



CATE SCHOOL

Head of School  
Opportunity Statement

# The Opportunity

Cate School looks forward to welcoming a transformative, visionary leader as the next Head of School. Our new Head will be a passionate educator enthused by the unique opportunities of a boarding school education and eager to embrace every aspect of Cate's dynamic, diverse, and tight-knit community.

A four-year college preparatory school with a low student-to-faculty ratio, small class sizes, and inviting residential spaces, Cate's inquiry-based program is designed to challenge, inspire, and support boarding and day students whose interests, abilities, characters, and aspirations make them individually and collectively exceptional.

A Cate education uniquely leverages strong academic and residential curricula to transform students' lives by preparing them as independent thinkers, informing their societal roles as global citizens of influence, and encouraging them to build authentic and meaningful relationships. Cate students engage enthusiastically in myriad non-academic pursuits and traditions which, complemented by academic rigor, constitute the foundation of a truly whole education.

Perched on a hill overlooking the Southern California coast, Cate School's setting is one of unparalleled beauty and natural inspiration. "The Mesa," as we call it – with its juxtaposition of close spaces and vast vistas, its blending of human architecture and natural splendor, history and potential – is itself a critical touchstone for this community.

Cate's next leader will be joining a school committed to academic excellence, integrity, and service, where students and faculty embark on journeys of inquiry and discovery together. This is an extraordinary opportunity to lead an inclusive community committed to affirming and nurturing each student's individual strengths, well-being, dreams, and identity. Cate's eighth Head of School will take up the charge to extend a distinguished history by leading our school with strength, vision, and courage into the future.

# Key Responsibilities

## To Advance the School's Vision

- Articulate a 21st century vision for residential education, preserving the distinctive culture of Cate while enhancing the school's signature inquiry-based learning and academic innovation.
- In partnership with key stakeholders, thoughtfully evolve the school's academic and residential life curricula.

## To Inspire and Build Community

- Be a visible, accessible, and approachable leader who fosters a collegial, diverse, and inclusive campus community.
- Listen actively and engage enthusiastically with students, faculty, staff, parents, and alums.
- Bring personal energy to promote trust and engagement across the school's community and cultivate collaboration, mutual respect, and unity.

## To Grow the Capacity of the Organization

- Attract, empower, develop, and retain a talented and diverse faculty, staff, and administrative leadership team.
- Enhance existing organizational structures, systems and policies to create inclusive decision-making processes.
- Demonstrate strong business acumen and astute fiscal management skills, adroitly stewarding the school's significant assets.



*Through commitment, scholarship, companionship, and service, each member of the Cate community contributes to what our founder called "the spirit of this place... all compounded of beauty and virtue, quiet study, vigorous play, and hard work."*

– Cate Mission Statement



# Critical Experience

*“Cate is distinctive in its development and nurturing of a culture of inquiry across the curriculum, but especially in the academic program. We aspire toward a collaborative rather than competitive approach and a seriousness of purpose mixed with a sense of fun.”*

– Cate Faculty Member

## **Passion for Education**

- Dynamic educational leader with a history of delivering innovation and excellence.
- Experience working in, or familiarity with, a residential school community is desirable.

## **Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)**

- Experience leading DEI initiatives that have influenced organizational culture, practices, and strategies.
- Proven success developing and leading a diverse team of colleagues.

## **Inspirational Leadership & High Capacity for Community Engagement**

- Experience motivating and inspiring a dedicated faculty and staff and compassionate and curious students within a small but vibrant community.
- Effective partnership and engagement with students, faculty, staff, alums, and a Board of Trustees.

## **Organizational Management**

- An organizational systems thinker.
- Ability to apply strategic and tactical leadership to the financial and operational framework of a residential academic institution.

## **Fundraising Experience**

- Evidence of ability to serve as the school’s principal fundraiser to build philanthropic support.

# Professional Capabilities

- Exceptional verbal and written communication skills.
- Ability to articulate an inspiring vision, set challenging goals, prioritize strategically, and delegate for success.
- Deep commitment to faculty professional development in curriculum and pedagogy to enable excellent and relevant student-centered programming.
- Capacity to navigate the complex landscape of independent boarding school education.
- Orientation to transparency, and the ability to communicate decisions and rationales to various constituencies in order to engender trust and unity.
- Strong fundraising skills, philanthropic expertise, and experience communicating the needs and vision of an educational institution.
- Financial fluency and experience managing budgets.



*“Connected, soulful, caring, warm, and cohesive. Cate feels like a giant hug. It also cultivates each student’s growth because every student is known so well by the devoted faculty on campus.”*

– Cate Parent



# Personal Characteristics

- A curious and vibrant intellect.
- Strong moral compass, deep integrity, sound judgment, and ability to lead by example.
- Flexibility, adaptability, and equanimity.
- Eagerness to learn from others, the wisdom to seek assistance when needed.
- The confidence to listen actively, embrace vigorous debate, weigh different perspectives, and make decisions.
- Energy! A sense of fun, and enthusiasm for being a part of a lively boarding school community.

*“Cate is a community of connection, compassion, and curiosity. The tight-knit community, academic excellence, and extensive opportunities for personal growth are integral to the Cate experience.”*

– Cate Parent

# What Makes Cate, Cate

Students come to Cate to excel and to earn the opportunity to distinguish themselves academically and as leaders at Cate and beyond. Cate supports those ambitions wholeheartedly, striving to prepare students for adult life and for the service they might offer the world.

Cate faculty and staff are experts in their fields of study, fiercely committed to the education of their students, enthusiastic collaborators with peers and colleagues, and deeply engaged in the advancement of school curricula. Close personal relationships between and among students and faculty – fostered through the many rich interactions afforded by our residential program – are the medium through which learning is delivered at Cate. These relationships are also among the most enduring and impactful legacies of our shared time on the Mesa.

Cate aims ultimately to develop in students: profound curiosity and creativity; an inclination to assess material analytically and judiciously; the skills to work collaboratively and productively – to read, write, and problem-solve with clarity of thought, purpose, and insight, to communicate effectively, and to seek both depth and breadth of knowledge.

Non-academic community traditions, such as athletic rivalries, family-style meals, all-school assemblies, dorm and advisor meetings, Senior Servons Speeches – as well as spontaneous events rising from the unfettered enthusiasm of students and faculty alike – are the glue that binds myriad Cate experiences to build a whole education.

Cate, by nature, is a humble yet hungry institution, as aware of our challenges as we are of our possibilities. Our ambitions for our school, for our students, and for our programs are far-reaching and aspirational. We strive to be the paradigm of residential education, and toward that end, we are perpetually at work.

# Our Culture & Values

## Culture of Inquiry

Cate's inquiry-based curriculum challenges students to notice and wonder, to observe first, then to infer, and finally to assert using evidence. Whether around a Harkness Table, in the Physics Lab, or on a service trip, students learn to ask and develop useful questions, take ownership of their pursuit of understanding, share their knowledge as well as their process, and articulate why their work matters.

## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Cate's DEI efforts are designed to provide the skills and competencies that will allow all stakeholders to thrive in increasingly diverse environments, beginning with the one we are constructing at Cate. Awareness and sensitivity are not enough and must be augmented with greater knowledge and the practical tools that will enable the most proactive and inclusive behaviors. We encourage all Cate community members to share their backgrounds, identities, and beliefs so that we can collectively work to broaden our perspectives, deepen our capacity for empathy, and strengthen our resilience.

## Service as Leadership

In the spirit of *Servons* – our school motto – Cate students engage regularly in community service activities on and off the Mesa, developing a skill set that empowers them to become agents of positive change. Students apply those attitudes and values of service and leadership in a number of roles, formal and informal, especially in their senior year when they step into authentic and genuine partnership with the faculty to lead and serve the school community.



*"I most value Cate's commitment to high achievement throughout the community as well as the inherent desire to make your world a better place."*

– Cate Alum



*“Cate is busy,  
joyful,  
rewarding.”*

– Cate Student

*“The school culture  
is about being kind and respectful  
and working to be  
the best version of yourself  
you can be.”*

– Cate Parent

*“The community and the location  
make the school very distinct.  
The culture values education and  
a balance with the outdoors,  
athletics, and the arts.”*

– Cate Student

# Cate at a Glance



**1910**  
YEAR FOUNDED

**304**  
TOTAL STUDENT  
ENROLLMENT

**17%**  
OF APPLICANTS  
ADMITTED

**21**  
VARSITY TEAMS

**150**  
ACRE  
MAIN CAMPUS

**2000**  
ACRE  
BACKCOUNTRY  
CAMPUS

**134**  
CLASSES

**5:1**  
STUDENT-TEACHER  
RATIO

**42**  
DOGS  
ON CAMPUS

- Average class size: 10 students
- Students of color: 55%
- Faculty/advisors of color: 27%
- Faculty/advisors living on campus: 95%
- Day students: 18%
- Students who receive need-based financial aid: 26%
- Boarding students from outside of California: 55%
- States represented in student body: 26
- Boarding students from abroad: 18%
- 19 nations represented in 2022-23 student body:  
Australia, Canada, China, El Salvador, Georgia, Ghana,  
Hong Kong, Japan, Kazakhstan, Panama, Philippines,  
Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand,  
Ukraine, US, Vietnam

# Inquiries & Contact Information

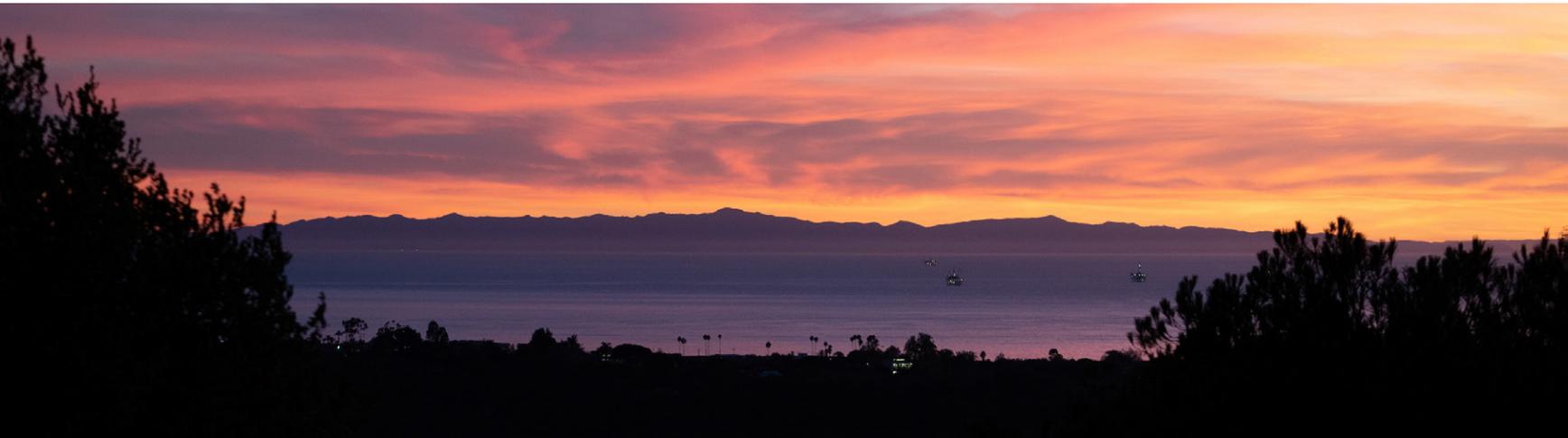
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We welcome applications from candidates of all backgrounds. The Cate Head of School Search Committee is assisted by the firm Spencer Stuart in this search process. Please send expressions of interest in email, with any supporting materials, to Spencer Stuart at the following confidential email address: [CateSchoolHOS@SpencerStuart.com](mailto:CateSchoolHOS@SpencerStuart.com).

The Committee welcomes comments, questions, and nominations. To contact the Committee directly, visit the website linked below or email: [headsearch@cate.org](mailto:headsearch@cate.org).

[www.cate.org](http://www.cate.org)

[www.cate.org/about/head-of-school-search](http://www.cate.org/about/head-of-school-search)



*The spirit of this place...*

