



# SAGE RIDGE SCHOOL

Reno, Nevada  
Head of School  
July 2018

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





## MISSION

Sage Ridge School is committed to a traditional college preparatory curriculum for a diverse student body. The pursuit of excellence in academics, the arts, physical endeavor, and ethical behavior is emphasized in an environment nourished by the dynamic relationship between students and teachers. The school fosters self-expression, service, and a sense of community while encouraging students to think critically, communicate clearly, and pursue a lifelong passion for learning.

## FAST FACTS

**Founded:** 1998  
**Type:** Coed nondenominational  
**Location:** Reno, Nevada  
**Mascot:** Scorpion  
**Grades Served:** 4-12  
**Enrollment:** 236  
**Countries Represented:** 5  
**Students on Financial Aid:** 23%  
**Campus Size:** 40 acres  
**Full-Time Faculty:** 29  
**Faculty w/ Adv. Degree:** 63%  
**Student-Teacher Ratio:** 8:1  
**Average Class Size:** 14  
**College Matriculation:** 100%  
**AP Courses Offered:** 16  
**Sports Teams:** 18  
**Accreditations:** Northwest Association of Independent Schools (NWAIS)

## The Position

Nestled on the eastern slopes of Nevada's Mt. Rose, Sage Ridge School's campus has spectacular views of the Truckee Meadows and downtown Reno. Turn around 180 degrees, and you are 20 minutes from great downhill skiing and 30 minutes from the shores of Lake Tahoe. Hiking and biking trails literally abut the campus. This is an outdoor, quality-of-life town—and it is growing, due to an influx of the kinds of families that value independent education. Long removed from its casino reputation, Reno is one of the hippest, fastest-growing cities in the country.

Sage Ridge School is the only nondenominational, preparatory independent school in town and is poised to take advantage of the area's recent growth. Approaching its 20th anniversary, Sage Ridge already enjoys an exceptional track record of student success and is poised to move from institutional adolescence into an energetic young adulthood. "Energy" is the operative term here: Walking around the campus, visitors see a happy school brimming with energy. Sage Ridge knows that what it is doing works. But it wants to become even better.

For local and historical reasons, the School serves grades 4-12. Sage Ridge School is best described as a college prep school emphasizing academic rigor, character, and values, and seeking to prepare students for success in a changing world with changing technologies, changing vocations, and changing systems. Its five value pillars are integral to the life of the School. Even the most academically focused teachers proudly explain that character and values education carry equal weight to academics. Indeed, adults in the community are quick to remark about how grounded, kind, honest, and joyful the students at Sage Ridge are.

Currently led by a capable interim Head, Sage Ridge School seeks a permanent Head of School to bring vision, leadership, management, energy, community, and growth to the School. Effective July 1, 2018, this position represents a great opportunity for someone who enjoys the outdoors, who loves children, who is truly passionate about teaching and learning, and who wants to have real impact and move a great school forward.



## The School

Sage Ridge School was born out of a vision shared by parents, community leaders, and educators in the area to bring a new educational option to the families of the Truckee Meadows. The founders set clear goals from the outset—to establish a college preparatory school with rigorous academics and high standards of excellence, serving a diverse student population and fostering ethical and moral values as well as social responsibility. In 1998, Sage Ridge School opened its doors to 99 students in grades 6 through 8. A high school was subsequently added, and Sage Ridge graduated its first senior class in 2003.

Today, Sage Ridge School serves 236 students in grades 4-12. With a student-teacher ratio of 8:1, Sage Ridge faculty work one-on-one with students to identify their strengths and weaknesses, challenging each student at the appropriate level while fostering a safe and nurturing learning environment. Students do not fall through the cracks at Sage Ridge. Using the School's five pillars as a framework for instruction, teachers guide student learning in the classroom as well as outside of it, instilling fundamental skills of critical thinking, writing, and problem solving.

Sage Ridge School boasts outstanding student leadership programs, a highly popular outdoor education program, creative Mini-Sessions that enhance students' core studies, and a wide array of extracurricular activities. The School rightly prides itself on its students' achievements beyond Sage Ridge; 100% of graduates attend a four-year college or university. The School is accredited by the Northwest Association of Independent Schools (NWAIS) and is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

## ACADEMICS

Sage Ridge School's focus on delivering top-notch academic instruction is evidenced in the School's tagline: "The Power of a World-Class Education." The curriculum at Sage Ridge is thoughtfully designed and aligned across grades and divisions, building the critical skills and knowledge students require to thrive at the nation's top colleges and universities. The core curriculum is grounded in liberal arts studies, with a balanced emphasis on English, history, and foreign language learning alongside impressive STEM-based science and mathematics programs. Fine arts and physical education classes are also interwoven into the core curriculum. For more detailed information, please see the comprehensive curriculum listings available by department [on the School's website](#).

Integral to students' learning experience at Sage Ridge is its Outdoor Education program. Every September, each grade level embarks on a different weeklong outdoor excursion. Students are challenged to expand their horizons, stretch themselves, and build trust with one another while camping, hiking, biking, whitewater rafting, and more. The location and related activities evolve in their depth and difficulty as students progress from younger to older grades.

Sage Ridge educators also shake up student learning each January, when class schedules are adapted for the School's two-week period of Mini-Sessions. After returning from winter break, students are given a break from the traditional curriculum and have the chance to explore a diverse array of creative courses, designed by teachers based upon their own passions and intended to expose students to new topics and spark new interests. Students take between two and four Mini-Sessions each year depending upon grade level. Recent Mini-Session subjects have included rockets, yoga, film studies, media ecology, sports and games, astronomy, and the history of Disney.

The college preparatory program offers 16 Advanced Placement courses as well as a range of honors courses including a Senior Capstone. Eighty-six percent of students taking AP exams at Sage Ridge earn a passing score of 3 or higher. All seniors at Sage Ridge complete an internship as well as a Senior Thesis as a part of their graduation requirements. The Class of 2017 consisted of 29 students with an average GPA of 3.82 and median GPA of 3.91. Collectively, the Class of 2017 earned scholarship awards & financial aid offers totaling \$5 million.

### CLASS OF 2017 COLLEGE MATRICULATIONS

American University  
Boston College  
California State University - Fullerton  
Claremont McKenna College  
Colorado College  
Cornell University (2)  
Dartmouth College  
DePauw University, Honors Program  
Duke University  
Northeastern University

Smith College  
Swarthmore College  
Tufts University (2)  
U.S. Military Academy  
University of California-Davis  
University of Nevada-Reno (6)  
University of North Dakota  
University of San Francisco (2)  
University of Texas Honors Program  
University of Washington



## ARTS

Sage Ridge School is known for its exceptional fine and performing arts programs. Arts are viewed as fundamental to students' intellectual, social, and emotional development. All students are required to take a minimum of three semesters of fine arts to graduate, and the course options available to them are extensive. Students may pursue visual arts, music, and theatre study, including AP Studio Art and Advanced Theatre.

In addition to curricular offerings, students have ample opportunities to develop their artistic acumen in extracurricular activities as well. The theatre department puts on three productions per year in addition to coaching students for state and national performance competitions.

## ATHLETICS

Sage Ridge School was founded with the intent to educate the whole child, and this includes a commitment to athletics as a part of the wider scope of educational excellence. Beginning in Grade 5, students have the opportunity to engage in competitive play in an environment that supports educational objectives, promotes ethical conduct and sportsmanship, and preserves the wellbeing of students.

Sage Ridge School hosts a total of 18 sports teams across three seasons. Girls, boys, and coed teams compete in cross country, basketball, soccer, volleyball, skiing, golf, swimming, and track and field. The middle school teams compete in the TAH-NEVA league while the Upper School's athletics program is a member of the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association (NIAA), the state's governing body for high school athletics.



## STUDENT LIFE

With its small class sizes, Sage Ridge School has a warm and close-knit student community. Several cultural components of student life reinforce the strength of community at the School. Every week, each division meets for its own Town Meeting, and each week culminates with a schoolwide Town Meeting. Led by the Upper School's Student Government President, this gathering is an opportunity to share announcements, celebrate accomplishments, as well as spread a bit of joy and humor. The School's schedule also makes time for weekly advisory meetings, in which small groups of students meet with a faculty advisor for activities and discussions geared toward students' social and emotional development.

Believing in the importance of building citizenship through service to others, Sage Ridge School holds community service in high regard. Beginning in their sophomore year, students complete a minimum of 25 hours each year of community service—totaling at least 75 hours—as a part of their graduation requirements. Those pursuing an Honors Diploma must complete 50 hours in their junior and senior years for a total of 125 hours by graduation, while the High Honors Diploma requires 75 hours in junior and senior year for a total of 175 hours by graduation.

Service begins before students enter the Upper School, however. For many years, the School has partnered with an at-risk public elementary school nearby, where Sage Ridge 8th graders are paired with a 1st grader to mentor throughout the school year. Sage Ridge School also provides ongoing support for CIT—Children in Transition—a program that supports children in homeless shelters in the Reno area through schoolwide food and toy drives.

Student involvement in extracurricular clubs are also a hallmark of the Sage Ridge experience, setting the School apart from other private schools in the area. Because club meetings are integrated into the regular school day, all students are required to participate. Six seasons of extracurricular credit are required for graduation, which Upper School Students may complete through involvement in Athletics, Debate, Robotics, and/or Theatre. Clubs are faculty-sponsored and designed to inspire students' interest and expand their horizons. While club offerings vary from year to year depending upon interest, popular ones include chess club, photography club, art club, debate and public speaking, and robotics.

## STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Both Middle and Upper School students at Sage Ridge are encouraged to build leadership skills through a number of different outlets.

Each division has its own **Honor Council**, faculty-sponsored and led by a group of students nominated by teachers and elected by their peers. Tasked with upholding the School's Honor Code, the Honor Councils hear cases and consult on issues such as lying, cheating, and stealing, in addition to educating the student body on the importance of academic integrity.

The Middle and Upper School **Student Government Associations**, which meet weekly, are tasked with providing leadership for various social and community events throughout the year. SGA members are elected by their peers in the Upper School, and membership is open to all who wish to participate in the Middle School.

Sage Ridge also hosts a **Prefecture Program**. Each year, a small number of Upper School students are selected for the prestigious position of Prefect based upon exceptional leadership and involvement in the School community. Together, the Prefects serve as a student advisory council to the Head of School and Upper School Director.

## PHYSICAL CAMPUS

As mentioned previously, Sage Ridge School is situated on a beautiful elevated campus overlooking the Truckee Meadows with views of downtown Reno to the north. The 40-acre campus includes three main buildings—Crossbow Hall, Webster Hall, and the learning annex. Webster Hall is home to the Great Space, a multipurpose room and non-regulation-sized basketball court that is used for physical education classes, Town Meetings, and more. Also housed in Webster Hall are the main office and school library, which offers academic research support as well as a quiet space and ample collections for use by students and parents alike.





## Reno, Nevada

It would be easy to have misimpressions of Reno, the second most populous city in Nevada. Today, though, mention of Reno sparks conversation about Microsoft, Tesla, Google, Apple, and eBay; about the emergence of University of Nevada-Reno as a major research university and the arrival of more tech startups and microbreweries than residents can keep track of. Indeed, Tesla is midway through construction of its Gigafactory—slated to be the world’s largest building at 5.8 million square feet when completed in 2020—and the Tahoe Reno Industrial Park has become an ideal spot for some of the country’s newest data centers.

Why the sudden growth in industry and culture in Reno? In addition to the state’s efforts to attract technology companies following the recession, the quality of life and cost of living in Reno offers a welcome respite for those who have grown weary of the traffic, expense, and challenges of daily living in the Bay Area. Drawn by 300 days of sunshine a year, clean air, spectacular scenery, and outstanding outdoor activities all around—not to mention no state income tax and a cost of living well below that of nearby California—many young professionals and their families have made the move to Reno, and the area is booming. While there are still longtime Reno families at Sage Ridge School, many are recent transplants who have come to Reno to raise their children in a healthy environment. Some parents even commute to the Bay Area for work, deemed a worthwhile trade-off for what it offers their family as a whole. Reno’s transformation is well underway, and the area is truly a great place to live and raise a family, as well as a convenient and easy home base for professionals who travel.

While the economy is booming and the population growing, it is not all business. A recent Bloomberg article described the Reno scene as such: “Thousands throng to the weekly Food Truck Fridays near downtown, dudes play cornhole while sipping cold brew coffee at a cafe by the river, and a local bartender can’t quite keep track of the number of craft breweries.” Reno is also the gateway to the annual Burning Man Festival, a nationally-known outdoor gathering and pop-up community in the desert that its organizers describe as “a temporary metropolis



dedicated to community, art, self-expression, and self-reliance.”

Outdoor recreation is not limited to nationally organized events, however. The Truckee River, which originates in Lake Tahoe and ends at Pyramid Lake, flows through downtown Reno and is home to a \$1.5 million whitewater park offering Class 2 and 3 rapids. Whitewater events and competitions are held here throughout the year. Also popular in the summer is Washoe Lake, where wind speeds make for ideal kite and windsurfing. Reno residents and tourists alike enjoy access to 18 ski resorts within driving distance. For this reason, skiing and snowboarding are popular pastimes during the winter, as are ice skating, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling.

Those looking for cultural activities indoors will also find plenty to explore in Reno. In July, Reno is host to Artown, a month-long festival for the arts. The city is home to Nevada’s Museum of Art as well as the National Automobile Museum (where Elvis’ Cadillac Eldorado can be found). Music lovers enjoy the year-round offerings of the Reno Philharmonic Orchestra, Reno Pops Orchestra, and the Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts.



## Strengths of the School

Among many strengths, the new Head of Sage Ridge School will encounter, in particular:

- Terrific students--eager to learn, engaged, kind, diverse, and happy.
- The energy, livability, and relaxed outdoor lifestyle of Reno.
- A commitment to academic rigor and a foundational education that teaches content as well as innovation and 21st century skills.
- A school that lives its character and values as captured in its five pillars.
- Dedicated, skilled faculty and staff who teach, mentor, and get to know their students as people as well as learners.
- A track record of graduates not only getting into colleges of choice, but being exceptionally well-prepared and thriving once they get there.
- Signature programs that adults and students love and that are not often found in independent schools, including outdoor education trips for all students in the fall and January mini-session enrichment weeks.
- A particularly strong performing and visual arts program.
- A warm community of adults and students who genuinely want to be at Sage Ridge.

# Challenges & Opportunities

Among the opportunities to make a difference and have real impact, the next Head will encounter:

- The school facilities need expansion and improvement. Conversations and preliminary planning are underway to consider a gym, a theater, and additional classroom space. The new Head will partner with the board to make the case, raise the funds, and execute the project to set Sage Ridge up for success for many years to come.
- Like many adolescent schools, Sage Ridge is much better at doing what it does than at letting others know about it. The new Head will be expected to be both an internal and external “face of the school”— to lead with vision, to enhance the School’s marketing and branding, to increase enrollment in the Upper School, and to maintain enrollment in the Middle School in the face of increasing competition. As the pioneering independent school in Reno, it falls to Sage Ridge to educate the community on the value of a college preparatory independent education.
- While firmly committed to its “foundational” college prep curriculum, the School will look to the new Head to bring an appropriate level of innovation to the program in conjunction with all stakeholders.
- The School would benefit from clearly articulated, consistently applied policies and procedures.
- As in many schools, it is ongoing work at Sage Ridge to apply consistent student attendance and discipline policies as well as provide avenues for constructive engagement with eager and supportive parents.
- While the School has been successful at attracting and retaining excellent faculty and staff, the ability to do so in the future will depend on getting out in front of and dealing with compensation and work-distribution pressures that many schools are feeling.
- There is a desire for administrative decision-making to be more inclusive and more transparent.
- The School has a smart, committed, and growing Board that would benefit from working in partnership with a Head who understands best-practices governance.

## FIVE VALUE PILLARS

- ◆ **COMMUNITY.** At Sage Ridge, our community believes in our value pillars and shares common goals.
- ◆ **COURAGE.** At Sage Ridge, we have the courage to face the challenges of today, tomorrow and the future.
- ◆ **INTEGRITY.** At Sage Ridge, we show integrity in and outside of the classroom and school.
- ◆ **RESPECT.** At Sage Ridge, we respect ourselves, our peers, our teachers, and our school.
- ◆ **SCHOLARSHIP.** At Sage Ridge, our students demonstrate scholarship in academics, the arts, and physical endeavors.



## Desired Qualities & Qualifications

Among other things, successful candidates for the Head of School position will possess the following skills and attributes:

- Experience across middle and high school programs.
- A wide bandwidth to be both an inspiring visionary leader and capable operational manager.
- Eagerness to get out and connect—to be the face of the School in the broader community and to tell the Sage Ridge story. Familiarity with branding and marketing in successful independent schools is highly desired.
- A true love of kids, a desire to get to know them, and an ability to relate well to them.
- Readiness to seek and build relationships with all stakeholders of the School and the broader community.
- Bridge-building skills to knit together the disparate parts of the School and the diverse constituencies, and to inspire all around a common vision.
- Personally modeling and demanding a culture of respect of differences and all dimensions of diversity.
- Experience with all-school budgets and finance.
- Knowledge of and eagerness to embrace modern technologies.
- Eagerness to “put down roots”—Because leadership stability is important and there is much challenging and rewarding work to be done, the School seeks an individual who can envision themselves staying for a long time.
- Familiarity with the intersection of tuition, financial aid, tuition-remission, and enrollment goals.
- Familiarity with fundraising and eagerness to partner with the Board to raise capital funds.
- Infectious energy, enthusiasm, and positive outlook.
- Appreciation for the arts and music.
- Eagerness to come to Reno and to embrace the outdoor lifestyle.



## How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit the following materials as separate PDF attachments in one email:

- Cover letter expressing interest in the Head of School position at Sage Ridge School;
- Current résumé;
- Statement of educational philosophy and practice;
- List of 5 references with name, phone number, and e-mail address of each to:

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN  
SAGE RIDGE SCHOOL!

