



Search for the Director of Enrollment Strategy Marin Academy San Rafael, California

THE SEARCH

Marin Academy (MA), a trailblazer in progressive and experiential education, seeks an innovative, strategic, and collaborative leader to serve as its first Director of Enrollment Strategy. This Director joins MA at a moment of remarkable momentum. Over the past seven years, a disciplined endowment strategy has doubled the school's financial foundation from \$15 million to \$31 million. Vision 2030 and 2050's transformative campus plans have moved forward, including a new aquatic center and housing for Penn Fellows. The [MA Promise](#) has rewritten the school's commitment to access: free tuition for any admitted student whose family earns under \$100,000 annually.

Inheriting these schoolwide successes, along with a committed team and a devoted community of engaged thinkers and learners, the incoming Director will steer MA through its next chapter and establish the school as a thought leader in enrollment management.

Founded in 1971 by educators and private individuals with a forward-thinking vision, MA is a co-educational, independent, college preparatory day school in San Rafael, California, just north of San Francisco. The school enrolls 450 students in grades 9-12. MA's founders realized—far ahead of their time—the importance of incorporating experiential learning and citizenship with intellectual development, ideals that have become a model for 21st century education. MA has long been recognized for its commitment to environmental stewardship and its visionary curricular and co-curricular programs that engage students in real-world topics and learning by doing. The school has benefitted from remarkable leadership stability, with only four heads of school in its history; the current head is in her 18th year.

This new Director position reflects MA's sustained growth in inquiries and applications, as well as its commitment to best practices in independent school recruitment and enrollment. Reporting to the Dean of Institutional Advancement—a senior leader who manages admissions, advancement, marketing, and communications—the Director of Enrollment Strategy will support a tight-knit and effective team of professionals across all stages of the recruitment and enrollment life cycle.

Success requires continued excellence in MA's student body through recruitment practices that resonate with the school's mission. The Director will build and sustain a robust admissions pipeline within MA's unique regional context and will further MA's commitment to a diverse and dynamic student body. This leader brings an in-depth understanding of the trends and forces shaping independent school admissions, a strong ability to synthesize and present complex admissions data clearly, and a record of robust mentorship. With these skills, the Director brings an advanced strategic mindset to admissions and an appetite to push boundaries on best practices in recruiting and enrolling MA's incoming classes.

Marin Academy has retained Isaacson, Miller, an international executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of the Director of Enrollment Strategy. Please direct all inquiries, nominations, and applications to the search firm, as indicated at the end of this document.

MARIN ACADEMY AND ADMISSIONS

Mission and Philosophy

Marin Academy continues to believe in thinking beyond traditional academic disciplines and aspires to adapt and innovate for a future that requires new competencies. Profound changes in the workplace and the social fabric demand additional fluencies in problem-solving, creativity, curiosity, empathy, and engaged citizenship. MA has evolved its curriculum to create more opportunities for project-based learning that empower students to frame questions, make connections, and find new approaches to the world's most pressing problems. The school asks every individual to think, question, and create in an environment of encouragement and compassion, and challenges each person to accept the responsibilities posed by education in a democratic society.

Community

MA enrolls 450 students in grades 9-12, drawn from throughout the Bay Area—73 percent from Marin County, 19 percent from San Francisco, 7 percent from the East Bay, and 2 percent from Sonoma. Thirty-eight percent of students identify as students of color, and 32 percent come from public schools. MA is committed to creating more equitable support structures for students from backgrounds historically underrepresented at independent schools through initiatives like Belonging@MA and student-led Identity and Equity (IDEQ) leadership.

Admission to MA

Admission to Marin Academy is highly selective; a class of 110 is typically drawn from approximately 500 applicants. Students are admitted based on previous academic work, recommendations, extracurricular involvement and interests, and personal interviews. Since 2021-2022, the admissions process at MA has been test-free.

The MA Promise Program supports the school's historic commitment to ensuring that the most talented students in the Bay Area have access to an MA education. The program offers free tuition for all admitted

students whose families earn less than \$100,000 per year. For families whose income exceeds \$100,000, the school continues to meet one hundred percent of demonstrated financial need for all admitted families who apply for tuition assistance. MA awards over five million dollars annually in need-based tuition assistance, with approximately 21 percent of families receiving support each year.

The Admissions Team

The members of the Admissions Team bring deep familiarity with Marin Academy and are committed to supporting prospective, admitted, and matriculating students and families through the entirety of the enrollment cycle. The team consists of three dedicated staff members: the Director of Admissions and Tuition Assistance, who manages daily operations, applications, and admissions events; the Associate Director of Admissions for Belonging; and the Assistant Director of Admissions.

For more information on Marin Academy, please see the Appendix at the end of the document.

THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENROLLMENT STRATEGY

Reporting directly to the Dean of Institutional Advancement, the inaugural Director will set a bold and forward-thinking vision to attract and enroll a talented, diverse, and mission-aligned student body. This leader joins MA at a moment of strength and growth in the Bay Area independent school market and is responsible for tactically enhancing MA's approach to building its applicant pipeline and broadening its tuition assistance outreach, ensuring that MA enrolls an extraordinary class of students from a diversity of backgrounds.

This seasoned, nimble, and creative admissions leader will deepen partnerships across MA departments by leading a schoolwide, aligned approach to enrollment. Equally present and engaged externally, the Director serves as lead ambassador to prospective students, families, school administrators, and external educational partners. As a strategic thought partner to MA's senior leadership team, this Director serves as one of the school's most visible public faces.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Craft a long-term admissions and financial aid strategy that delivers on MA's priorities and values.

The Marin Academy community is rich in diversity and perspective, and the school's distinct reputation attracts a strong and growing number of students from across the Bay Area. To remain competitive and aligned with MA's mission and strategic priorities, the incoming Director will develop and implement a comprehensive, multi-year enrollment management plan that continues to draw talented students, increases access from underrepresented regions and populations across the Bay Area, and uses data to refine enrollment forecasts. In partnership with the Dean of Institutional Advancement, Head of School, and senior leadership, annual enrollment goals will address strategic growth, yield, and retention targets.

Tuition assistance sits at the heart of MA's enrollment strategy. The Director will thoughtfully evaluate financial aid policies and allocations to ensure they support MA's values of access and diversity. Knowledge of national trends in tuition and aid practices, reflection on the current distribution of tuition assistance dollars, and development of strategies to leverage the MA Promise as a tool for mission-driven enrollment growth will be essential. Success requires partnership with the Director of Admissions and Tuition Assistance, the Chief Financial Officer, the Dean of Institutional Advancement, and the Head of School to ensure that MA both enrolls an inclusive class and stewards the financial wellbeing of the school.

Serve as an effective ambassador and storyteller of the MA experience.

As a primary ambassador for prospective families, the Director ensures that messaging and process reflect the school's values of inclusion, excellence, and community. Building on the excellent work of MA's Marketing and Communications Team, this leader will align MA's brand and identity across all aspects of recruitment and enrollment initiatives and will oversee all communications strategies related to admissions. A clear understanding of MA's position in the marketplace enables critical thinking about how to deliver and communicate the value of the MA experience for students and families at every point of the enrollment cycle—recruitment, yield, onboarding, and retention. By sharing MA's distinct curriculum and experiential opportunities, the Director will strengthen relationships with prospective families, feeder schools, educational consultants, and community organizations to increase visibility and expand applicant pipelines.

Lead the overarching admissions process and mentor a close-knit office of professionals.

The Director of Enrollment Strategy will inherit a talented group of admissions professionals. Success requires fostering an environment of collaboration and respect, leading a positive and innovative culture, and facilitating strong mentorship. Assessing and leveraging the unique strengths of each team member will ensure that everyone is valued, given space to innovate, and invited to challenge the status quo in admissions processes and procedures. To continue sharpening the team, the incoming Director will strengthen onboarding and professional development opportunities, establish a culture of transparency, and commit to regular staff touchpoints.

Develop and grow data-driven systems and procedures to guide MA's full enrollment cycle.

A systems-thinker framework serves this work well. The Director will assess current admissions data systems and will modernize the collection, analysis, and preparation of enrollment data to evaluate admissions and recruitment activities, enrollment forecasts, and financial aid packaging and policies. Attention to the regional and national enrollment trends and demographic shifts affecting independent schools today and in the future will inform strategic decisions. Through successful management of data systems and reporting, regular updates and trend analyses flow to the Office of Admissions, the senior leadership team, and the Board of Trustees. Data analytics inform decisions, identify emerging trends, and continuously refine recruitment strategies.

Collaborate across MA to support student success and mission alignment.

A comprehensive and successful enrollment strategy requires participation and buy-in from all constituents. While not a direct report to the Head of School, this Director serves as a key institutional partner on the administrative leadership team, contributes to cross-departmental planning and institutional initiatives, and represents an indispensable voice as MA's enrollment expert. Working with the Dean of Institutional Advancement, the Director of Admissions and Tuition Assistance, and the communications team, the Director ensures cohesive messaging and effective storytelling across admissions and marketing communications to articulate the distinct value of an MA education. Given the importance of alignment across recruitment, retention, and graduation of students, partnership with the advancement office ensures that prospective students and current families experience a seamless journey of connection and belonging during and after their time at MA.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The following qualifications represent the broad set of skills and personal qualities important for success as the Director of Enrollment Strategy. While no candidate will embody every quality, ideal candidates bring many of the following professional and personal attributes:

Professional Experience

- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred.
- Minimum of seven years of progressive experience in independent school or higher education admissions and enrollment management.
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in enrollment practices.
- Proven record of success in developing and executing strategic enrollment initiatives.
- Expertise in local and national enrollment trends in independent schools and fluency with policies and practices in financial aid.
- Strong analytical and data interpretation skills with familiarity in software systems that support recruitment, admissions review, and financial aid management.

Personal Qualities

- Strategic and visionary thinker with strong planning and organizational skills.
- Warm, relational, and authentic communicator.
- Innovative and adaptive; comfortable with change and growth.
- Ability to build trust and foster teamwork.
- Strong sense of humor.
- Deeply aligned with the school's values of Character, Community, Leadership, and Excellence.

Research shows that people from structurally marginalized groups often apply only when they meet 100 percent of qualifications. As no one ever meets 100 percent of qualifications, we encourage you to apply if most of these reflect your experience and expertise.

COMPENSATION

This is a full-time, 12-month senior leadership position with a competitive salary and comprehensive benefits package commensurate with experience. The anticipated salary for this position is between \$150,000 and \$175,000 annually.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/marin-academy/director-enrollment-strategy>.

Berkley Braden, Lauren Wilkes, and Kira Hamilton
Isaacson, Miller

Marin Academy creates a community where everyone belongs and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. We encourage candidates from all backgrounds to apply and bring their full selves to this work.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Marin Academy. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Marin Academy would supersede any conflicting information in this document.

APPENDIX: MORE ABOUT MARIN ACADEMY

Philosophy

Marin Academy believes that educational excellence should push the boundaries of both what and how students learn to prepare them to lead and thrive in a rapidly changing world. The school sees the high school years as a critically important time when students discover who they are, what they value, what they enjoy, and where they are headed. Students develop the skills and knowledge that will serve them well now and in the future.

Notably, MA is committed to experiential education. Students receive a solid foundation in traditional academic subjects in a college-preparatory program, and the school believes that healthy, challenging experiences both inside and outside the classroom are essential for taking adolescents to and beyond intellectual and theoretical knowledge. Throughout, the school promotes critical thinking—informed, independent, collaborative, and creative—as the hallmark of the Marin Academy experience. The curriculum focuses on problems, projects, and questions that cultivate an intentional set of skills linked to MA's school-wide competencies: Demonstrated Empathy, Imaginative Curiosity, Intellectual Flexibility, Compelling Expression, and Strategic Boldness. Thus, curriculum and assessment methods focus on transferable and enduring skills, and MA moved away from AP courses in 2016.

MA expects participation and reflection to be active, inspired, and sustained. Students thrive in a supportive, compassionate environment that promotes friendly, open dialogue based on respect and trust. The school encourages students to explore complex ideas and diverse perspectives, to test their values and judgments, to make their own discoveries, and to make mistakes. Each individual recognizes their shared responsibility to inspire and foster a purposefully diverse, equitable, and just community, where students and adults of varied backgrounds, beliefs, attributes, and abilities relate to one another as individuals worthy of respect. Further, the school embraces its responsibility to promote, within and beyond the boundaries of Marin Academy, the values inherent in a democratic society.

The MA Experience

Marin Academy encourages students to break out of academic silos and explore new ways of seeing the world. Using models like [competency-based](#) education and transdisciplinary learning, MA is transforming education to better reflect the way their students will engage in the world beyond high school. MA is a founding member of the Mastery Transcript Consortium. [Signature experiences](#) include:

Transdisciplinary Leadership Program (TLP)

An innovative research- and action-based program for 12th graders. The heart of TLP is a year-long course with a supporting practicum, fulfilling semester credits in English and either history or science. Students explore the nuances and perspectives of a societal issue and then respond to

it in partnership with community organizations, including institutions of higher learning, non-profit organizations, local government officials or agencies, and local companies.

Marin Academy Research Collaborative (MARC)

The MARC program empowers students to ask questions and push the boundaries of scientific knowledge. Participants receive robust curricular support as they work to make meaningful, publishable contributions to real-world scientific investigation in partnership with professional scientists.

Conference on Democracy

Embodying a key tenet of the school's mission that "challenges each person to accept the responsibilities posed by education in a democratic society," the annual Conference on Democracy features speakers, panelists, workshops, and programming that examine a wide array of perspectives and issues related to our democratic systems. Now in its 20th year, Conference on Democracy is a fully student-led program.

Identity & Equity (IDEQ) Leaders

Marin Academy has long modeled student-led diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging efforts. IDEQ leaders are trained in leadership and facilitation skills, enabling them to design and implement a comprehensive program of student-led affinity spaces and open community dialogues that center the experiences and stories of minoritized community members.

Outings

The Marin Academy Outings Program offers wilderness, rural, and urban adventures large and small, and has been central to the school's identity from its founding. MA students are grounded in place, acquire and apply ecological and cultural knowledge, develop a sense of self through nature, and become responsible stewards of the human and non-human environment.

MA understands that balance plays a critical role in the teenage learning process. With the block schedule, classes meet every other day, giving students the time they need in class to truly dig into their coursework, while still providing ample time for community activities, including assemblies, class meetings, and advisory group meetings.

[Diversity, equity, and belonging](#) are similarly a core part of the MA experience. MA believes in developing talent and ensuring that every community member has the access and sense of belonging necessary to nurture and share their multitudes of diverse strengths and identities. This is reflected in the diverse community, with 38 percent students of color, 21 percent students on tuition assistance, 32 percent students from public schools, and 38 percent employees of color.

Finally, environmental stewardship is firmly integrated within the mindset and culture of the school and its community. MA has systematically integrated environmental sustainability into the curriculum and

operations, making significant progress in solar power and water and energy conservation. In particular, the Science and Innovation Center's Platinum LEED certification—the highest level of green building design and construction—embodies the school's commitment to sustainable design and technology for all building projects.

Strategic Plan

MA's Strategic Plan (2017-2026) reaffirms a commitment to the founders' vision and builds on the school's strengths to chart an ambitious future. The plan's five goals include: transform education, expand diversity, excellence without exception, inspire generosity, and attract and sustain. To learn more about the progress to date and what's next for each goal, please visit <https://www.ma.org/about/strategic-plan>.

A new strategic planning process is currently underway, focusing on five interconnected goals: people, program, permanence, place, and promise. These ensure MA's continued excellence and leadership in progressive education.

Campus and San Rafael

Situated on a ten-acre, 115-year-old campus that was once a military school, MA's impressive facilities include a library, science and innovation center, theater, visual arts center, music and dance building, two gymnasiums, a new competition swimming pool, and an all-weather synthetic field.

MA is fortunate to be located in San Rafael, the heart of Marin County, which offers the benefits of both urban living and natural beauty. Famous for its fantastic weather year-round, San Rafael is the oldest, largest, and most culturally diverse city in the county. Its quaint downtown boasts Victorian buildings, restaurants, boutiques, and the San Rafael City Plaza. The plaza is a lively gathering spot that hosts events like the Thursday night farmer's market and summertime concerts. San Rafael is also proud to be one of 14 California Cultural Districts recognized by the California Arts Council. The visionary architect Frank Lloyd Wright left his mark here by designing the impressive Marin County Civic Center, designated a national historical landmark. Hikers, bikers, campers, and kayakers are often drawn to San Rafael, given its abundant open space.

Leadership

Travis Brownley has served as Head of School since 2008, bringing more than thirty years of educational leadership to MA. An English teacher by training, she holds a B.A. with distinction from the University of Virginia and an M.A.L.S. from Dartmouth College. She taught at Groton, Winsor, and San Francisco University High School before serving as Head of Upper School at The Wheeler School and arriving at MA as Head of School. She coached basketball and field hockey, taught poetry, and once wrote an article titled "Off the Ball Play: What Teaching Poetry and Coaching Basketball Have in Common." She believes in the bravery of curiosity, the necessity of integrity, and the power of education to serve democracy.

Trent Nutting is MA's Dean of Institutional Advancement, where he oversees all aspects of admissions, advancement, marketing, and communications. Trent began his leadership at MA over 11 years ago, first as the Director of Admissions and later as the Director of Strategic Engagement. Trent joined Marin Academy from Choate Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, CT, where he served as Senior Associate Director of Admissions, with Northern California as one of his primary recruiting areas.