



Independent Schools Association of the Central States Executive Director Search for July 2020 www.isacs.org

The Independent Schools Association of the Central States ([ISACS](http://www.isacs.org)) is seeking a new Executive Director for July 2020. Since 2014, ISACS, through bold strategic thinking, a significant upgrade in its technological capacity, and an expansion of its full-time staff, is poised to ask fresh and different questions about accreditation, professional development, the future of independent schools in the Midwest, and the use of technology to strengthen relationships between schools and ISACS. ISACS is a well-managed, well-governed, and financially healthy organization that provides valuable services to its member schools. ISACS is in an outstanding position to welcome the new Executive Director.

— A Brief Introduction —

ISACS is an association of more than 240 independent schools in the Midwest region of the country. ISACS is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3), and the member schools elect new trustees annually, based on recommendations from the Board. The current Board includes 10 school heads, eight teachers & administrators, and two former trustees of ISACS schools. The Executive Director is an Ex-Officio member. ISACS was originally a teacher organization, which has resulted in the prominence of teachers in its governance, committee structures, and programs. Every member school has a teacher representative, appointed by the head of school. The full Board of 21 trustees meets three times annually. Members of the Board chair standing and *ad hoc* committees that review the services of ISACS, oversee financial accountability, and address timely issues of concern. The primary services of ISACS are accreditation and professional development. [Please click here to view the most recent Strategic Plan.](#)

ISACS has seven staff members, in addition to the Executive Director: Director of Accreditation; Accreditation Associate, who provides administrative support to the accreditation operation and the work of the Executive Director; Director of Communications, Outreach & Research, who also assists in assembling visiting teams for accreditation; Director of Professional Development; Director of Programs; Director of Technology & Manager of Programs; and Director of Finance. The small staff is flexible and adept at supporting one another in accomplishing the many responsibilities of ISACS. The operating budget for 2019-2020 is \$2,270,000. The office moved in the summer of 2013 to a space overlooking the Chicago River. ISACS purchased two condominium units in the new location and combined them to provide, in addition to required office space, a meeting center large enough to accommodate board and committee meetings as well as professional development events in downtown Chicago.

ISACS:

Providing accreditation, professional development and support services to more than 240 independent schools throughout the Central States.

Mission:

ISACS leads schools to pursue exemplary independent education.

Vision:

ISACS schools empower all students to contribute and thrive in a diverse and changing world.

Core Values:

- Equity
- Integrity
- Continuous Improvement

Strategic Plan Goals 2016-2021:

- 1) Enhance Professional Development
- 2) Enhance the Accreditation Process
- 3) Enhance Equity and Justice
- 4) Enhance Leadership, Governance, and Infrastructure
- 5) Expand Branding and Promotion

Member States:

Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, West Virginia, Wisconsin

ISACS 2019-20 Committees

Accreditation Review Committee
Administrative Services Committee
Equity and Justice Committee
Executive Committee
Finance Committee
Member Needs Task Force
Professional Services Committee
Trusteeship Committee

Accreditation — ISACS provides a comprehensive accreditation process for its member schools, based on a seven-year cycle. ISACS staff coordinate the process, including conducting school visits, assembling visiting teams, and supporting the work of the Accreditation Review Committee. Along with other independent school accrediting bodies, ISACS is a member of the International Council Advancing Independent School Accreditation (ICAISA). Through ICAISA, ISACS has achieved recognition of its accreditation practices and strives for continual improvement in this area.

Professional Development — ISACS is known for its high-impact and forward-thinking professional development events for administrators, teachers, emerging leaders, heads of school, trustees, and parents. The Director of Professional Development and the Director of Programs select topics and, with the help of the Director of Technology & Manager of Programs, handle the logistics. The Professional Services Committee (PSC), the Administrative Services Committee (ASC), the Equity & Justice Committee (E&J), and past participants at ISACS events suggest topics. Annual offerings include the Annual Conference, Trustee Day, the Heads Conference, the Kellogg/ISACS Leadership Academy with an emphasis on business acumen for school leaders, training for Deans and Departments Chairs, the New Teacher Institute, the Academy for Division Heads, the Academy for New Division Heads and Leaders, and an affinity workshop for educators of color. Biennial events include the Diversity Summit and Workshop for Administrative Assistants. ISACS offers Learning Bridge webinars on many different topics and a wide variety of workshops for teachers and administrators complemented by ongoing opportunities for consultation with the ISACS staff. The Director of Professional Development serves as the staff liaison to the ASC, PSC and E&J Committee.

— The Executive Director —

The Executive Director's time is divided relatively evenly among partnering with the board on strategic direction and supporting board and committee activities, working with the staff on implementation of strategic initiatives, and direct services to schools. The Executive Director serves as the staff point-person for heads and board chairs: fielding requests for resources and counsel, visiting with heads on campus and at regional meetings, planning and hosting the annual two-day conference for heads, participating in the ISACS year-long program designed to support new heads, writing a monthly newsletter specifically for heads, and providing school-based governance workshops upon request. It is expected that the Executive Director will continue the practice of visiting member schools and providing special support for new heads.

— The Candidate —

ISACS is seeking an experienced educator who will work closely and effectively with the trustees and the heads of the member schools. Here are some questions the new Executive Director will need to work on with the Board of Trustees:

- How can the accreditation process be redesigned to better serve the needs of an array of schools with different needs and interests?
- How can ISACS leverage its growing technological expertise to improve its professional development programs and its communication and work with member schools?
- How can ISACS fortify governance among its schools with a focus on board-head relationships?
- How can ISACS assist its members in an age of rapid innovation in curriculum and pedagogy?

Candidates should possess the executive capabilities necessary to lead a high-performing organization. These capabilities include strong organizational, strategic, interpersonal, communication, and leadership skills.

Qualifications: Candidates must have the experience and skills to deal with the broad range of issues facing ISACS member schools and, therefore, should demonstrate the following:

- sufficient educational or “school” experience, such as the head of an independent school, to be a credible and respected leader of ISACS
- excellent understanding of the issues facing independent schools, especially financial sustainability, enrollment and fundraising
- skill in articulating and promoting the value of an independent school education
- appreciation for the diversity of the member schools including the broad range in size, structure, mission, and financial resources
- familiarity with the educational spectrum, including charter and public schools
- understanding of the characteristics of a mutually beneficial relationship between heads and boards
- experience with the accreditation process
- ability to work closely and strategically with the ISACS Board in building a strong partnership in governance and leadership
- ability to inspire trust and confidence through exemplary team leadership and collaboration
- a history of building constructive relationships and effectively resolving conflict
- superior communication skills

Candidates should be prepared to make Chicago their home and to travel frequently to visit ISACS schools and attend relevant national and regional conferences.

— The Search Process —

ISACS has engaged the national executive search firm, [Educational Directions](#), Portsmouth, RI to assist with the search. Please direct all inquiries, applications, and nominations in confidence to:

Christopher B. Arnold (carnold@edu-directions.com), **Dr. Jerry Larson** (jlarson@edu-directions.com) or **Samuel S. Richards** (srichards@edu-directions.com)

Candidates should submit electronically by August 31, 2019:

- a cover letter explaining their interest in the Executive Director position at ISACS
- a resume or CV
- the names, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers of five professional references (*reference letters specific to the ISACS search welcomed but not required*)

Candidate Referrals Welcome: Please forward, to the e-mail addresses listed above, the names and contact information of qualified candidates who may not be aware of this opportunity.

ISACS and Educational Directions do not discriminate against qualified applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, national or ethnic origin, sexual identity, religion, age, or physical disability. ISACS is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer and seeks a diverse and broad spectrum of qualified candidates.

