



Position Statement for Head of School The Girls' School of Austin

Austin, TX

July 1, 2022



THE GIRLS' SCHOOL OF AUSTIN

Head of School Position Statement
Start Date: July 1, 2022



Welcome to GSA!

"There's something magical about The Girls' School of Austin. You feel it from the moment you arrive on campus." This is a common refrain about this wonderful school.

THE SCHOOL

The Girls' School of Austin (GSA) is a kindergarten through eighth-grade school serving 150 girls. GSA is the only independent school for girls in the greater Austin, Texas region.

Imagine a place where the mission comes alive, where sisterhood is supportive and real, where there is a wonderful outdoor teaching environment and where students are creative, compassionate and bright. Imagine an environment that encourages children to find their own voice, build confidence and be seen. Imagine a school where learning and growing are contagious. Welcome to the Girls' School of Austin.



GSA is a School Program built for and about girls. "GSA is a haven for girls." "This is a school that gives girls muscles to successfully navigate high school." GSA teachers are invested in the entire lives of the girls. Parents love this school as much as the students do. This is a school that practices real service learning and "a place where girls can explore who they want to be without being judged." This is a place where there's a culture of innovation, where girls can follow their passion. "Nobody is ostracized because they don't fit the mold." "It's hard not to fit in here. We love being unique." GSA incorporates the academic rigor, love of learning, and exploration of self that are critical to building confidence in girls. In 15 years, this hidden gem tucked into a beautiful residential neighborhood just outside of downtown Austin has planted its roots and blossomed.



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MISSION

The Girls' School of Austin provides an academically challenging education for girls in a community that fosters creative learning and personal excellence. Our mission is to develop confident young women who lead intellectually vibrant and fulfilling lives.

OUR COMMUNITY

- Is respectful, inclusive, and supportive.
- Celebrates the efforts and achievements of hardworking students.
- Thrives under the guidance of dedicated, inspiring teachers.

WE BELIEVE

- Curiosity, creativity, diversity, and a willingness to take risks advance intellectual growth.
- A well-rounded education provides the foundation for scholarly and personal pursuits.
- Service to others and self-awareness are essential to the learning experience.

PROGRAM

The program at The Girls' School of Austin provides a deeply integrated curriculum incorporating a combination of free thinking and structured activities. The K-8 program is supportive with challenges - it's designed to build character, confidence and resilience in girls. All aspects of the program provide hands-on activities in myriad ways. The art and music programs surpass those available in many high schools. Girls here are encouraged to be great in math, and many are. "The program meets kids where they are and is a classical education in a modern world." Here's a thorough description of the [LOWER SCHOOL PROGRAM](#) and the [MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM](#).



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STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

The next Head of School will benefit from GSA's many strengths, including:

- A strong sense of community, love for the school, and shared purpose within and among all constituent groups
- Small classes that allow teachers to customize education by identifying girls' strengths and voices while encouraging them to develop those attributes
- An extraordinary commitment to social-emotional learning
- A school-wide commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion work
- A school culture that allows girls the freedom to grow and become the best versions of themselves
- Incredibly dedicated teachers who know and connect with students and their families
- Excellent academic and co-curricular programs that empower girls to pursue passions and explore new interests
- A vibrant fine and performing arts program throughout the entire curriculum
- A well-developed effective and caring middle school advisory program

All who are affiliated with the Girls' School of Austin will quickly note the close, welcoming, and warm community as one of its most distinctive characteristics. Even during this year, with all the challenges associated with operating a school during a pandemic, GSA has maintained a strong sense of connection, continuing to look for opportunities to safely celebrate and gather. Students and parents appreciate the dedication, thoughtful approach, and hard work of the faculty and staff to preserve the special nature of the GSA experience.

The Girls' School of Austin values its traditions. Indeed, there are many traditions at GSA that bring the community together throughout the year and that many cite as important to fostering a special sense of connection. Some of the most cherished GSA traditions include:

- Theme parade
- Self-portrait show
- Concerts
- Mud villages

The sense of camaraderie among students across both divisions is palpable and thoughtfully fostered by the adults on campus. They call this sisterhood! Sister groups are developed that bring together older students with younger ones. These are great



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opportunities to create unique bonds and provide role modeling and leadership opportunities for the middle school girls. These relationships are real and add a strong sense of belonging among the student body.

"GSA is a flexible culture, designed to provide the best for our girls." "There's an Austin vibe here, laid-back but professional and joyful." "The faculty share a deep connection with the girls and their families by providing a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere." "This is a magical place unlike other schools." GSA is a joyful campus full of happy kids. "We are almost old-fashioned, it's actually cool to be smart here." Several day-to-day rituals are intentionally designed to build community. "The girls are encouraged to have their own ideas and thoughts, this is female empowerment at its best." "This

is a private school without pretentious-ness. GSA has become a gift to our family."

The faculty and staff are made up of an extraordinarily talented group of professionals who are as dedicated to each other as they are to their students and the mission of GSA. The average tenure of faculty is over 10 years, providing stability throughout the divisions. As one long-time faculty member put it, "we love our students, we love each other, we love our school." And while the school values its long serving employees, it also has recent hires that have brought new perspectives. The new head of school will have the support of a group of dedicated and caring professionals who are committed to serving their students and their families, strengthening their skills as educators, and ensuring that GSA continues to be among the best independent schools in the area.

CAMPUS AND LOCATION

The GSA campus is warm, inviting, safe, inspiring, creative and environmentally sustainable. The campus was awarded a four-star rating by Austin Energy Green Building Commission for improving indoor air quality, water conservation and energy efficiency. Located in central Austin, the campus is less than 10 minutes from downtown, the Capitol, and Lady Bird Lake.

Austin is home to the University of Texas flagship campus, an eclectic music scene known as "the live music capital of the world," and many neighborhood pools and parks. Austin has routinely been lauded as one of the best places to live in the United States for its warm weather, affordable housing, bustling cultural scene, world-class museums, and beautiful outdoor spaces. The city is within an hour's drive of the beautiful Hill Country of Texas and the vibrant city of San Antonio.

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OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The future Head of School will have the amazing opportunity to usher in the next era of GSA. The community is ready for a forward-thinking leader who can look to the future while honoring the history and culture of the institution. The GSA ethos is strong and infectious and in search of leadership that can harness the tremendous energy of the community.

Like all schools, GSA has had its challenges. It will be important for the next head to deeply understand these challenges, prioritize them, and address them in ways that connect with the positive aspects of the school's culture. In addition to navigating a global pandemic, the GSA has experienced multiple changes in leadership over the last two years and is in need of a stabilizing and reassuring force in the community. Despite these obstacles, school spirit is strong and parents and teachers are excited for this next chapter.

The next Head of School at GSA will appreciate the strengths of the school and embrace the exciting opportunities and challenges ahead. They are:

Furthering Girls' Education. Demonstrate a heartfelt commitment to educating girls in a manner that consistently reflects intention and purpose. Delight in the opportunity and joy of guiding talented young women to meet the challenges of their future. Inspire girls to find their voice and use their strengths to change the world. Build relationships with students and create compelling leadership opportunities for young people.

Thoughtfully Building Community. Cherish and nurture the GSA culture, which has been characterized by warmth, kindness, and respect. Embrace fully the school's time honored values. Be a visible and engaging presence to faculty, students and parents.

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Pursuing Academic Excellence. Sustain and promote academic excellence as a top priority at GSA. Promote best practices in teaching and learning. Support the critical thinking, instructional strategies, and classroom experiences that inspire lifelong learners. Provide the discipline, encouragement, tools, and training for faculty to deliver a program characterized as challenging and engaging. Lead faculty in reviewing the entire scope and sequence of GSA's academic program.

Advocating for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Bring experience with implementing diversity, equity, inclusivity, and anti-racism policies, hiring, and programming. Embed this work authentically and purposely across both divisions of the school.

Continuing the Integration of Social-Emotional Learning. Celebrate and ensure the implementation of the social-emotional programming that makes GSA stand out throughout Austin. Ensure that each GSA girl is understood and valued.

Being an Inspirational Communicator. Be a visible presence. Bring warmth and a sense of humor to the important work of the school. Build vibrant networks with parents both current and past, students, and the larger Austin community.



Instilling Organizational Well-Being. Attend to the importance of positive faculty and staff engagement. Build effective teams and collaboration, emphasizing a "one school" ethos. Delegate appropriately. Work in partnership with the board of trustees. Operate with an open door that invites input and robust discussion but also demonstrates decisiveness and leadership.

Recruiting. Continue to ensure GSA's ability to recruit and retain high-quality faculty in an increasingly demanding and competitive market.

Fundraising. Effectively fundraise to build an endowment for GSA, allowing the school to be less tuition-dependent and ensuring that it is able to effectively implement future strategic priorities.



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THE POSITION

The Girls' School of Austin is a school with high standards that has benefited from a legacy of inspiring and caring faculty, administrators, and trustees. Given the leadership challenges of the past two years, the next Head of School will require considerable poise, patience, confidence, and skill to effectively balance the demands associated with this exciting leadership opportunity. A successful candidate will be able to demonstrate the following skills, values, and experiences:

- Builds relationships and leads by knowing and caring about students, employees, and families
- Possesses the powerful combination of vision, intelligence, kindness, humility, and a sense of humor
- Is an excellent listener and communicator
- Is determined and skilled with on-going diversity, equity, and inclusion work
- Manages effectively and knows how to prioritize, delegate, and hold people accountable
- Solves problems, navigates difficult conversations and knows how to structure effective decision-making
- Empowers teachers to be drivers of school improvement
- Is a passionate and experienced recruiter of faculty and staff
- Has the ability to embrace fundraising with passion and skill
- Is an enthusiastic partner in thinking with others about the future of GSA to ensure that it remains a leader in educating girls
- Has the ability to oversee the financial sustainability of GSA

APPLICATION PROCESS

I welcome applications from those who are eager to take on the opportunities and challenges of this wonderful school.

Candidates interested in applying to become The Girls' School of Austin's next Head of School may apply online at: <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

The application includes:

- Letter of interest
- Resume
- Personal Statement or Educational Philosophy
- List of five references

If you have any questions, or if you would like to nominate a candidate for this position, please contact:

John Farber
jfarber@rg175.com

The deadline for receipt of full application materials is **Friday, May 21, 2021**.

