



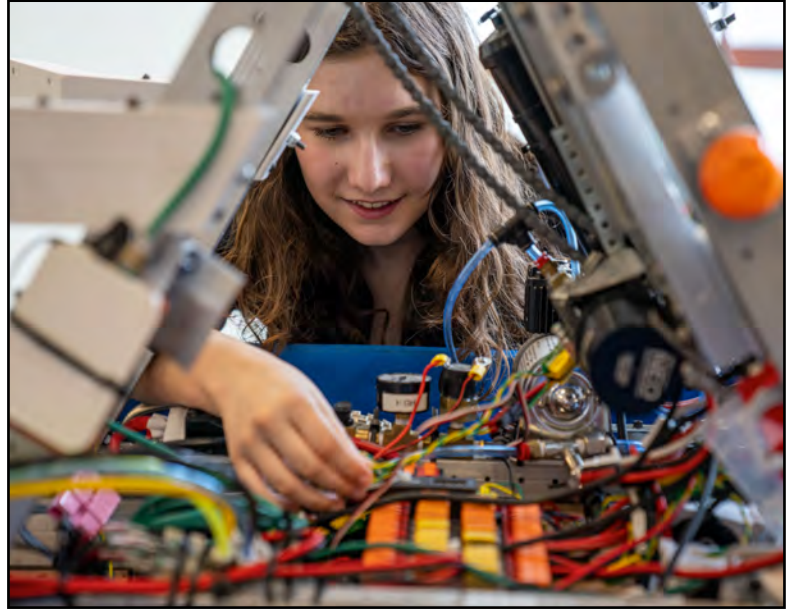
Head of School Position Statement



OVERVIEW

Windward School originated as and remains “a small school with big possibilities.” Founded in 1971 by Shirley Windward, a middle school teacher, and her colleague, Carl Parsons, these educators shared a commitment to opening a school in the Westside of Los Angeles and creating an ideal environment for students and teachers alike. The fledgling school was situated in what had once been a motel before finally moving to its current nine-and-a-half-acre site. What a remarkable journey. Today, according to one alumnus, the School remains “animated by Shirley’s vision” to provide a dynamic education in a caring and nurturing environment. In Windward’s DNA is Shirley’s desire to instill the joy of learning in every student and her focus on student wellbeing. Shirley wanted a school with soul, an intellectual faculty committed to teaching, a program open to innovation, and a community with students at the center. She succeeded. Until her death in 2012 at age 93, Shirley remained immersed in the life of the School—composing a poem for each graduating class—and would be so proud of all that has been accomplished as Windward remains true to her vision.

Today, Windward School sits at the intersection of two LA thoroughfares—a few blocks from the 405 Freeway—the noise and frenzy of which disappear when you enter a contemporary campus greeted by proud and helpful security guards who interact with students and staff eager to begin their day. Located in Mar Vista, a close-knit and inclusive community just a few miles from UCLA, Windward is adjacent to Culver City, a vibrant community and center for the entertainment industry, and a bike ride from Santa Monica. Windward draws a forward-looking and long-tenured faculty and staff in this geographic setting.



The School commits to providing a dynamic, engaging education in a nurturing, inclusive community. The commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) is rising at Windward and is a strategic priority so that the School can meet its mission and serve students drawn from across the city. This critical core value is central to the School’s current [Strategic Plan](#), developed in a community-wide process and prominently posted on walls and in offices. Achieving the goals and answering the guiding questions found in this plan will require school-wide commitment.

This is a School that genuinely lives and breathes its Mission:

“Windward School is a dynamic college-preparatory school that challenges students to achieve excellence in a nurturing, inclusive community. Windward teachers, parents, and administrators work together to inspire our students to be responsible, caring, well-informed, ethical, prepared, and well-balanced young adults.”

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THE CORE COMPETENCIES OF A WINDWARD GRADUATE

- Critical Thinkers
- Effective Communicators
- Resilient Problem Solvers
- Inclusive Leaders
- Ethically and Culturally Responsive Citizens



THE NUMBERS

Grades:	7-12
Students:	625 (8:1 Student-Teacher ratio)
Students Receiving Financial Assistance:	11% (Average Financial Aid Package \$37,841)
Students of Color (self-identified):	37%
Faculty and Staff:	161 (full and part-time)/101 (full-time faculty)
Average Faculty Tenure:	10 years
Number of Sending Schools:	90
Campus Size:	9.5 Acres
Annual Budget:	\$41 million (23-24 school year)
Annual (Windward) Fund:	\$3.5 (22-23 school year equaling 8% of the budget)

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THE PLACE

It took imagination and an intentional master plan to turn the land spanning the Sepulveda Channel on the corner of Palms and Sawtelle Boulevards into an open-air campus that is an oasis from the bustle of LA. The current [campus](#) contains contemporary one- or two-story buildings, human in their scale, and enhanced by landscaping that is low water use. Light-filled and comfortable classrooms are outfitted with flexible furnishings that encourage teachers' individuality and creativity. In the campus's nooks and crannies, the cozy spaces between buildings are filled with students and staff socializing, studying, having lunch, or simply enjoying a California day.

The School has completed the Academic Hub—a new building which houses classrooms, graphic design and painting and drawing studios, dance and rehearsal studios, and Administrative spaces—expanded its playing field, added the CREATE (Collaborative Resources for Engineers, Artists, Technologists, and Entrepreneurs) Studio, renovated its gymnasium, and added the Peak Performance Center, which includes

a weight room, sports medicine facility, and cardio room. Under construction and scheduled to open in the Spring of 2025 is a 33,500-square-foot Innovation and Arts Center that will include a 250-seat theater and innovation and incubator spaces. In the planning for 2025 and completing the [current master plan](#) is a landscaped community gathering plaza that will span the space between the two bridges over the Sepulveda Channel.

THE COMMUNITY

No longer a hidden gem, Windward, a top-flight school enrolling 625 students in grades 7-12, has, in its fifty-year history, become a school of choice in LA, competing in every way with schools double its size and history. Contributing to the School's success is strategic leadership, the dedicated and talented faculty, staff, and parenting adults, and a community-wide commitment to students' wellbeing. Windward families and faculty are both drawn to the School by its "culture of kindness."



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For the past 37 years, Tom Gilder has been the head of Windward School, and under his leadership the School has designed, built, and funded a contemporary campus and developed a culture and program that have kept the focus on the School's mission and core values. At his retirement in 2025, Tom leaves the next head with a Strategic Plan in motion, the draft of a self-study for the School's next WASC/CAIS accreditation, and a completed capital campaign and campus plan.

Reporting to Tom is a stable and experienced leadership team, which includes the Associate Head for Finance, Advancement and Operations, and three assistant heads who lead the three divisions.

Purposefully organized into three distinct divisions so that students will be known, heard, and cared for, Windward has fully staffed the Middle School (Grades 7 and 8), Prep Division (Grades 9 and 10), and Collegiate Division (Grades 11 and 12). In this

configuration, students find counsel and support from the Director, an Associate Director, a Dean of Students, and a Counselor; the Collegiate Division also includes four college counselors. Deepening the academic and counseling for students and staff are the people and resources found in the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) (CTL), a facility that provides a space for students and faculty to both study individually and collaborate with peers. A hub on campus, the CTL's first floor buzzes with activity and its second floor has space for quiet work and offices for the research librarians, learning specialists, educational therapist, educational technology and the Studio for Writing and Rhetoric.

A senior tour guide proudly announced, "We are a first-name school!" Windward places a high value on relationships between students and their teachers and the faculty and staff with each other and the administration. In this environment, Windward students are actively engaged in their studies and willing to meet their counselors, teachers, and advisors in offices, in a courtyard, or at the tables outside the Pavilion.



Every Windward parenting adult is a member of the Parent Guild. This critical organization offers a wide variety of opportunities for parents to get involved in the life of the School. The purpose of the Parent Guild is to provide a liaison between the parents and the School. Parents help to organize and plan many of the School's special events and assist in sustaining the arts, athletics, service learning, and other important activities of the School. The Parent Guild works to strengthen participation in the Windward community through volunteer and participatory programs that enrich the social, cultural, and fundraising activities of the School. The president of the Parent Guild sits on the board of trustees each year.

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THE PROGRAM

Fundamental to the Windward School philosophy is the belief that secondary education must engage more than the mind alone. Windward's comprehensive and rigorous course of study is complemented by many opportunities to participate in a range of extracurricular experiences that foster further growth and development. In a balanced program that is forward-looking but not faddish, the faculty provide students with a solid foundation in fundamental skills for academic success as well as advanced, honors and AP courses in English, History and Social Sciences, Mathematics, World Languages, Science and Technology, and the Visual, Media and Performing Arts. In a recently adopted block schedule, students can choose during the 8th and 9th periods to pursue an array of electives. Middle school students have as choices: Interdisciplinary Visual and Media Arts, Music Production, and Improvisation and Sketch Comedy. A lengthy list of electives in the upper grades, many for credit, include Advanced Speech and Debate and Rock Band Film Production. Additional curricular choices in Entrepreneurship and Innovation include introductory courses, advanced algebra with financial applications, and extracurricular offerings that include Buy It On the Bridge events that allow entrepreneurs to market products they have created. For students in 9-12, the Global Scholars program combines coursework, electives, language immersion, and travel, and the Steam Scholars program requires students to create a digital portfolio, complete a STEAM-focused community service project, and mentor 8th grade students.

Capstone courses are required for all seniors who choose from a range of classes, including Ethics and Leadership, Social Justice and Public Policy, and Novel Writing. In each of the nine courses offered, students conduct in-depth research projects guided by a faculty member, culminating in a community-wide colloquium.



Collegial faculty are housed in department offices and are encouraged to imagine, develop and pilot ideas. New programs and initiatives follow extensive research, often based on learnings from and in partnership with universities. One teacher noted, "We have everything we need or want to teach our classes: the encouragement to experiment and the respect and friendship of colleagues." Windward prides itself on its support for the professional development of its faculty, including opportunities for attendance at conferences and summer research activities.

At Windward, teachers set standards for excellence and offer the support needed to meet them. In this supportive and intellectual environment, students seek the advice of adults, and feel safe to challenge ideas, take risks and create. A freshman can take the stage and play a guitar solo, a senior who has never sung will join the chorus, a sophomore will try out for a new sport or stretch beyond their comfort zone through extracurricular offerings. Windward encourages students to become more independent as scholars and as thinkers.

Windward offers a wide variety of athletic teams, competing locally and regionally in 14 different sports. Students are encouraged to participate at their interest level, and many Windward teams have flourished over the past several years. Equal opportunities are provided across genders at all division levels.

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GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

A high-functioning Board of Trustees is comprised of 23 members, including current parents, parents of graduates, alumni, a faculty member, an outside educator, and the current President of the Parent Guild. In conjunction with the School's administration, a forward-looking board has provided the strategic leadership and partnership that have enabled Windward to thrive.

With a record-breaking number of applications, enrollment at capacity and a balanced budget every year, the School is in a solid financial position. Its quasi-endowment has increased dramatically since the last accreditation report and now stands at more than \$22 million. An unrestricted annual fund exceeds \$3.6 million and notably has 100% faculty and staff participation. As of this writing, the School expects to exceed its goal of \$40 million for the current campaign that funds construction of the Academic Hub, Innovation and Arts Center and the Plaza.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Windward has become a more competitive school while holding tight to its founding values. It continuously reaches full enrollment and has built a state-of-the-art campus, all while providing competitive salaries and extraordinary resources for the faculty and staff. Furthermore, it has struck a wonderfully balanced program for its students, one that provides academic challenge and time for exploration and play. A thoughtful transition plan has been put into place over the past several years so that the new Head can smoothly "take the baton" and keep running at a healthy stride.



- Three distinct divisions ensure that students and their families are seen, heard, and cared for. For faculty, who may teach across divisions and/or wear several hats, there is a desire for greater clarity around the administrative structures, particularly those that pertain to decision-making relating to academic programs and initiatives.
- Students are well served by the three distinct, well-staffed divisions whose counselors, deans, and administrators understand the importance of ensuring that students lead healthy and balanced lives while pursuing their academic and

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extracurricular interests. This balance is a hallmark of Windward. Serving grades 7-12, the divisions have different operating modes and sometimes inconsistent or conflicting communications. The next Head will work with the administrative team to refine the systems for clarity and consistency for faculty and staff.

- The School has the good fortune to have had the stability of a 37-year Head who is both innovative and strategic. Throughout his tenure, the campus has been dramatically enhanced, enrollment has tripled, and a talented faculty and staff have been employed. The current Head's focus on the development of the School has meant a more limited presence on the campus—particularly in the later years of his tenure. The next Head should relish spending time out and about around campus, taking advantage of the hard work that their predecessor has laid out over the past four decades.
- Intentionality and strategy are points of pride for the Windward community. This is demonstrated through the development and completion of a Strategic Plan crafted in the 23-24 school year, providing direction and a blueprint for the School and the next Head. One of the themes most amplified in the current plan is belonging, a key component of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). The next Head will cultivate an environment "in which all members are seen, heard, connected and valued as their authentic selves."
- In the spring of '25, the School will begin the accreditation process by drafting a self-study that the new Head can review and refine in anticipation of the WASC/CAIS visiting team in the spring of '26. The recommendations from the visiting team, along with the input from the Head of School search process, will have identified for the School and the new Head areas of growth and excellence.



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THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Stepping into the footsteps of a 38-year tenured Head is daunting. However, this is a school that has prepared for this transition. The next Head of School will:

- Demonstrate a high level of integrity
- Have a strategic knowledge of and experience with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging
- Maintain a highly visible and accessible presence within the life of the School
- Be a relationship builder and a clear, transparent communicator
- Demonstrate follow-through, attention to detail and a track record of execution
- Be a visionary leader
- Have strong administrative and teaching experience
- Demonstrate finance and fundraising experience
- Respect, value and give space for student voice and expression
- Demonstrate a growth mindset and be a supporter of staff professional development

SALARY RANGE AND BENEFITS

Salary Range: \$450,000-\$575,000. Windward offers a competitive benefits package including a retirement plan with an employer contribution, comprehensive insurance benefits, and support for professional growth. The School will support the head with a housing allowance and anticipates the eventual purchase of a property in the years to come.



THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Windward School has retained Resource Group 175 (RG175) to support the search for its next Head of School. Interested candidates should prepare a cover letter, resume, and personal statement to apply. The application deadline is **March 25, 2024** for a start date of **July 1, 2025**. Candidates are requested to submit these materials online at: <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

For an initial inquiry or to nominate a potential candidate for this exciting leadership position, please contact one of the following RG175 consultants:

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