



THE WAVERLY SCHOOL

Pasadena, California

INTERIM HEAD OF SCHOOL

Start Date: July 2021

thewaverlyschool.org



Carney
Sandoe
& ASSOCIATES



Mission

The Waverly School cultivates curious, resourceful, confident learners who demonstrate intellectual engagement, critical and creative thinking, respect for individual differences, a strong awareness of personal responsibility, and an active commitment to social justice.

OVERVIEW

Every day, teachers at The Waverly School create experiences that challenge students to ponder, experiment, and problem-solve. Waverly is a nonsectarian, coeducational, progressive day school in Pasadena, California, that spans preschool through high school. The school opened in 1993 as a place where children from preschool through 8th grade could grow and explore the joys of learning. The high school was launched in 1997, offering an integrated curriculum designed to challenge curious adolescents while preparing them well for college and life beyond.

Through its well-structured education program — inspired by the philosophies of leading progressive educational thinkers and informed by the contemporary science on learning and brain development — Waverly fosters lifelong learning in a highly child-centered and intellectually challenging environment.

In November 2020, long-serving Head of School Heidi Johnson announced her intention to retire at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. The Waverly School now seeks a dynamic leader to serve as Interim Head of School starting July 2021. The successful candidate will be a highly experienced educational leader devoted to the school's progressive mission and program. The Interim Head has oversight of all organizational activities and serves as the school's academic leader, fostering a climate of excellence and ethical growth among students, faculty, and staff. This is an exceptional opportunity to lead an outstanding independent school with an unwavering commitment to student success and community.



Fast Facts

Founded: 1993

Grades: PreK-12

Total students: 347

Total faculty: 43

Faculty of color: 37%

Faculty with advanced degrees: 40%

Student/teacher ratio: 12:1

Students of color: 46%

Flexible tuition budget as % of tuition revenue: 29%

Students enrolled in flexible tuition: 42%

THE SCHOOL

Waverly's educational philosophy asserts that students learn best when they are actively involved in their education, when they become responsible for their own growth as students, when they are encouraged to work to their highest level, and when their learning is based on life experiences. Children and adolescents develop in stages; Waverly respects and supports each child's journey through these stages. The educational program incorporates all aspects of human development—intellectual, social, physical, aesthetic, and ethical—and strives to integrate learning by guiding students to be curious about all that the world has to offer.

Each day, students collaborate to study, problem solve, discuss, and make connections. Waverly teachers know students on a personal level, with a keen understanding of their cognitive and social-emotional needs. Waverly teachers also model intellectual curiosity, a commitment to a life of meaning with the highest integrity. From preschool through 12th grade, Waverly uses formative assessment to evaluate students. The result is a community in which highly engaged students, teachers, and families learn from one another.

Waverly believes that an equitable and diverse school community makes members better informed, more empathetic, and better prepared to effect positive change in the world. To that end, Waverly seeks out, supports, and celebrates a diverse staff, faculty, and student body. The school is also committed to social justice education and seeks to provide an environment where all members of the community can engage in dialogue, question, learn, and contribute fully. With the help of several internal committees and outside partners, the school is currently engaged in thorough work to dismantle racism, advance equity, and create a truly just school environment.

Waverly has three separate divisions each in their own facility in Pasadena, California — as well a



one-acre organic farm within walking distance of the campuses. The school owns the contemporary elementary and high school buildings. The middle school is located in a leased building adjacent to the high school.

The Waverly School is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS). It is also a member of The Alliance, People of Color in Independent Schools (POCIS), and A Better Chance.

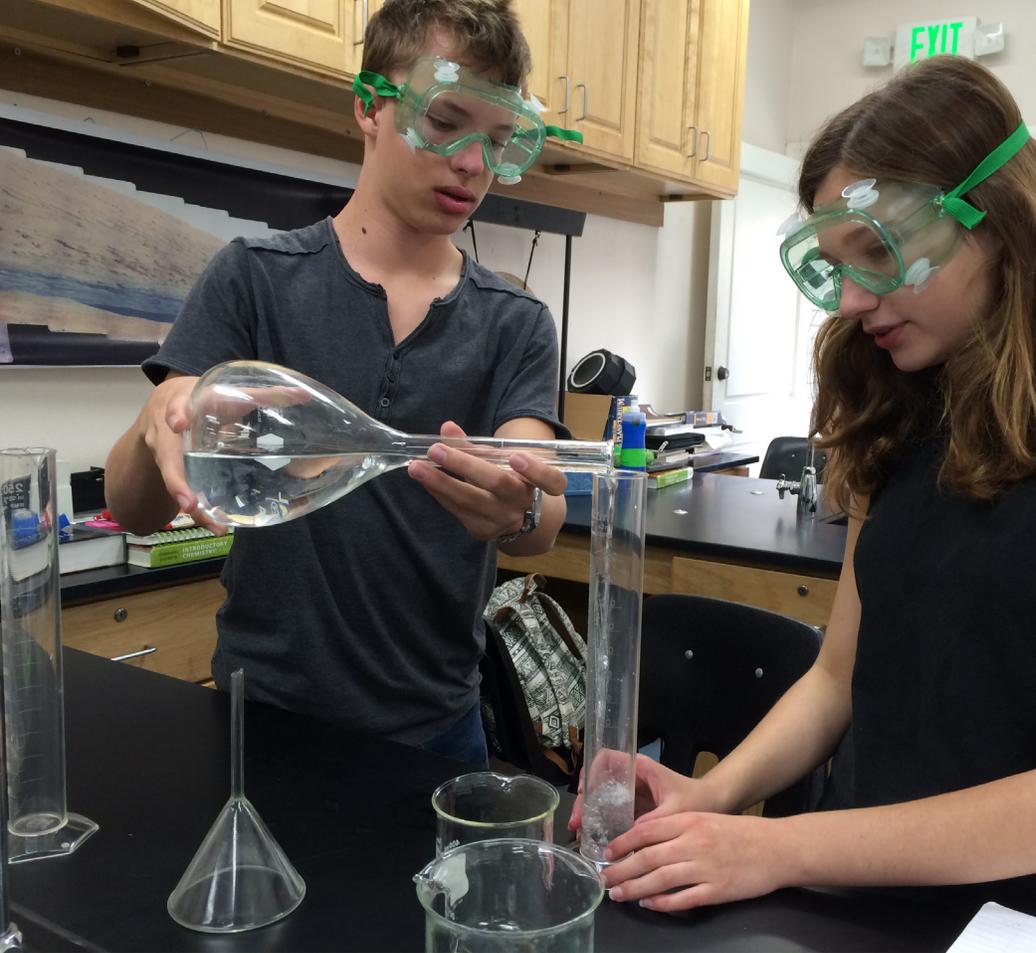
ACADEMICS

From preschool through high school, Waverly's approach to education is guided by several common themes that center around a deep commitment to the work of thinking and learning.

Lower Division

In preschool (ages 3.5-5), the focus is on experiential learning, play, and social-emotional growth, consistent with developmentally appropriate practice. Each school year, the preschool teaching team develops a theme that fosters a love of learning and adjusts their curriculum to allow the children to be co-constructors of their own knowledge. Waverly preschoolers spend about half of the day outside. The program is limited to 17 students and staffed by gifted and experienced early childhood educators, including a director/teacher and two full-time teachers. The preschool is located on the elementary school campus.

At the elementary level (kindergarten-grade 6), teachers develop a social studies theme for the school year and build an interdisciplinary curriculum around the theme. Science, math, the arts, and language arts are all integrated with that theme. Emphasis is placed on active learning experiences for the students. In each elementary classroom and throughout the elementary school, a sense of community



is fostered using the Responsive Classroom approach that weaves skill building in conflict resolution, teamwork, collaborative learning, and more. In the Wellness program, students learn about identity, human development, building community, and understanding systems through a social justice lens. “I appreciate the joyful relationships between students and teachers,” shared one faculty member. “We celebrate those dear and precious connections.”

Upper Division

The middle school program (grades 7-8) is designed to meet students’ needs for social and emotional support while building and strengthening their academic skills. In alternating years of this multidisciplinary program, teachers integrate study of American and world themes in the English and history classes. Science classes follow an intensive, hands-on curriculum designed to prepare students for a demanding laboratory science program in high school. The math program offers classes suited to each student’s ability. Advanced students are able to take Algebra I and Geometry for high school credit in 8th grade. Spanish is a core subject at the middle school. Eighth grade students may earn high school credit and move on to Spanish II their freshman year. The academic experience is enhanced by annual two-night outdoor education trips to one of two experiences: Astrocamp in Idyllwild and California Island Marine Institute at Toyon Bay, on Catalina Island.

College Matriculation

Graduates of The Waverly School attend many of the top colleges and universities in the U.S. and abroad. Graduates of the Class of 2020 are enrolled in the following:

Boston University
California State University, Fresno
California State University, Fullerton
California State University, Long Beach
Carleton College
Eckerd College
Georgetown University
Loyola Marymount University
New York University
Norwich University
Oberlin College
Occidental College
Olin College of Engineering
Pasadena City College
Pitzer College
St. Olaf College
Syracuse University
The Art Institute of Chicago
The New School
University of California, Davis
University of California, Riverside
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of California, Santa Cruz
University of La Verne
University of Oregon
University of San Francisco
Worcester Polytechnic Institute



The high school (grades 9-12) offers a tightly knit community and a challenging, engaging college preparatory program. Students are taught in an environment that values inquiry, debate, and critical thinking, and teachers work closely with students to help them develop these skills in all subject areas. The school offers a wide range of courses, all approved by the University of California, including Advanced Placement and Honors courses. Most important, Waverly emphasizes essential academic and social-emotional skills that produce students well prepared for the demands of college and beyond. “The student body is impressive,” commented one faculty member, “they have an intrinsic interest in learning, they speak their truth, and they’re authentic and creative.” Outdoor education excursions typically occur in the spring, and have included rock climbing in Joshua Tree, exploring music and the recording industry in Nashville, and staying in Los Angeles to produce a music video. Every other academic year, juniors and seniors have a chance to go to Costa Rica to stay with local families and contribute to the local area by helping with a community service project.

ARTS

Waverly’s visual and performing arts program aims to foster bold, inventive, and confident participants in the arts. Elementary students attend visual arts, vocal music, and instrumental classes with specialists each week. Middle and high school students may take art, music, and drama classes as an elective. Student artwork—ceramics, models, wirework, paintings, and drawings—is on display throughout the school.

The music program begins at the preschool level and progresses through high school with an overall focus on contemporary pop and rock styles. Students play a variety of string, keyboard, and percussion instruments. Classes are held weekly. As part of high school music ensembles, students study compositions, music theory, and notation and perform at lunchtime concerts and at the annual Waverly Rock Festival.



Theater and drama opportunities are available throughout the school year. Middle and high school students may take drama as an elective, and several performances are put on each year. In addition, the highly popular high school Bollywood Dance Club performs twice a year. The Holiday Show held each year at Occidental College is an opportunity for students, especially in the lower division, to showcase their burgeoning talents.

ATHLETICS

Sports enrich student life and the school community. Waverly believes that participation in sports can contribute significantly to the physical, social, and emotional well-being of students. Athletes are encouraged to develop their skills and ability to work as a team. As a result, coaches focus on maximizing the participation of all team members.

The athletics program allows students to compete at the middle school level (grades 5-8) in fall, winter, and spring sports in the Foothill League. Sports include flag football, volleyball, basketball, tennis, and soccer. In the high school program, students to compete in cross-country, soccer, tennis, volleyball, basketball, and track in the International League, affiliated with the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF).

SCHOOL LIFE

Waverly strives to build a school community that is rich in and supportive of multiple aspects of identity, and to establish institutional practices that foster equity so that all members of the community may fully participate and prosper. The result is a warm, inviting, and engaged community of adults and students.



A particular element in Waverly’s vision of progressive education is the Love and Justice program. Many of the curricular areas and approaches the school has always engaged with in wellness — healthy communication and consent, decision making, human development and sexuality, community building, healthy relationships, mindfulness, and more — seek to incorporate social justice within the Love and Justice program. The initiative, in its early stages and still evolving, addresses developmentally appropriate topics relevant and important to each age group and works to inspire a healthy, safe, and just community.

Another community-building element is the Waverly organic farm. “The farm is our gem!” enthused one faculty member. The farm exists to enable students, their families, their teachers, and the broader community to engage nature on multiple levels. The scope of participation in the life of the farm is broad, ranging from active cultivation and organic production to inventive play, hands-on learning, and simple appreciation of nature. The farm also creates opportunities for elementary, middle, and high school students to interact in ways that nurture cross-generational mentoring, leadership skills, and social harmony. The intent is that the farm be inspirational, experimental, educational, and sustainable.

Student life is vibrant at Waverly, and middle and high school students in particular have a variety of options to becoming involved in the school community. In middle school, each fall, students are selected by peers in their advisory groups to represent their advisory on the Student Advisory Leadership Team which offers ideas for enriching the school experience, plans events, and selects community service projects. Middle school students have also created various committees and clubs to address more specific school activities, including a social group for planning dances, and many kinds of clubs for gathering like-minded students (past clubs have focused on politics, popular novels, and the study of ninjas).



High school students serve their community and learn leadership skills by joining the Ravens. The Ravens is a student-initiated peer advocacy group who works to center student voices in matters of reporting and resolving community conflict. Student interest also determines extracurricular clubs (past clubs have included a ukulele club, a Jewish Student Union, a gay-straight alliance, and an environmental activists club). Service to the greater community is encouraged through a curriculum that inspires involvement and action. High school students are required to participate in a total of 60 hours prior to graduation, some of which is organized during school hours.

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

Pasadena is located 11 miles north of downtown Los Angeles. As a city in its own right, it is home to around 140,000 residents. Pasadena may be best known as the home to the Rose Bowl and the site of the annual Tournament of Roses Parade, but it's also home to numerous scientific and cultural institutions, including the Jet Propulsion Lab, the Pacific Asian Museum, the Art Center College of Design, the Norton Simon Museum, the Huntington Library, and Caltech. The city is also chock-full of interesting, walkable neighborhoods and sits close to both the San Rafael Hills and the San Gabriel Mountains. In all, Pasadena is considered one of the best places to live in California and offers residents a combination of a suburban and urban feel. Efforts at environmental sustainability and historic preservation put the city high on the livability index.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Preserve

At its core, Waverly is a strong community that possesses a deep commitment to its progressive values and where each student and teacher is known as an individual. Parents describe with delight how the school meets the unique needs of each child in their family. The Interim Head of School will be asked to nurture the sense of community as its members adapt to new leadership and as teachers and students adjust to returning to school full time after 18 months of COVID-driven uncertainty and isolation.

The Interim Head must also support the important work that is underway to help Waverly live more fully its commitment to equity and social justice. Although DEI was already listed as a major goal in the recent CAIS/WASC Self Study, the Black Lives Matter movement revealed to the Waverly community the importance of broadening and deepening the school's DEI work. The Interim Head will be asked to ensure that the various DEI efforts underway, including attention to further healing the community, receive the attention and resources required.

By necessity and design, Waverly runs a fiscally lean operation. In partnership with a strong finance committee and an excellent business manager, the next Interim Head of School will provide ongoing strategic leadership to the school's finances.

Prepare

School communities commonly struggle when they transition from a very long serving founding Head to new leadership; this is particularly true for small schools with a strong family feel like Waverly. The Board has wisely decided to hire an Interim Head who will skillfully help the community manage the inevitable adjustments that accompany a leadership transition. The Interim Head will be assisted by a passionate faculty, skilled senior administrators, and a dedicated Board.

Propel

The Pasadena area is home to many excellent public school and well-regarded religious and independent schools, making for a very competitive marketplace. The Interim Head, working with the Director of Admissions, will be asked to begin identifying ways to increase Waverly's visibility and reputation in Pasadena and the adjacent communities. In a region where most families prefer a traditional educational approach, the Interim Head will help Waverly more thoroughly articulate the benefit of Waverly's distinctive approach to progressive education.

DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Waverly is looking for an Interim Head who possesses the following:

- A palpable enjoyment at being an active and visible presence in the life of the school as a foundation for strong, supportive relationships with faculty, staff, students, and parents, thereby supporting the school's strong sense of community.
- Comfort in serving as a public figure and as the chief ambassador and spokesperson of the school.
- A deep understanding of important trends in progressive education and the ability to combine that understanding with an appreciation for Waverly's values and traditions, in order to articulate a compelling vision for the school's future.
- Prior experience living and leading diversity and inclusion initiatives, skill in building inclusive communities, and the ability to respectfully navigate diverse cultural and social situations.
- A leadership style that is collaborative and projects an openness that genuinely invites and respects the perspectives and views of others, yet is decisive when necessary.
- An ability to connect and communicate effectively with faculty members, administration, parents, students, community members, and the Board so that these groups are appropriately informed of school events, potential issues, and needs.
- Understanding of and commitment to strategic external affairs, including admissions, fundraising, marketing, and broader community involvement.
- A strong record of fiscal management and understanding of finance and budgeting.
- Significant teaching and administrative experience.
- Bachelor's degree required; graduate degree preferred.

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 their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- Three writing samples which may include articles you wrote, memos on an important topic, newsletter, or letters introducing or describing an important topic to your current or previous school community;
- 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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Bob Fricker

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