

# UPPER SCHOOL HEAD SEARCH

**CATLIN GABEL**

Portland, Oregon

catlin.edu

Start Date: July 2025



Catlin Gabel



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES

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# Mission

Catlin Gabel fosters compassionate and curious citizens of the world by inspiring in every student a love of learning and the courage to take responsible action.

# Core Values

Catlin Gabel sees learning as initiative, as a conversation. And every day the school embarks upon that experience in community together based on these core values:

Integrity • Inclusion • Kindness

# At a Glance



Established  
1957



Upper School enrollment  
322



Faculty in the Upper School  
37



Student-teacher ratio in  
the Upper School  
15:1



Students of color in  
Upper School  
48%



Financial aid awarded  
\$6M



Faculty with advanced degrees  
92%



Campus size  
67 acres

Enrollment: 785

Languages spoken: 40

Total faculty: 91

Faculty of color: 32%

Students receiving aid: 27%

Endowment: \$43M

Annual operating budget: \$30M

Honors courses: 45+

Athletic programs: 13

Clubs and organizations: 40+



## Overview

Founded in 1957 through the merger of the Catlin Hillside School and the Gabel Country Day School, Catlin Gabel is a leader amongst its peers in progressive education. The school offers a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum and places a strong emphasis on what it means to be a productive and contributing member of a community. Utilizing an inquiry-based pedagogy and leaning into experiential learning, Catlin Gabel produces community-minded thinkers who are ready to navigate the complexities of college life and beyond. “Kids leave Catlin Gabel with a strong sense of self and agency,” reflected a community member.

Catlin Gabel’s core values, Integrity, Inclusion, and Kindness, guide students’ journeys through the school, whether they enter as Beginning and Lower School, Middle School, or Upper School learners, with the goal of fostering compassionate citizens and emphasizing taking responsible action. Students learn to think, to reason, and to interact positively within the school community and outside of it.

Catlin Gabel serves students from Preschool through 12th grade on its vast and verdant campus—a former farm—providing ample room for students in all grades to thrive, whether in the plentiful outdoor spaces that surround the Beginning School, the wonderful classroom facilities for Middle and Upper School, the majestic Fir Grove, or through the various athletic facilities supporting a variety of offerings. The progressive focus of the academic program revolves around the school’s small class sizes, meaningful faculty and student connections, and an inclusive focus on intellectual curiosity. Catlin Gabel is a community dedicated to equity and inclusion where those from all backgrounds can thrive.

Starting in July of 2025, the new Head of Upper School will join a healthy school community and Upper School division that has enjoyed a stable faculty and leadership team, oversee a talented, intellectual, and caring Upper School faculty and a dynamic curriculum, and collaborate with an administrative team fiercely dedicated to providing a safe and challenging and progressive learning community at the school. “The faculty balance intellect and heart,” noted one administrator while another shared, “I fell in love with the community of people at Catlin Gabel—they care for another, and we see each other, and the kids, as whole people.” Reporting to the Assistant Head, the Upper School Head will collaborate with other division heads, as well as the Head of School, regularly and will be responsible for providing outstanding and supportive leadership to faculty, parents, and students in the upper school.





## Opportunities and Challenges

### **Support and advocate for commitment to educational excellence**

- Continue to evolve and innovate on a progressive, whole-child focused academic program, recognizing new strategies and where those can be implemented.
- Will be a thought partner with PS-12 faculty and administration around the ideas of learning, assessment, and feedback.
- The next Head of Upper School will harness and celebrate the school's progressive academic values; in particular, they will continue to lead and support faculty members in:
  - The exploration and implementation of competency-based learning and assessment practices and to share why this evolution is positive for student learning and growth while articulating the value in a college preparatory environment.
  - Educating for democracy by encouraging student discursive skills, deliberative ability, and approach to a variety of perspectives and ideas.
  - Centering the importance of cultivating whole people via artistic, athletic, and service-related passions in conjunction with an engaging academic experience.

### **Provide care, connection, and support for faculty and students**

- The next Head of Upper School will be a champion for the voices of the faculty and the student body, balancing the culture of involving many voices in decision making and creativity with institutional goals and PS-12 coherence.
- Will seek to balance the many exciting ideas of the community with what can be reasonably addressed and accomplished well at any given time; they will help the division to prioritize and focus efforts to provide clarity and a sustainable pace.
- Will seek to support equity and belonging of all members of the school community, harnessing the work achieved while also continuing to examine and refine processes, structures, and practices.
- Will navigate the disparate spaces of the Upper School creatively and seek ways to foster increased connection and collaboration across departments and programs.
- Will work closely with the Upper School leadership team to continually examine and support the well-being of students and their engagement in and out of the classroom with particular care of the orientation of 9th graders and support of the advisory program.



### **Anticipate the opening of the Community Center for Athletics and Wellness (CCAW)**

- The capital campaign for the CCAW is well underway and the school community anticipates the new building—which will account for 20% of the school’s square footage—to open in the spring of 2027. The CCAW will be a transformational resource and space for the school, particularly, the Upper School, and the new Head of Upper School, has the opportunity to help the community transition into and joyfully occupy the new space.

### **Serve as an enthusiastic and joyful ambassador**

- The next Head of Upper School has the opportunity to serve as a key spokesperson and ambassador for the school community internally and externally. As the Upper School evolves its ambitious and student-centered program, the Head of Upper School will help students, faculty, staff, and parents/guardians understand “the why” and invite community engagement and learning.
- Partner with and support the efforts of the admission office to attract, recruit, and enroll talented and mission-appropriate 9th graders and to rally the support and engagement of the Upper School community to welcome prospective students.
- Collaborate with the Beginning and Lower School and Middle School teams to show students and their families the exciting and compelling PS to 12 journey and to retain students and ensure a smooth transition to the Upper School.
- Champion Catlin Gabel in the Portland community, serving as a visible member of the school community beyond campus and model community engagement.





## Qualifications and Personal Attributes

The most competitive candidates for Catlin Gabel will offer the following qualifications and qualities:

- Extensive knowledge of current best practices in progressive curriculum, pedagogy, and student life, including competency-based learning and assessment.
- A leader with vision and the courage to pursue educational leadership opportunities for which Catlin Gabel is known (founding member of Global Online Academy, Mastery Transcript Consortium, etc.).
- A relational leader with a high EQ, with the ability to listen to the members of the school community, engage and synthesize input, and make thoughtful decisions that center the best interest of the students.
- Ability to make difficult decisions and resolve conflicts with compassion, conviction, and appropriate transparency.
- Ability to balance autonomy and accountability.
- Practice of being an active, visible, engaged, and joyful member of the school community.
- An articulate and compelling spokesperson and champion for progressive education and the school community with the ability to engage and educate internal and external audiences.
- Leadership practice that incorporates equity and inclusion when reflecting on any given situation and when making decisions.
- An inspiring and compassionate cultural and academic leader.
- A collaborative thinker and decision-maker with experience connecting and partnering with different departments, programs, and divisions.
- Ability to communicate with all constituencies thoroughly, systematically, and with clarity.
- Have a proven record as a student-centered teacher.
- Ability to lead with authenticity, patience, humility, curiosity, vulnerability, and a sense of humor.

# Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about Catlin Gabel.

[School Website](#)

[Upper School Academics](#)

[School History](#)

[Upper School Course Catalog](#)

[Equity and Inclusion](#)

[School Profile](#)

[Virtual Tour](#)

[About Portland, Oregon](#)



# To Apply

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position
- A current résumé
- Leadership statement
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission) to:

**Rice Bryan**  
Consultant  
rbryan@carneysandoe.com

**Jennifer Wong Christensen**  
Senior Consultant  
jennifer.christensen@carneysandoe.com

*The full-time equivalent salary range for this position is \$155,000 – 180,000. The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to several factors that include years of experience, education level, and expertise.*