Flintridge Preparatory School

La Cañada Flintridge, California

Head of School

Start Date: July 2020

www.FlintridgePreP.org
Step onto the Flintridge Preparatory School campus and it’s immediately evident you’ve entered a special place. A sense of pride, enthusiasm, and “Prep for Life” permeates the campus at all levels; a tightly-knit community of students, faculty, and staff engaged in learning. Enrollment is strong and steady, the Board is strategic and supportive, and the faculty is talented and dedicated, and the school is poised to continue its excellent trajectory.

Located north of Pasadena and Los Angeles, Flintridge Prep is an independent, coeducational day school for grades 7-12. Prep is known for academic excellence and its commitment to a balanced approach in order to provide its students with an optimal environment in which to learn, explore and grow as human beings. Prep nurtures critical thinking and intellectual curiosity to prepare each student to embrace lifelong learning. Because students realize their full potential when they are known and supported by wise and caring adults, Prep consistently strives to hire, develop, and retain outstanding and committed faculty and administrators.

Prep is a place where students have nearly unlimited opportunity to discover and cultivate their potential. Anyone who visits Prep today will quickly see that each and every class, sports match, and art creation is an opportunity for students to further their socio-intellectual development, character, and community engagement. Additionally, Prep treats every day as a chance to explore the essential value of diversity — of people, of talent, of interests, and of passions — on its campus.

At this time, Prep seeks a new Head of School who understands that academic excellence is deepened when it operates in tandem with joy, and that the best education involves time spent both inside and outside of the classroom. The strong candidate will be able to honor the powerful traditions Prep has in place and continue to innovate ways to integrate leadership and global consciousness into the curriculum — and, of course, be able to laugh every once in a while.
In 1933, Doane Lowery, a trained YMCA administrator, opened Flintridge Preparatory School for Boys. A “non-sectarian, non-military, non-profit” college preparatory school, Flintridge Prep originally served 3rd grade through high school students — including a small number of boarding students — with a starting roster of seven teachers. In 1940, Flintridge Prep was a founding member of the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS).

From the beginning, Prep was known for its rigor and its commitment to a well-rounded education; sports and academics existed in symbiosis. By the early 1950s, the school was taking part in the Southern California prosperity boom. The school established an alumni association, purchased adjacent land, and built new classrooms. A gym was completed on the school’s 25th anniversary in 1958. It was the same year boarding was eliminated and the student body numbered 240.

In 1978, Prep began to eliminate the lower grades, and the Class of 1987 was the last class that started in 6th grade. In 1979, the Board of Trustees voted to admit girls for the first time, and the school reached a 50-50 gender balance in 2000.

After 30 years of remarkable leadership, Headmaster Peter Bachmann will be retiring in June 2020. Under his wise and steady guidance, Prep added vital performing arts, visual arts, and human development programs. The centers of many of these programs are the Randall Performing Arts Center and Miller Theater (2000) and the Chandramohan Library (2007). Prep established the Idea Lab with a leadership grant from the EE Ford Foundation in 2012, encouraging innovative programming, including partnering with schools and a hospital in Nicaragua and the establishment of the Prep League’s first Athletic Council on Leadership. This year, Prep was ranked 2nd Best Private High School in the Los Angeles area, 4th Best Private High School in California, and 14th Best Private High School in America by Niche.
The School

Prep aims to incorporate honor and kindness into all facets of life on campus. The school’s Honor Code — My responsibility as a student, teacher, or parent in the Flintridge Prep community is to be honest, kind, generous and respectful — articulates the type of integrity that Prep expects from each member of its community. A recent survey that explored what the community most values about Prep revealed consistent celebration of: an excellent faculty that teaches and mentors students in and out of the classroom; a student culture that values citizenship and support of one another; equal priorities of academic excellence and human development; and a highly engaged, dynamic, warm, and proud Prep community.

While honor underpins every aspect of Prep life, the community also celebrates diversity and inquiry. Prep nurtures a myriad of interests and passions and doing so is an extension of the school’s mission to help its students lead balanced and engaged lives. “Students at Prep are multidimensional,” says one student, “for instance, our quarterback is also a poet!” Recognizing that science, technology, art, engineering, and mathematics mutually reinforce flexible, creative, fail-forward thinking, Prep’s STEAM program encourages students and faculty to collaborate across the curriculum to solve problems. Additionally, with enhanced electives, collaborative coursework, outreach networking and student involvement inspired by Prep’s long-term partnerships with institutions outside of the U.S., the Global Studies initiative aims to change how students think about and engage in the world beyond its campus gates.

Prep also incubates creativity at every turn. Teachers have ample opportunities for professional growth, both on- and off-campus, and regularly share exciting ideas from these experiences with colleagues and students. The culture of collaboration among faculty members means that it is common for an art teacher to coordinate a project with an English teacher or computer science
teacher, or for teachers to be guest speakers in each other’s classes. Students have a strong voice on campus, working closely with their peers and teachers on everything from student government to community impact. Against the backdrop of these creative projects and ventures, students and faculty can be their best selves and catalyze both deep reflection and passionate action. Supporting and retaining a talented faculty is consistently one of the Board’s highest priorities, and Prep consistently has one of the highest rates of faculty compensation amongst area independent schools.

Ultimately, a Prep education prepares students to be citizens of the world around them, whether that means traveling to Nicaragua to partner with a local school, calculating elliptical cross-sections for a national math exam, or measuring the water quality of a local stream.

ACADEMICS

Flintridge Prep has eight academic departments that drive the curriculum in both the Middle School and High School. Students and faculty alike underscore their enthusiasm for learning with and from one another. “I love the kids,” shares one faculty member, “they’re nice, smart, and make me feel happy to be in the classroom because they are genuinely curious.” Prep’s graduation requirements surpass the minimum requirements for admission to the University of California and all other colleges and universities. Virtually all students go beyond these minimum requirements, and several exhaust the curriculum and seek additional coursework at the college level before graduating.

Middle School (7th and 8th Grades)

These are the years for exploration and discovery, so Prep Middle School courses offer a taste of as many academic and arts disciplines as possible. The 7th grade English program includes
two separate courses—English 7th Grade and Writing 7th Grade—which, together, develop verbal fluency, enthusiasm for written expression, and analytical reading techniques. Middle School fine arts courses provide students with a sample of visual and performing arts fundamentals. Study of French, Spanish, or Latin begins in 8th grade. Students engage in deep thinking with Prep’s interdisciplinary STEAM and Service Fair, for which seventh graders create algorithmic thinking projects and eighth graders design Community Impact Projects. As Prep students head for high school, they bring a newly acquired sense of what, how, and why they love to learn.

High School (9th-12th Grades)
Ninth grade builds a foundation for each student’s high school experience by helping students think within and between disciplines. On any given day, a ninth grader might conduct inquiry labs, brainstorm for analytical and creative writing pieces, expand comprehension of a language, tour through world history, and enjoy an arts elective. Sophomore year requires students to make cognitive leaps in several capacities. It is an exciting time for students as they delve into physics or honors biology and European or world history, interpret a piece of literature in new ways, and consider math as abstraction and philosophy. During junior year, students apply newfound intellectual independence to topics, engaging in exhilarating conversations with their teachers and classmates. “I love hearing what my classmates think,” reflects one current junior.

Senior year is a time when students craft their own schedule to pursue their passions. About a third of the senior class elects to undertake an Independent Study; these ambitious academic projects are designed and carried out by the student under the direction of a faculty adviser. Many seniors participate in a yearlong psychology and statistics collaboration, creating a statistical study of a topic in psychology. They conduct a literature review and analyze their data, presenting their work for a panel of professional statisticians and psychologists. In Identity, a college-style course for all second-semester seniors, students examine the concept of self and identity from a variety of
Prep’s college counseling program formally launches for students and families in 10th grade, preserving the 9th grade year as one of transition. In the spring of 11th grade, each student is assigned a college counselor and begins attending a weekly college counseling course. The college counseling team’s mission is to inspire students to be the best versions of themselves, while strategically guiding them through the college application process. College matriculations each year are the byproduct of the department’s work in identifying the appropriate balance and fit for each student.

**ARTS AND ATHLETICS**

The arts are essential at Prep. The Performing Arts Department encourages students to explore the world of artistic performance as a means of communication and expression. Students cultivate their passion for artistry in areas including dance, drama, vocal and instrumental music, and stage technology. The faculty takes pride in

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**College Placement**

Students from the Classes of 2016-2018 are enrolled at the following colleges and universities, among others:

- American University
- Boston University
- Bowdoin College
- Brown University
- California Institute of Technology
- Carnegie Mellon University
- The Claremont Colleges
- Columbia University
- Cornell University
- Dartmouth College
- Duke University
- Elon University
- Georgetown University
- Harvard University
- Johns Hopkins University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Middlebury College
- New York University
- Northeastern University
- Northwestern University
- Pennsylvania State University
- Rice University
- Saint Mary's College of California
- Santa Clara University
- Stanford University
- Syracuse University
- Tufts University
- University of California, Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, Santa Barbara & Santa Cruz
- University of Chicago
- University of Michigan
- University of Southern California
- Wellesley College
- Williams College
- Yale University
mentoring individuals and conducting process-oriented curricula, with goals of instilling performance discipline and nurturing student exploration. Through master classes and field trips, the program engages Los Angeles’ plentiful offerings to supplement an enriching and expansive experience.

The Visual Arts Department offers mentored learning experiences in drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics, photography, and video. Each day, Prep’s visual arts faculty of practicing artists guides students through a curriculum that is designed to foster breakthrough moments while emphasizing concept development, visualization, and artisanship. The contiguous art studios on Prep’s campus also serve as a community destination. Fully stocked with supplies and both analog and digital tools, these spaces provide a welcoming oasis where students can create, visit with friends, and be inspired by rotating exhibits.

Nearly 100 years ago, Prep’s founder celebrated the benefits of physical education for mind, body, and spirit. Prep is proud that its Athletic Program still reflects that essential philosophy — with more than 30 teams across 13 sports. Prep athletes do more than improve their ability to play a sport; they develop leadership and teamwork skills, self-discipline, and the ability to persevere in the face of challenge. Prep’s spirited community turns out to support athletes and especially relishes Pack the Place matches and games. Prep’s innovative Athletic Council on Leadership recognizes and celebrates these facets of participation in athletics. Flintridge Prep participates in the CIF Southern Section and is one of the founding members of the Prep League. Sports offerings include baseball, basketball, cross country, football, golf, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track and field, volleyball, and water polo.
School Life

Prep is a place where people like to be busy with the important things. Student activities exist to enrich students' lives — not simply their resumes. So, while nothing can replace the unique synergy between academics, sports, and arts at Prep, the school is rich with opportunities that build global citizens and future leaders. Prep's largest leadership organizations (sometimes called the Big Three) — Student Senate, Student Community Action Council, and Athletic Council on Leadership — are key players in ensuring life at Prep is meaningful and enriching.

Outdoor Education

Prep's outdoor education program takes full advantage of the school's beautiful surroundings and provides stimulating, challenging experiences outside of the classroom. The Director of Human Development and faculty lead week-long trips at the beginning of the 7th and 9th grade years that create class unity and teach vital skills. The 7th grade spends five days in Big Bear, CA and the 9th grade spends five days at White’s Landing on Catalina Island. Each trip highlights team-building activities and offers personal challenges that allow students to succeed personally as well as within a group, to gain self-confidence, and to feel a part of something larger than themselves.

Prep seniors are lucky to have an outdoor education experience as one of their capstones; the 12th grade trip is the last time the senior class is together before Commencement. Its main focus is to provide a meaningful time of reflection, bonding, and closure. This five-day program takes place on the Ocean Mesa, El Capitan Canyon Camp. Activities include river rafting, mountain biking, kayaking, surfing, hiking, and rock climbing. The week closes with the Pine Cone Ceremony, a personal time of sharing class memories, challenges, and celebrations around the campfire.
Retreats
The school year at Prep is marked each spring with the Sophomore and Junior Retreats, which celebrate and evaluate the close of one year while beginning a conversation about the responsibilities and challenges offered by the next. The Sophomore Retreat begins in the evening on campus with student-directed discussion groups that allow students to address specific class-related issues and prepare for their pivotal junior year of high school. The Junior Retreat is a two-day off-campus celebration and discussion in anticipation of arriving as the incoming senior class. With administrators and senior year faculty members serving as facilitators, the class evaluates and defines its leadership position in the school. Senior Horizons is another equally important retreat that occurs as the first quarter of spring semester ends. The two-day off-campus event for seniors prepares the class for college by including speakers about life, careers, and the coming transitions.

Traditions
Prep has a mix of traditional and unique practices, some of which are decades old and some of which are near-new. These traditions range from Book Day, which, as one student says, “celebrates coming back to school,” a time for students to gather all of their books for the year, to a Family BBQ in September, where the whole Prep community — faculty and their children, parents, students and their siblings — eats dinner together on the athletic field.

Other traditions punctuate the school year and have become a way to ensure all members of the Prep community maintain a sense of connection or are just good-natured fun. Junior Parent Dinner (JPD) is a tradition that goes back to the 1980s and began as a way to raise money as a junior leadership and class bonding experience. Alumni Sports Day pits Prep alumni against the school’s current varsity athletes in water polo, soccer, basketball, and volleyball. Mr. Flintridge Prep is a fundraiser where senior boys vie (tongue-in-cheek!) for the crown and glory of the Mr. Flintridge Prep title. Powder Puff football between junior and senior girls at Homecoming has also become a celebratory rite and encourages class bonding.
CAMPUS

Flintridge Prep is situated at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains in the community of La Cañada Flintridge. Completed in September 2007, the two-story Chandramohan Library is the academic and social hub of school life. It includes a computer lab, a classroom for seminars, meeting rooms, space for individual and group study, and a college counseling suite. The school’s campus dining facility was also renovated in 2007 and now houses a commercial kitchen and food service center that provides fresh and delicious meals and snacks for the students, faculty and staff.

Since 2013, the school has undertaken significant remodeling efforts that have impacted almost all of its classrooms, labs, and performance spaces. Perhaps most notably, these efforts included a complete refurbishment of the Norris Auditorium in 2015. Other additions include the incorporation of flexible learning spaces and environmentally sensitive landscaping.

In 2019, the atrium between the Norris Auditorium and the Helen and Will Webster Family Science Center was enclosed to provide an entertainment and student space. The Webster Family Science Center includes the Keck Biology Lab, the Braun Computer Lab, and the Murfey Chemistry Lab. The Randall Performing Arts Center includes seminar classrooms, as well as classrooms for dance, drama, and music, and the Miller Theater, a black box performance space. As mentioned previously, Prep’s art studios serve as a creative hub for students exploring drawing, painting, or ceramics. The arts facilities also include a fully equipped photography studio with professional cameras and developing equipment, and a darkroom. In the Fall of 2020, the community looks forward to the opening of the Bachmann Collaboration Building designed to support STEAM, global studies, and student leadership initiatives.
La Cañada Flintridge, California

La Cañada Flintridge is a city in Los Angeles County, California, with a population just under 21,000. La Cañada, which means “the glen between the hills,” is located in the Crescenta Valley, just northwest of Pasadena, and is perhaps best-known for being the home to NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. (JPL is the leading U.S. center for robotic exploration of the solar system and has 19 spacecraft and 10 major instruments carrying out planetary, Earth science, and space-based astronomy missions.) The city prides itself as being a small, close-knit, and family-oriented community with many volunteer-based organizations and highly ranked schools—every one of its public schools has been named a California Distinguished School; it has one of the lowest crime rates in the county and was recently rated as one of the 50 safest cities in California by SafeWise. La Cañada Flintridge boasts many desirable amenities, including parks, sports fields and courts, a skate park, hiking and equestrian trails, a public library, the historic Lanterman House, and Descanso Gardens, an internationally renowned botanical collection.

La Cañada Flintridge has a unique 23-mile trail system that allows people to circumnavigate the City on foot or on horseback. The development of these beautiful trails began in 1974; in 2011 the final link was dedicated. The altitude in La Cañada Flintridge ranges from 1,200 feet on the southwest side of town to 2,100 feet on the north side. The 210 and 2 Freeways afford those who live and work in La Cañada Flintridge easy access to all points within the Los Angeles Basin. For most of the year, temperatures are slightly warmer than downtown Los Angeles during the day and slightly cooler at night.
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Flintridge Prep enters the Head of School search in a position of great strength: high enrollment demand; modest debt; an excellent, growth-oriented, and hard-working faculty and staff; an invested and supportive community; and partnership with an engaged and generative Board. All stakeholders universally embrace and celebrate the school’s commitment to Prep for Life. We consider this an exciting and compelling opportunity, and housing is available. The priorities that lay ahead for the next Head of School include:

Educational excellence: Flintridge Prep is committed to an existing outstanding educational program that is forward-looking, attentive to best practices in education, and incorporates attention to the whole child. There is an expectation that the next Head of School will have the intellectual curiosity and vision to lead the school to the right balance between tradition and innovation, including the thoughtful consideration and careful implementation of new ideas and approaches.

Building and sustaining the community: Flintridge Prep has an exceptionally strong sense of community united around a shared culture of kindness that is actively fostered by the current Head. The next Head of School will need to honor that legacy and to model those values in ways authentic to him/herself. The next Head will be expected to be a leader who is passionate about the school’s values, who is inclusive, and who delights in knowing the community and being known.

Continuing the development of the campus: Flintridge Prep has done a masterful job of skillfully using its “snug” campus. In 2020, the new Bachmann Collaboration Building will provide specially designed spaces for STEAM, Global Studies, and Leadership. The next Head of School will need
to be actively involved in planning for future campus development and in cultivating and soliciting gifts to implement future campus enhancements.

Adapting to the changing demographics of the area: The San Gabriel Valley is increasingly becoming more global and diverse, as evidenced by an enrollment that is more than 50% students of color. The next Head of School will work with the senior administration and faculty to explore ways to engage, support, and include students and families from a wide range of cultures, experiences, and perspectives.

**Desired Qualities and Qualifications**

Flintridge Prep is an aspirational and caring community. As such, the community is looking for an experienced, visible, and visionary leader, a strategic thinker, collaborative team builder, and a skillful manager who can mobilize and direct the passion and commitment of the school community. Successful candidates will have a background and skills that include most or all of the following:

- Joy in and enthusiasm for working with teenagers with the heart and mind of a teacher.
- A passion for working with teachers and administrators to provide students with an education based on the school’s values and rooted in a community that celebrates each person’s uniqueness.
- A deep understanding of important trends in education and the ability to combine that understanding with an appreciation for Flintridge Prep’s values, culture, and traditions in order to articulate a compelling vision for the school’s future.
- Experience in recruiting, retaining, supporting, and developing the growth of talented and committed administrators and teachers.
• A collaborative leadership style that projects openness and genuinely invites and respects the perspectives and views of others, yet is decisive and firm when necessary.
• An ability to connect and communicate effectively with faculty members, administrators, parents, students, community members, and the Board of Trustees so that these groups are appropriately informed of school events, potential issues, key decisions, and needs.
• A palpable enjoyment at being an active and visible presence in the life of the school as a foundation for strong, supportive relationships with all stakeholders.
• The successful candidate must be comfortable asking for financial support and must have a commitment to fostering a culture of philanthropy.

Personal Characteristics
The next Head will be someone who exudes optimism and a growth mindset, while also being warm, approachable, and down-to-earth. The favored candidate will be a person with a passion for academic excellence, intellectual curiosity, and a keen sense of inquiry who is also outgoing, energetic, and confident, with strong emotional intelligence, fine personal values, and excellent communication skills.

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;
• A statement of educational or leadership philosophy and practice;
• 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:

Search Calendar
Applications Due: June 30
Search Update: July 30
Semifinalist Interviews: August
Finalist Visits: September

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