students are introduced to foundational art topics and explore a wide range of materials and learn about diverse artists and art forms from many cultures. Music appreciation is also practiced. Students learn about rhythm, dynamics, and musical styles. Classes are exposed to songs and musical styles from all over the world. As part of a drama unit, students may create their own play to act out, or perhaps use a known story. Memorizing parts, creating choreography, and the art of stagecraft are all introduced.

LIBRARY & TECHNOLOGY - Students are introduced to new authors, illustrators, genres, books, and series by the librarian. Classes learn how a library is organized, as well as how to locate, select, and check out books using call numbers, the Dewey-decimal system, and library software. Students try new books and develop their own reading interests and goals. Digital literacy and citizenship topics are covered in the upper grades.

ESPAÑOL - Valley School students participate in Spanish classes every week. Students learn Spanish through songs, stories, call and response, repetition, games, writing, art, and conversation. Students may practice Spanish in small groups to provide more opportunities for practice speaking.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION - Students participate in physical education classes in all grades. Pre-K and K students are led through a sequential curriculum in classes where they learn to move their bodies effectively and with strength. 1st through 5th Grade students participate in P.E. activities that are designed to teach cooperative games and good sportsmanship.



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

Responsibility, Relationships & Risk - Strong SEL skills provide a foundation for all learning and relationships in school and life. Valley School students receive direct instruction in the 5 Core Competencies of SEL: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision Making. Teachers are trained in Responsive Classroom methods and implement key parts of this research-based curriculum in classrooms.

Focus areas for lower school include: emotions, self-regulation, giving clear messages, friendship skills, and problem solving. In grades 3-5 there is increased emphasis on problem solving, conflict resolution, and mindfulness. Communication strategies are strengthened. Students manage emotions and behavior with increased confidence and independence using a wide range of mindfulness activities and tools. Self-reflection, empathy, and goal setting are also core areas for the older students as they become school leaders.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & ACCESS

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESS (DEIA) STATEMENT - The Valley School honors diversity, practices inclusion, and invites courageous conversations. The faculty, staff, and families form a community where each individual is valued, respected, and included. Though the journey can be muddy—much like the playground—the goal is to give every child the tools necessary to flourish.

DEIA DEFINITIONS - Because the way a school may define these words can be different, The Valley School has intentionally described how to approach the work being done in each one of these areas as the following:

DIVERSITY - Diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another. At Valley, it means respect for and appreciation of differences in gender, gender identity, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, family composition, education, learning styles, race, religion, and other dimensions.

EQUITY - Equity is giving each student what they need to be successful. Equity leads to the fair treatment of all individuals based upon their circumstances. Equity and equality are not the same thing. Equity is the process; equality is the outcome.

INCLUSION - Inclusion is about respecting and engaging with the differences encompassed within diversity. This intentional and ongoing work takes place in the classroom, on the playground, and throughout the Valley community.

ACCESS - The Valley School strives to eliminate barriers and forge pathways to allow students and families to fully engage in school life, both inside and outside the classroom. To respect and appreciate the diverse characteristics of each student and strive to create an environment where playful work, purposeful play, and the practice of community can take place.

ADMISSION

Due to the size and the local independent school landscape, admission work at Valley is a continual process. The size and program are unique and can be an attraction for families or a reason to enroll elsewhere. Therefore, the classroom sizes can fluctuate at different grade levels based on the success of enrollment in Pre-K or

Kindergarten (which are the main entry points for the majority of the applicants).

Students matriculate out of Valley to Middle/High Schools that are located in the greater Seattle area. Commonly attended schools are: Seattle Academy (SAAS), Bush, Northwest, University Prep, Lakeside, Lake Washington Girls Middle School, Seattle Girls' School, Billings, Forest Ridge, as well as several of the local public schools.

GIVING AT VALLEY

Along with tuition, Valley relies on donations from the community to help build and grow the educational program. The annual campaign at Valley is called the 3-2-1 Fund! It raises funds to benefit three key initiatives.

3: Financial Aid. Valley committed 17% (\$560,000) this year to provide equitable opportunities for families of different means to access a Valley School education and to support their school experience. The school strives to continue this level of support on an annual basis.

2: Student Resources. The COVID-19 pandemic and the social justice initiatives in the world today, have created new challenges and opportunities for all schools. Valley aims to meet the needs of the rapidly changing community and provide a high level of commitment to the students and families through new programs, resources, and support.

1: Teacher Resources & Professional Development. The school recognizes that Valley faculty will feel more successful when they are supported in their professional development. Providing thoughtful and thought-provoking opportunities for the faculty and staff will keep them engaged, challenged, and up-to-date with the most important teaching methods for the community.

Along with the annual campaign, Valley also holds a Spring Community Fundraising Event for the sole purpose of building community and raising money towards a predetermined Fund-A-Need. This event has raised anywhere from \$60 - \$100K each year in the past five years.

All giving initiatives at Valley are managed by The Director of Admissions and Community Relations.

FAMILIES AT VALLEY (F@V)

The strength of the Valley School community is a differentiating factor in the school and the mission of the Families at Valley group (F@V) is to cultivate pride, communication, and connection within that community.

Families at Valley is a volunteer-run collective driving a spirit of involvement and inclusion to nurture Valley's unique community. An organization for and of anyone helping raise a child at Valley, F@V is a critical communication link between Valley families, Admin, Faculty, and Staff in support of school events, activities, education, and more.

Families at Valley offers:

- Community Building: Weaving a strong network for the school: Social and educational events, parent education programming, online forum, new family welcoming, etc.
- Volunteer Coordination: Increasing capacity of Valley by accessing resources within the community
- Support for Educators, Admin, Class Reps, Staff, and Families
- Communication: Facilitating a transparent system of communication whereby parents, teachers, admin, and the Board can remain informed and involved

PARENT EDUCATION AT VALLEY - Along with Curriculum Night and Justice Day when families visit the classrooms to see how the curriculum comes to life, Valley School's Families at Valley (F@V) hosts a committee of parent volunteers who shepherd the Parent Education Program. The mission of the Parent Education Committee is to ensure Valley School families have access to educational opportunities and resources that enhance their experience both as parents and as members of our school community.



FINANCE

Valley is in a strong financial position, owns its campus property and buildings, and maintains prudent reserves to ensure the school's long-term sustainability. As of June 30, 2021, Valley's general operating reserve and capital projects reserve were close to \$1.95M, including the Board-designated Pat Overy Financial Aid Fund of \$234K and The Walter Fund, a generous bequest of \$600K earmarked for future strategic initiatives to be determined by the Board of Trustees. All of Valley's reserves are managed by an external advisor in accordance with the Reserve and Investment Policy approved by the Board of Trustees. In addition, separate from these funds, Valley maintains a segregated prepaid tuition reserve account of \$660K to hold the following year's advance tuition payments (net of financial aid). Financial returns on Valley's reserves and investments accounted for other income equal to approximately two percent of the school's revenue. As a best practice, Valley typically maintains operating cash on hand sufficient to meet all operating needs and does not tap into reserve funds except in exceptional circumstances.

FUTURE LEADERSHIP PROFILE

The Valley School Board of Trustees seeks a Head of School who enthusiastically embraces and champions the school's unique mission. The successful candidate will have a proven record of effective school leadership distinguished by a warm, welcoming and inclusive personal manner, exceptional communication skills, and a love for young children. They will also value the interplay of a progressive, play-based education with the academic growth of a diverse student body. The new Head will embrace the School's mission and values, educational philosophy, and have the skills, initiative and drive to help build and realize a compelling vision and future for the school.

The Board of Trustees of The Valley School is conducting a national search to identify and recruit the next Head of School. Joan Beauregard of Educators' Collaborative solicited input from stakeholders such as faculty, staff, administrators, parents and trustees, through numerous virtual meetings and an online survey. The themes that emerged were remarkably consistent. What follows represents a summary of The Valley School's strengths, challenges and opportunities as well as the qualities and skills of the next Head of School.

STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

1. A mission to ignite children's natural passion for learning and for students to develop an academic foundation and become joyful learners through playful work, purposeful play, and the practice of community through small classes and caring personal relationships between students, faculty and families;
2. The Valley campus, once an orchard in Seattle, which provides outdoor spaces where children play and work daily, rain or shine;
3. Parents, teachers, administrators, and staff dedicated to providing access to and an equitable experience for all students at The Valley School;
4. The caring, nurturing and close-knit community that serves as a cornerstone to the School's existence;
5. Dedicated, inspired teachers committed to progressive education, who go above and beyond to challenge and engage the students while retaining a steadfast focus on social and emotional learning;
6. A culture that honors diversity, promotes creativity and inquiry, and fosters a pervasive sense of kindness among the students; and
7. An engaged, strategic board dedicated to supporting the School and advancing its mission, program, and initiatives.



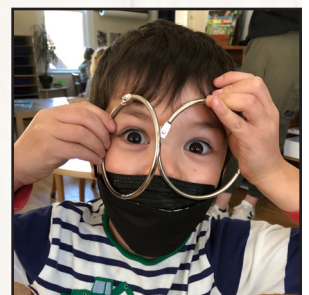
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

1. **Transition:** Ensure a successful transition to new leadership by taking the time to build trust among all stakeholders. Build connections in the NWAIS educator community, peer schools, feeder schools, and middle/high schools in the area.
2. **Identity and Visibility:** Branding and marketing is crucial to the long-term success of enrollment management of The Valley School. The next Head of School will need to engage with the faculty and staff to tell the story of what a Valley School education provides its students. Communicating clearly, confidently, and engagingly the philosophy and the implementation of the Valley School program to evidence hungry parents and prospective parents will be a critical part of the next Head of School's job. The next Head of School and the faculty need to communicate the value of the Valley model and that Valley graduates are well prepared for the next steps in their educational journey.
3. **Planning:** The Board of Trustees has engaged in Strategic Planning and will have a published five-year strategic plan ready to share by the end of the 2021-2022 academic year. Implementation of strategies will begin in 2022-23. The next Head of School will need to lead the community in completing the goals and objectives in the remaining four years of the plan.
4. **Diversity, Equity Inclusion and Access:** Keep the school's commitment to DEIA at the forefront in all aspects of the school by continuing to deepen and refine the school's DEIA lens in every facet of the school's life. Lead the community to continue to find Valley's space as an independent elementary school in responding to the call for social and environmental justice, furthering the School's commitment to DEIA.
5. **Finances and Fundraising:** Assure sustainable school finances by carefully managing tuition increases to maintain accessibility, sustain and enhance additional sources of revenue, grow the reserves and, when feasible, build an endowment. Further emphasize development and fundraising efforts and evaluate the need and right time to start a Capital Campaign.
6. **Campus and physical plant:** Indoor and outdoor spaces are integral to the curriculum and program; during summer of 2022 a new outdoor classroom will be added. Additional opportunities have been identified. The next Head of School should continue the evaluation of campus and plant needs and position the school to be able to act upon opportunities.
7. **Presence:** The next Head will be an avid participant in all components of The Valley School, visiting classes, lunches, and recesses, being regularly present at drop-off and pick-up, actively engaging at events, and enthusiastically supporting the daily life of the students.
8. **Professional support:** Provide leadership and support to a dedicated faculty and staff.

QUALIFICATIONS AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

The ideal candidate for this position will bring several years of relevant professional experience in PreK-5 education during which time they will have demonstrated the characteristics that best match the needs of The Valley School. The following descriptors most aptly fit the successful candidate:

- Evidences an abundance of those characteristics typically found in successful school leaders: a "people" person who is warm, accessible, collaborative, and honest; a relationship builder and a lifelong learner; is calm, steady, positive and humble with a sense of humor and a love of and genuine interest in the students Pre-K through 5th grade;
- An outstanding, experienced educator, knowledgeable about best practices and trends, specifically in elementary and equitable progressive education;
- An attentive listener and articulate and charismatic communicator with excellent verbal and written communication



skills who will be a visible and skillful spokesperson, internally and externally, for the School;

- An authentic commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in a progressive school as it works to respond to our collective responsibility to social justice, with an understanding of enrollment and hiring challenges schools face;
- A champion of the faculty who encourages them to be the best teachers they can be and shepherds their professional development and growth;
- A skillful decision-maker who takes the time to understand what is best about current practice, is thoughtful and clear about process and the locus of decisions, and leads others to embrace and adopt proposed changes;
- A big picture thinker who is attentive to the details that matter in the daily life of a school;
- Proven sound financial acumen and working knowledge of school budgeting, finance, plant maintenance, and fiscally sound management;
- Demonstrated experience and success in fundraising and marketing and a willingness to take a critical leadership role in both of these areas; and
- A willing partner with the Board in ensuring the appropriate strategic direction and ongoing fiscal stewardship of the School.



SUMMARY OF THE SEARCH PROCESS

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials in a Single Merged Document by July 18, 2022:

- EC Candidate Summary Sheet and Disclosure Form (Contact Joan Beauregard for these documents)
- A cover letter addressed to the Search Committee
- Current resume
- Statement of Educational Leadership philosophy
- A list of five or more references with contact information (including phone numbers and email addresses)
- Up to three letters of reference (optional)

Application materials are to be sent electronically via email, as a single WORD document to:

Joan Beauregard, Partner, Educators' Collaborative, LLC

Email: jbeau@comcast.net and jbeauregard@educatorscollaborative.com

Phone: 206-851-6616

THE SCHEDULE

The Search Committee plans to identify a preliminary group of candidates to interview via Zoom in early August. From this group the Search Committee will select finalists for two days of interviews. The Trustees expect to reach a decision and appoint a Head-Elect shortly after finalist visits with the term of office to commence on or about July 1, 2023. Salary and benefits are competitive.

The Valley School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, creed, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran's status, disability, use of a trained service animal, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws. This policy applies to admissions and administration of all of its programs, as well as to all areas of employment.

