



Executive Director
July 2009

CANDIDATE INFORMATION DOCUMENT



Educational Directions Incorporated

The Trusted Authority for Advancing School Leadership

Mission

“The New York State Association of Independent Schools is the collective voice of its member schools. NYSAIS protects its schools’ self-determination, inspires its exploration of educational innovation, and chronicles their strivings toward continual self-improvement.”

Overview

The next Executive Director of the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS) will find a nationally respected, well-established and vibrant association with an experienced staff and a sophisticated, committed Board of Directors.

Founded in 1947, NYSAIS now has 180 member schools. These schools (nursery, elementary and secondary; boarding and day; urban and rural; single gender and coed; religiously-affiliated and non) bring to the association a rich diversity of interests, challenges and opportunities while united in a commitment to independent education.

Currently, 3 staff members — one in charge of evaluation and accreditation, one in charge of professional development and one in charge of the office assist the Executive Director.

The office is in the Capitol District – a location of strategic importance because of the legislative work of the association and the opportunity to collaborate with other educational organizations whose central offices are in Albany. It is not necessary for the Executive Director to be in the physical office on a daily or weekly basis.

Over the past 15 years, membership has grown by 25% with a concurrent growth in the type and nature of services provided to members. These services include:

- Advocacy for independent education
- Evaluation and accreditation of member schools
- Professional development for faculty, administrators and trustees
- Ad hoc institutional counsel to heads and board chairs
- Information on legislation, regulations, statistics, educational developments and administrative practice

Supporting the work of the Association are 7 standing committees: Accreditation, Athletic Association, Business Affairs Council, Diversity, Professional Development Committee, and Technology. Extensive information about each is available on the association web site (www.nysais.org).

Established originally to guard the independence of its member schools, protect independent schools from obstructive legislation and regulation, this mandate remains an ongoing and important aspect of the Director's responsibilities. Supporting the Director is an Albany law firm, retained by NYSAIS, which provides legislative counsel and serves as a voice for the association in the capitol.

NYSAIS plays an important role in collecting and disseminating a wealth of information and data pertinent to independent schools in New York. The web site is a primary resource vehicle. Additionally, the association publishes a monthly *Bulletin*.

The association is extremely active with the evaluation and accreditation of member schools. On average, 30 schools participate in some stage of this activity per year. Overseen by a staff member of 20+ years tenure and a Commission on Accreditation, this "division" of the association has codified its procedures and is committed to making the process responsive and reflective of the diverse schools that it serves. It enjoys a reputation for "high-quality" services.

The association's professional development programs for faculty, administrators and trustees are highly respected and well run by another staff member of long-tenure. Conference committees work with the staff member to design and implement these programs. In 2007-2008, this arm of the association administered 8 residential conferences, 3 teacher institutes, 1 new teacher summer program and 27 workshops. The total number of participants was 2,197.

While viewing itself as an independent state association, NYSAIS well understands the need to collaborate with other organizations — national, regional and state — committed to independent education.

In the final stages of completion, member schools of NYSAIS participated in a strategic planning process this November to ascertain the priorities for the association in the near future. Among the areas identified for incorporation into the plan are:

- Clarification of membership criteria
- Operational structure of the association office
- Enhanced structure of professional development programming to meet the diverse needs of membership
- Increase in professional development programs centering on governance
- Increased coordination of information between Accreditation and Professional Development
- Analysis of current fiscal structure of NYSAIS and sources of revenue
- Examining ways for NYSAIS to provide a forum for information sharing and professional support; a consortium for common services

The Board of Trustees of NYSAIS defines its role as one of active partnership with the Executive Director. With a depth of knowledge about the various aspects of the association, the Board works with the Executive Director to identify and discuss issues of import. Elected by membership at the Annual Meeting, current heads and trustees of member schools are eligible to serve on the board. The Board meets four times a year.

History of the Association

The New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS) is a voluntary association of 180 independent schools, enrolling a total of some 70,000 students. Detailed information about membership requirements can be found on the website.

It is incorporated under New York State Law and is non-profit and federally tax-exempt. NYSAIS is fiscally sound and well positioned to move from the strength of the past and present to strength in the future. The organization belongs to the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and the Coalition of Independent and Religious Schools.

“In 1947 eleven independent schools in New York State joined forces to support a suit of The Packer Collegiate Institute contesting the constitutionality of a law requiring the registration of all elementary schools other than public and parochial. Upon the successful conclusion of the suit, the schools established NYSAIS, believing that a formal association would be more effective in opposing any future detrimental legislation.

The Association grew slowly, and in its early years was managed by an elected executive committee of member school heads. Legislative oversight was dealt with by an Albany head whose access to the Governor’s office was assured by the fact that the Governor was a satisfied parent. An annual meeting of school heads completed the Association’s formal undertakings.

The 1960’s saw increasing pressure to expand the range of activities to include regular liaison with other educational organizations, the evaluation of elementary schools, inter-school cooperative ventures, and educational research. The routine business of maintaining records, collecting dues, arranging meetings, etc. was proving to be more than executive committee members could manage in spare time. Accordingly, in November of 1967 steps were taken to incorporate the Association under a charter from the Regents and to establish a permanent office of Executive Secretary. In the following fall Appleton Mason, former head of Lake Forest Country Day School, assumed the post, and the Regents granted a charter.

In the nine years during which Mr. Mason directed the affairs of the Association the membership grew to over one hundred schools, a process for evaluation of elementary schools was developed and implemented, the Conference for Nonpublic Education (an informal association of independent and religious schools) was formed, legislative counsel was engaged, services to schools were expanded, and the reputation and influence of the Association were substantially enlarged.

On Mr. Mason’s resignation in 1977, Stephen Hinrichs, Headmaster of The Harley School, was retained as Executive Director. During his tenure the membership and the functions of the Association grew steadily, evaluations and accreditations were extended to include secondary schools, legal counsel was retained, an Athletic Association was formed and information and publication services expanded.

Following Mr. Hinrich’s retirement in 1986, Frederick C. Calder, Headmaster of Germantown Friends School in Philadelphia, became Executive Director. Since 1986,

membership has continued to grow, special programs for trustee education have been developed, information and publication services have been further expanded, post-season athletic tournaments have been approved, a Trustee Committee on Governance has been established, and an extensive website has been added.

In 1982, an Associate Director was appointed to organize and plan all of the Association's work in professional development. Programs now serve school heads, trustees, business officers, school administrators, and teachers. In 1986, a second Associate Director was appointed whose primary responsibility is to administer the evaluation and accreditation process for member schools. The future will see more ranging opportunities for teachers and administrators, both through workshops and service with visiting committees evaluating schools. In 2003, an Associate Executive Director was appointed to assist the Executive Director with school visitations, professional development efforts, and evaluation and accreditation work. During Elizabeth Penney Riegelman's tenure (2007-2009), systems have been modernized and a cycle of strategic long term planning established.

The Association will continue also to exercise its original function, that of safeguarding the independence of the member schools and relieving them of administrative burdens so that they may concentrate their energies on the education of children."

Quoted from NYSAIS Web Site

Opportunities and Challenges

1. Partner with the Board in being an articulate ambassador for the importance of independent education in the New York State; clarifying and capitalizing on the uses of media to "tell the story".
2. Continue to strengthen the relationships, and develop opportunities for creative collaborations, with NAIS and other organizations and associations nationally, regionally and in the state.
3. Continue to advocate for diversity and build on the strength of the current relationships with Catholic, Jewish and other religious schools.
4. Continue the strong and vital relationship with the State and its representatives in Albany, which is essential to the continuing independence of our schools.
5. Continue to enhance relationships and communications with member schools. Be a resource to both individual school heads and trustees.
6. Keep abreast of issues affecting New York state schools.
7. Develop with the expertise of staff and Board of Trustees the steps needed to fulfill the goals of the NYSAIS strategic planning efforts.
8. Continue to modify, where needed, the structure and operations of the NYSAIS

office to meet the needs of the organization.

9. Further explore the role and use of technology to support the current and future services of the association and to coordinate with the resources of members schools.

Qualities of Leadership Sought

The NYSAIS Board of Trustees and the Search Committee seek a person of exceptional leadership to strengthen and sustain the organization in the years ahead. The successful candidate will satisfy many, if not all, of the following:

Professional Experience:

- Commitment to and passion for all forms of independent education
- Experience working with and in independent schools
- Specific experience in the areas of
 - Governance
 - Fiscal management
 - Building and sustaining collaborative relationships on an organizational level
 - Strategic Planning
- Ability to balance the demands of building consensus around communal issues as well as advocating for specific member needs
- Superior communication skills
- Knowledge of and experience in the uses of technology as both a communication tool and a strategy for building community
- Excellent organizational, management and creative problem-solving skills
- Knowledge of regional, national and international educational trends

Personal Qualities:

- Approachable, empathic
- Intellectually curious
- Creative and strategic thinker
- “Self-starter”
- Ability to work independently and be flexible in work habits and space
- Sense of humor
- High levels of energy and stamina
- Ability to and enjoyment of wearing many hats — from being a visionary to being one’s own secretary in implementing the vision
- Enjoyment of and ability to relate to a wide variety of people, individually and in groups

