

What is the role of the Board of Trustees?

MCDS, like most independent schools, is governed by a Board of Trustees. The primary role of this 24-member body is to uphold the school's mission and values and to hire, oversee and annually evaluate the Head of School. The Board collaborates with the Head in developing the school's strategic goals, and is also responsible for ensuring MCDS' long-term financial sustainability, approving the annual budget and overseeing the endowment and reserves. Additionally, the Board supports financial stewardship with annual fundraising and capital campaigns. The Board sets policies which require its approval. Finally, the Board oversees physical assets of the school, primarily through a multi-year planning process.

MCDS is a member of and accredited by the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) and is also a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). The Board follows the Principles of Good Practice established by NAIS.

Board members regularly attend the annual CAIS Trustee/Head of School Conference to bolster their grasp on governance. The Board meets monthly during the school year and holds a multi-day offsite to evaluate relevant issues in depth. There are eight standing committees, which also meet regularly.

What is the role of the Board with respect to the Head of School?

It selects and annually evaluates the Head of School, who is responsible for daily oversight and management of the school, disciplinary and personnel issues, and administrative and admissions decisions. The Board creates the school's strategic plan, but the Head of School is responsible for overseeing its implementation. The Head also works in partnership with the Board to establish, uphold and refine the school's mission and values, and to articulate those to students, faculty and staff, parents, alumni, and the wider community. The Head is solely responsible for collaborating with faculty and staff to develop and maintain the academic programs that fulfill the school's mission. The Head or the administrator designated by the Head directly handle any parent concerns.

How is the Board different from the Parents' Association?

The Parents' Association (PA) is comprised of all students' parents and guardians. The role of the PA is to serve as a liaison between the school and the parent community, collaborating to sustain a healthy community. Its work is accomplished by an Executive Committee of eight and 30 chairpersons coordinating a wide array of volunteer opportunities. The PA President and immediate Past President serve as voting members of the Board of Trustees.

How is the work of the Board carried out?

There are eight standing Board committees: Executive; Audit/Risk; Committee on Trustees; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Buildings and Grounds; Finance; Investment; and Development Planning. In addition, ad hoc committees are created as needed to handle specific tasks and typically last for a year or two. A few examples of ad hoc committees are the Search Committee, the Transition Committee (currently active) and the Strategic Planning Committee. Committees are comprised of trustees (who typically serve on at least two committees) and often also include members of the Administration, faculty or staff, and members of the school's parent community. Community members are invited to join Board committees because of their interest in serving the school and their relevant experience related to the committee(s) on which they are asked to serve.

Committees report back to the Board on a regular basis and on all decisions that require a Board vote.

What does each committee do?

- **Executive**—Board management and setting of meeting agendas.
- **Audit/Legal/Risk Management**—Oversees the legal responsibilities of the Board as well as providing advice to the school administration. Approves the annual independent audit of the school.
- **Committee on Trustees**—Identifies and recruits non-trustee members of Board committees. Attracts and recruits new trustees for election to the Board. Provides training and education to the Board. Manages the evaluation process for trustees and Head of School.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**—Provides leadership on the Board for DEI issues including membership, structure and decision-making processes.
- **Buildings and Grounds**—Oversees ongoing plant maintenance issues and manages building projects.
- **Finance**—Works with the school's CFO to set the budget. Advises Board on all issues of financial sustainability.
- **Investment**—Oversees the investment and performance of all school funds, particularly the endowment and reserves, and is also responsible for oversight of the faculty/staff retirement fund
- **Development Planning**---Provides leadership in the school's fundraising and advancement efforts. Currently spearheading the Step Together capital campaign.

How does one become a Board member?

Trustees come from a range of backgrounds: current parents, alumni, alumni parents, as well as those from outside our community, such as educators from other Bay Area schools. The Head of School, the President of the Parents' Association, and the immediate Past President of the Parent

Association serve as members. As guided by NAIS best practices, the Board strives for a composition that "reflects the strategic expertise, resources, and perspectives needed to achieve the mission and strategic objectives of the school."

The role of the Committee on Trustees (COT) is to identify potential Board and committee members. Typically it looks for those community members who embrace the spirit and mission of MCDS, and who importantly have the skill sets or specific expertise needed to accomplish the Board's work. Additionally, the COT seeks to maintain a balance of gender, geography, and diversity of perspective and background on the Board. Trustees are also expected to play leadership roles in the school's development and fundraising efforts. They typically serve two consecutive three-year terms, although some only serve one. A complete list of the current board of trustees can be found [here](#).