



The Girls' Middle School Director of Advancement

LOCATION

Palo Alto, CA

POST DATE

March 14

PRIORITY DEADLINE

April 14

REMOTE SEMIFINAL ROUND

Late April

ON-SITE FINAL ROUND

Early May

DECISION ANNOUNCED

May 15

START DATE

Summer 2023

REPORTS TO

Head of School



The Girls' Middle School



12M
RECRUITING



SUMMARY

The Girls' Middle School (GMS) is an inspiring, mission-driven, independent school serving 200 girls* in grades 6-8. Located in Palo Alto, GMS provides students with a robust curriculum and inclusive learning environment, designed to allow girls to explore a wide variety of interests and academic subjects. GMS helps to develop each girl's self-confidence and ignite personal passions as students navigate the complex and fragile time of middle school.

GMS now seeks a director of advancement to help the school achieve an ambitious list of annual and long-term fundraising goals. Yearly targets include not just a traditional annual fund, but also a separate fund that supports 15% of families with full-ride scholarships,

so that a diverse array of students can experience not just a transformative middle school education but also receive additional support during and after their tenure at GMS. The director of advancement will have the opportunity to build upon an existing culture of philanthropy at the school, and cultivate relationships within the GMS community as well with donors, benefactors, and foundations throughout the Bay Area. This position reports to the head of school and starts this summer. This is an on-site position requiring continued presence in both the school and donor communities to build relationships. However, in the spirit of wanting to find the best possible candidate the head of school is willing to explore the possibility of a hybrid or flexible engagement with some amount of remote work.

Mission

The Girls' Middle School educates girls at a crucial time in life. We create an inclusive environment where academic growth is nourished. A GMS girl discovers her strengths and expresses her voice while respecting the contributions of others.

**At GMS, "girls" refers to cis girls, trans girls, non-binary youth, gender non-conforming youth, gender queer youth, and any girl-identified youth.*



KEY STATISTICS

FOUNDING YEAR:

1998

STUDENT TO FACULTY RATIO:

7:1

ENROLLMENT:

200 students

AVERAGE CLASS SIZE:

16 students

GEOGRAPHY:

Students come from **45** elementary schools from across the Bay Area.

MATRICULATION:

50% of students attend public high schools.

50% attend private and parochial high schools.

FINANCIAL AID:

25% of students receive financial aid.

www.girlsms.org



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

At GMS, we embrace the diversity of our student body in all of its forms, including but not limited to: racial and cultural diversity, socioeconomic diversity, diversity in how our students learn, diversity of family configurations, diversity of interests, and much more. Our student body reflects the rich diversity of the Bay Area with families coming from more than 45 elementary schools and 20 different Peninsula communities.

Our commitment to inclusivity is reflected in many areas. In our academic program, we work to ensure that a diverse set of viewpoints and perspectives are reflected, discussed and respected. The aim is that every student sees aspects of their identity represented across their academic studies and overall school experience.

Our admissions team is committed to creating a student body that represents the amazing diversity of the Bay Area. We know, and research shows, that a diverse student body allows for a richer and more rigorous learning experience. Learning to problem solve across differences leads to not only better solutions, but the opportunity to practice empathy, an invaluable skill for today's world and beyond.

Our tuition assistance programs support over 25% of our student body. As part of this program, our Bennett Scholars Program supports about 10 new students every year, many of whom will be the first in their family to go to college. The Bennett Scholars Program provides full tuition plus additional family and student support for three years.

GMS is committed to providing a transformational middle school experience to our students. We take pride in providing an inclusive environment where students can explore their educational passions and achieve their full potential.

--Christine Fairless, Head of School



About the Head of School

Christine Fairless has served as the head of school at GMS since July 2022. Currently in the first year of her first headship, Christine wholeheartedly believes in the school's mission and values. As head of school, Christine aims to validate and empower every student in learning who they are as individuals and students by providing a nurturing environment for them to explore their identities, build their confidence and learn in an intentionally inclusive community. Christine is excited to partner with a highly-capable director of advancement at GMS and set long-term goals for the school's bright future.

We invite you to watch our [INTERVIEW](#) with Christine, who discusses the school's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and the importance of finding a mission-aligned director of advancement.





BENNETT SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Living Out a Commitment to Educational Equity

The Bennett Scholars Program is at the heart of the GMS mission. Since its founding, the goal of GMS has been to provide a place where girls from diverse ethnic, religious, and economic backgrounds develop the academic skills, self-knowledge, and personal strength to achieve their dreams, as well as the empathy and communication skills to support each other on their journeys toward adulthood.

Each year, ten high-achieving girls from under-resourced elementary schools across the Bay Area are selected to receive a three-year, full-tuition scholarship to attend GMS. Deeply committed to creating an equitable experience for all students, The Girls' Middle School admits girls who are often the first in their families to be college-bound. While funding the basics like tuition is necessary, achieving true equity of opportunity requires a team of dedicated teachers and afterschool program coordinators to assist and support the scholar holistically.

In addition to covering the costs of tuition, technology, field trips, and events, GMS is proud to meet its scholars and their families where they are and offer support as needed for:

- All school supplies
- Weekly one-on-one tutoring
- Transportation
- Daily lunch
- Credit toward uniform purchases
- Payment for one optional after-school course per semester
- High-speed wifi connectivity at home
- Language translation of school communication
- Other wraparound student and family support as needed

The school's commitment to these scholars does not end when they graduate. GMS also provides high school advising, test preparation for high school, and summer college prep courses for rising high school seniors.



Three Profiles of Past Bennett Scholars

The Bennett Scholars Program has changed the lives of many GMS students. Thanks to the Program, GMS graduates have gone on to attend incredible high schools, receive acceptances to top universities, and pursue their passions in the professional world. Two GMS alumni describe how the school influenced their academic journeys and led them to kickstarting their professional careers. Additionally, one 2018 graduate shares an excerpt from her college admissions essay, in which she describes the valuable lessons and passions she discovered inside and outside of the classroom.

Cecelia Lofton
Class of 2017



I am currently finishing a Master's degree in Public Health with a specialty in Health Policy at Emory University. Looking back, GMS left a tremendous impact on numerous parts of my life. It created a space for me to be my authentic self, which allowed me to gain confidence and feel supported. That confidence extended into improved public speaking, better organization, and allowed me to approach academics in a way I had not done before. GMS and the support from the Bennett Scholars Program made me the well-rounded student I am today, and brought forth a responsibility to serve and give back. When I finish school, I am looking to go into government-based work with hopes of creating policies based around health equity.

GMS was crucial in providing the incredible tools that helped shape me into the woman I am today. After graduating from GMS, I attended Menlo-Atherton High School and completed a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science with a Minor in Spanish at San Jose State University. With my interest in politics, I began working at San Mateo County as a Community Specialist and liaison for the Latino Community. Additionally, I joined the GMS Board in 2019. I am currently the Director of Government and Community Relations for the Boys and Girls Club, and I have dreams of running for elected office in the future to continue my work in improving the quality of life for under-resourced communities.

Madahí Cornejo
Class of 2007



My education has always been oriented towards values of hard work, perseverance, and consistency, but mainly, a strong belief that I'm capable of achieving my goals. I have come to learn that achieving success in computer science is not just about intellectual effort; it also requires a commitment to reflect and think about problems in an artistic manner. The same can be said when I find myself dancing...once I learn the steps, I can transmit joy through a magical world of color, harmony, and perfection.

Leslie Garcia Sanchez
Class of 2018





LONG-TERM GOALS

Finding a New Home

The programming at GMS has outgrown its current campus. For several years, GMS leadership has been assessing options for a new, larger space. A few years back a new facility was identified, but plans ultimately fell through. With a new head of school in place, everyone agrees that now is the right time to double down on this initiative. The director of advancement will play a central role in this process, particularly once a site is identified and a campaign is launched.

Growing the Endowment

GMS is aiming to grow its endowment to support the Bennett Scholars Program and other operational needs at the school. The Bennett Scholars Program currently requires raising \$1.4M annually, which is a significant endeavor in addition to running a traditional annual fund that aims to raise about \$750,000. Early community support has already been identified to help start an endowment for this mission-critical program. The director of advancement will be integral in developing the strategy for a campaign such as this one.

“Middle school is when students begin forming their adult identities. By helping our girls build confidence and competence into their own self conceptions, we’re setting them up to succeed in the workplace, whatever career they decide to pursue.”

-Alice Chang, 6th Grade Math Teacher



CELEBRATING THE PAST, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The 25th Anniversary

GMS will be celebrating its 25th anniversary in the fall. As part of this celebration, the school will be hosting a major event. The director of advancement will have the opportunity to be a part of this exciting milestone, while utilizing the event as a way to spread the word about GMS and its mission to the community. This milestone will also be a valuable chance for GMS to reflect on its past, and strategically plan for the future.



CELEBRATING
25 YEARS

The Girls' Middle School



A New Strategic Plan

GMS will be developing a new strategic plan this year. This process will outline schoolwide goals for future growth and areas for improvement, and will encourage GMS to continue living out its mission. The director of advancement will be involved in this exciting initiative, and will bring a focus on long-term fundraising and philanthropic growth to this process. Developing a new strategic plan is an exciting opportunity to thoughtfully reflect and envision a bright future of possibilities for GMS.



BACKGROUND AND OPPORTUNITIES

Twenty-five years ago, Kathleen Bennett established The Girls' Middle School (GMS), an inspiring school where girls of all backgrounds come together to discover their strengths and voices as young women. Based in Palo Alto, GMS serves 200 girls throughout the mid-peninsula of the San Francisco Bay Area. GMS is committed to building a learning environment where students can be their authentic selves, discover talents they didn't know they had, and explore new opportunities in a safe, supportive environment. Since its founding in 1998, GMS has maintained a commitment to diversity and inclusion that manifests itself in nearly every element of school life.

Middle school is a formative time for young girls, and GMS provides both a structured and flexible curriculum that encourages students to "try everything" and then "go deep" in order to pursue their personal passions. For example, girls are enrolled in computer science courses for their entire three years at GMS. Students do not shy away from math and science, while they simultaneously dive into discovery-based learning activities such as African drumming and robotics. Seventh-grade girls take part in the GMS Entrepreneurial Program, a year-long course that challenges students to create and market a novel physical product to investors and consumers. Intersession, a GMS tradition, is a one-week period in which all regular academic classes are paused, and girls are given the opportunity to focus on one subject of their choosing, such as rowing, glass blowing, or set building. GMS girls participate in a variety of outdoor experiences, including skateboarding, surfing, or rock climbing. If something like the ability to swim is an impediment, then the school will arrange for lessons. More broadly, if a student would like to try a particular activity or pursue an educational subject, GMS will do its best to provide the resources and support she needs.

A hallmark of GMS's commitment to diversity and inclusion is the Bennett Scholars Program, which provides three-year, full-tuition scholarships to ten students per grade level, or about 15% of the student body. Named after GMS founder Kathleen Bennett, this program exemplifies GMS's steadfast commitment to providing a wide range of girls, many of whom will be first-generation college students, with the opportunity to excel in their middle school education and beyond. The school understands the complexities of serving students and families in a socio-economically diverse area of the country, and it aims to provide each girl with equal access to an incredible middle school experience. In addition to receiving full tuition assistance, Bennett Scholars receive other support during and after GMS, including: test preparation for high school, counseling and advising services, and college preparation courses. GMS is determined to see each girl succeed and discover her academic passions during and after her time at the school, and many scholars come back to GMS to speak on behalf of this life-changing program. In essence, once a GMS girl, always a GMS girl.

In addition, the school has resourcefully built a vibrant learning environment from an office space in Palo Alto. Many years ago, GMS transformed a commercial building to include an outdoor play area, art and music classrooms, science labs, lockers, a gym, and even an indoor treehouse in which students can play and gather. Student-crafted paper kites hang from the ceilings and ukuleles line the walls. The outdoor area even hosts a skating ramp for students to practice skateboarding during and after school hours.



As wonderful as the current space has been, the community has known for some time that GMS needs a permanent home with a larger footprint. Space is such a premium that multiple departments, including the advancement team, have had to move off-site to another office complex a few buildings down the road. Around 2019 GMS began looking for a new, larger facility under the leadership of its previous head of school. GMS quickly identified another office complex less than a mile away. This facility was adjacent to a 22-acre park and would have offered 30% more interior space for the school to leverage and grow into. A campaign was quickly launched: Brave & Bold, with several seven-figure pledges already secured. Unfortunately, after the campaign had started GMS leaders learned that converting the site to school use would be cost prohibitive based on environmental impact studies, so the endeavor was halted nearly as quickly as it had begun.

Despite the search not coming to fruition, GMS leaders are determined to find a permanent location for its deserving community of teachers and learners. This remains one of the top goals of the school and will be a major priority for the board, head of school, and leadership team right as the next advancement director arrives. Meanwhile, the beginnings of an endowment for the Bennett Scholars program has emerged as a few major donors have demonstrated their commitment to the longevity of this foundational program. With proof of concept established that the GMS community is also willing to fund such a major programmatic endowment, a Bennett Scholars endowment campaign could very likely be a second long-term priority for the advancement team.

Around the time that the Brave & Bold campaign was paused, and right as COVID-19 was hitting, GMS experienced major disruption to the leadership team due to unforeseen personal circumstances for multiple senior administrators. Despite this challenge, GMS still continued to fundraise and cultivate donor relationships with the help of other leadership team members as well as several dedicated trustees. A silver lining of these unexpected events is that the board is now more than ever ready to support the advancement team in major philanthropic endeavors, both via annual campaigns and major gift campaigns.

This past July GMS welcomed its new head of school, Christine Fairless, who came from a progressive school in the Bay Area. The entire community agrees that their arrival represents a turning point for the school at just the right time. Christine has been described as thoughtful, visionary, caring, and completely mission-aligned. She has helped bring the GMS community together following the disappointment of the paused site campaign, as well as following some personal tragedies that affected several beloved leaders of the school. The next director of advancement will find a head of school who is extremely optimistic and confident that the school can achieve its long-term goals, and that now is exactly the right time to do so.



In addition to the aforementioned long-term goals of a new site and an endowment for the Bennett Scholars program, the advancement department has two significant annual goals related to philanthropy. The first is the school's annual fund, for which \$750,000 is the current goal. This year's yield is likely to come up a bit short. Possible reasons include insufficient staffing, the late start to this year's campaign, the still unknown effects of the current economic landscape and the lingering pandemic. What is certain is that this year's result does not presage softening support in the community for GMS, but in fact a sign that giving will return to expected levels. The next advancement director does need to recognize that a small school with big goals needs to be well prepared and operate in high gear to raise funds from a community that often sees families depart after just three years.

The other main goal is the annual raise for Bennett Scholars, which currently stands at approximately \$1.4M. This campaign is in addition to the annual fund, and it requires continued relationship cultivation and donor prospecting. Many of these donors have no direct connection to the school, a fact that presents an exciting, albeit nontrivial, opportunity for the advancement team to undertake large-scale fundraising initiatives more often seen by foundations and community organizations. The next advancement director would ideally have experience in these areas of philanthropy, while at the same time have the ability to envision how an endowment campaign could ensure long-term sustainability of this essential program to GMS.

Overall, the director of advancement will play an integral role in taking GMS to an even brighter future. This individual should bring not only a genuine love for education of middle school girls, but also exceptional skills in development, community relations, and major gift fundraising. At the same time, an optimistic, determined, yes-we-can-do-it mindset will be essential for the next leader, who will get to hire for an open position within the advancement team after evaluating current roles, responsibilities, and needs. The director of advancement should feel energized by getting to know the students, leadership team members, faculty, and staff at GMS, so much so that having an office down the road will not prevent essential relationships from being formed and cultivated. This individual will also connect directly with the board of trustees, which will continue to be an engaged partner in the area of philanthropy.

With all of this said, the director of advancement will be welcomed with open arms by the GMS community later this summer. This is an exciting opportunity for an ambitious advancement professional who wants to build on an inspiring legacy of philanthropy and community engagement at a mission-driven school that has already changed the lives of over 1,500 girls.



IS THIS ROLE RIGHT FOR YOU?

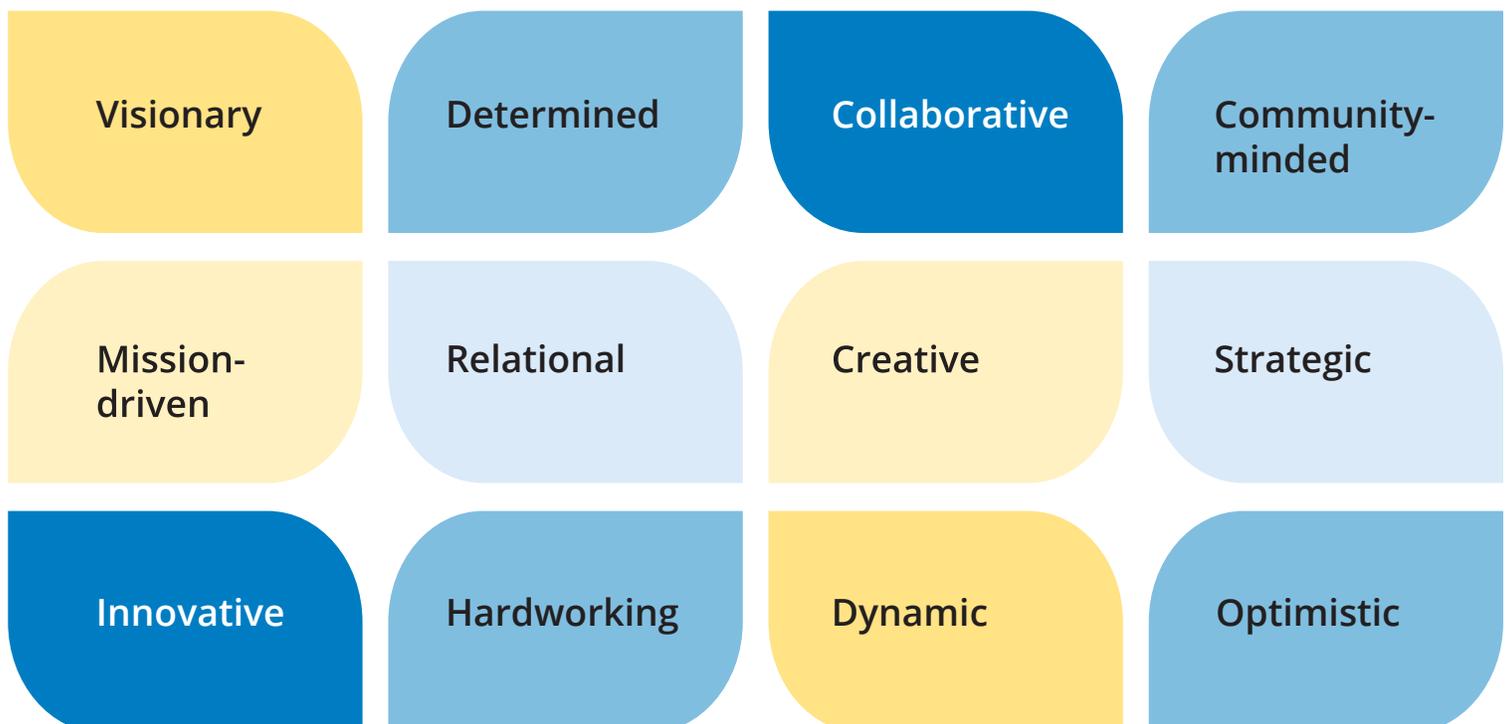
What GMS Seeks Most

- An exceptional ability to visualize and enact forward-thinking advancement strategies and initiatives
- A willingness to build thoughtful relationships with the head of school, the board of trustees, and GMS staff to enact long-term strategic goals
- A commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and a deep understanding of the school's mission and values
- A genuine desire to learn and build upon an inspiring culture of philanthropy, while envisioning new ideas for fundraising and school-wide growth in the future

Early Work To Be Done

- Develop and execute an exceptional strategy for the 23-24 annual fund.
- Learn the unique philanthropic elements of the Bennett Scholars Program, and oversee this critical development initiative.
- Identify needs for the open advancement position and make an outstanding hire.
- Build relationships throughout the GMS community and its benefactors, learn the unique elements of its culture, and become an authentic spokesperson for its mission, vision, and strategic goals.

Adjectives to Describe the Next Director of Advancement



SPECIFIC DUTIES

Community-Driven Philanthropy for Annual Needs

- Serving as the director of the school's \$750K+ annual fund campaign, work with the board of trustees to develop and implement new strategies for donor cultivation and stewardship, oversee the fund's marketing through various multi-media channels, and evaluate the fund's sustainability in alignment with the school's overall goals.
- Oversee the strategy and fundraising for the Bennett Scholars Program (1.3M+ per year), identifying and building relationships with new prospects, strengthening relationships with existing donors, and effectively promoting the fund among community members to maximize major gifts and overall philanthropic support.
- Promote the mission of GMS in the community through special events and partnerships, and work to build strong relationships with various donor constituencies including the Alum Association and Parents' Association.

Advancement Strategy for Long-Term Sustainability

- Strategically develop and grow the school's endowment fund to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Bennett Scholars Program, and the school's ongoing operational needs.
- Collaborate with the head of school, board of trustees, and administrative leadership to develop a capital campaign strategy that will enable the school to find and secure a more permanent location for its campus.
- Oversee and develop the school's current planned giving program, and build additional streams of non-tuition revenue including soliciting additional foundation support.
- Develop, coach, and mentor colleagues, key volunteers, and trustees to take an active role in building relationships and fundraising.

General Leadership and Departmental Oversight

- Work closely and build relationships with the head of school, board of trustees, and the board development committee to promote the role of fundraising and philanthropy at GMS, and develop multi-year plans to ensure that GMS develops an ongoing culture of institutional advancement.
- Offer outstanding mentorship, feedback, support, professional growth, and guidance to the advancement department, which, in 2023-2024 will include supervising an advancement associate and the communications manager as well as hiring for an open position within the department.
- Provide ongoing assessment of roles and responsibilities for the purpose of ensuring the advancement department has proper staffing aligned with fundraising goals and needs of the school.
- Implement best practices in data recording and management, gift acknowledgment and reporting, donor relations, giving policies and confidentiality of information.
- Remain current with advancement trends and cultivate professional standards and development by participating in educational opportunities, reading professional publications, maintaining professional networks, and participating in local, regional, and national professional organizations.
- Actively participate in the life of the school, and perform other duties as assigned.



GMS IS LOOKING FOR CANDIDATES WHO CAN DEMONSTRATE...

Qualifications

- Possession of a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, graduate degree preferred
- 5+ years of increasing responsibility in fundraising, scholarship, or annual giving campaigns, preferably in an educational or nonprofit setting
- 3+ years of leadership team or supervisory experience, overseeing a team of 2+ employees
- Proven track record of fundraising success, including an ability to cultivate, solicit, and secure major contributions through excellent relationship management skills
- Experience with capital and endowment campaign planning, implementation and management
- Comprehensive understanding of advancement best practices and demonstrated proficiency with leading-edge fundraising technology

Qualities and Competencies

- Proclivity and enthusiasm for building authentic relationships across different constituencies, including alumni, trustees, parents and guardians, staff and faculty, and friends of the school
- An excitement about both the mission of GMS and working specifically within a middle school community of passionate and engaged faculty and staff
- Outstanding collaboration and team-building skills, including the ability to clearly communicate and prioritize team responsibilities and goals in alignment with big-picture objectives
- A demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and an understanding of the importance of reflecting these principles in all fundraising strategies
- Ability to create, analyze, and leverage performance metrics, and communicate them to senior leadership and board members
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including strong attention to detail
- Creative, flexible and strategic mindset willing to solve complex problems



HOW TO APPLY

12M Recruiting is acting on behalf of The Girls' Middle School to identify exceptional advancement leaders to fill this extraordinary opportunity. Direct inquiries to:

jobs@12MRecruiting.com

Applications will be considered through April 2, 2023.

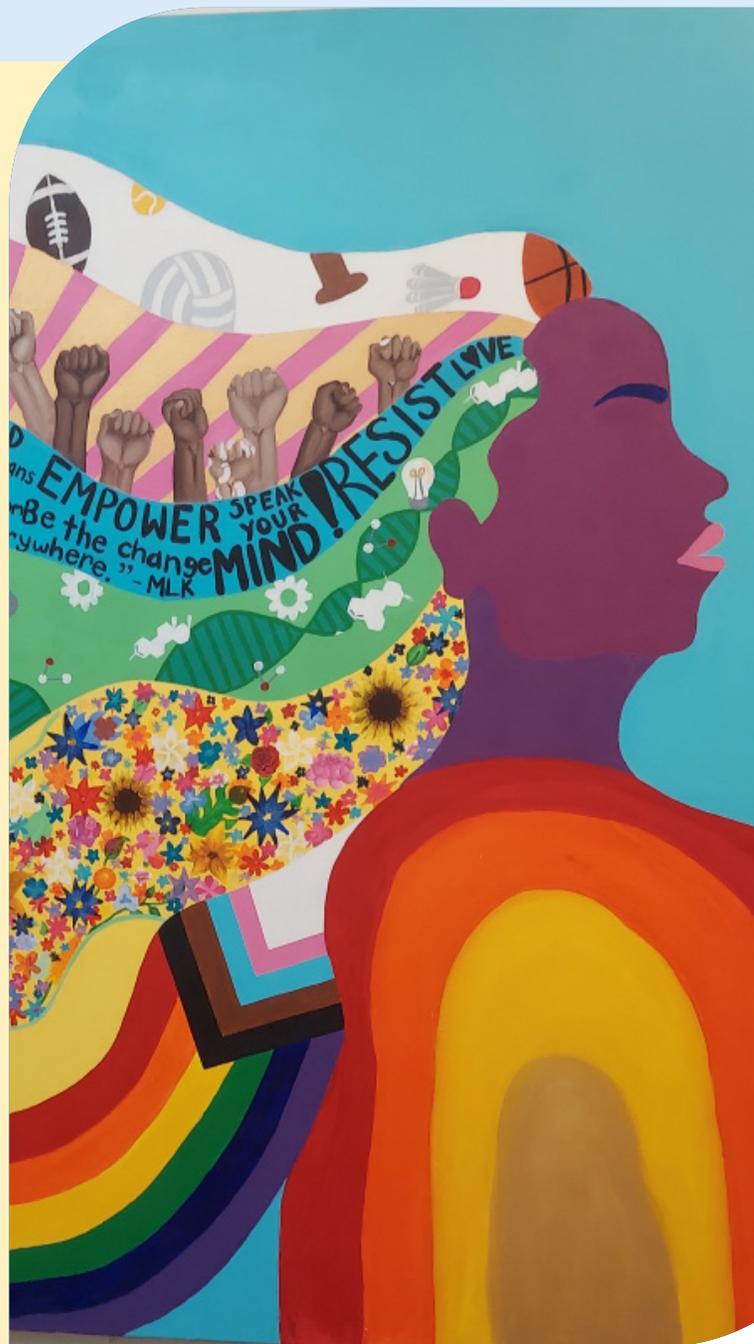
All applications must be submitted online:

www.12MRecruiting.com/jobs/GMS

An application requires submitting four PDFs:

- Cover letter introducing yourself to The Girls' Middle School search committee
- CV or résumé
- A list of four references (include each person's name, organization, title, phone number, email, and connection to you — though we will not contact any references without obtaining your permission first)
- A response to the following prompt:

As described in this document, GMS has two yearly philanthropic drives, one for the annual fund and one for the Bennett Scholars program. Meanwhile, the school is seeking to raise capital for a new home, as well as for an endowment to the Bennett Scholars program. Given all this, what questions would you have for the board or leadership team to help you gain better insight into the school's philanthropic goals and priorities? Develop a set of questions that you might ask in the early days of your tenure to show your understanding and appreciation for the unique elements of the advancement program at GMS. In one or two additional paragraphs, what early actions would you take to begin to conduct discovery on topics related to your questions?



The Girls' Middle School is proud to be an Equal Employment Opportunity employer committed to a policy of equal treatment and opportunity in every aspect of its hiring and promotion process without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, partnership status, gender and/or gender identity or expression, marital, parental or familial status, national origin, ethnicity, veteran or military status, age, disability, or any other legally protected basis. Salary Range: \$150,000 - \$170,000.

