





Mission Statement

The Midsouth Association of Independent Schools is to certify the educational integrity of member schools and to promote the development and freedoms of independent schools in the region.



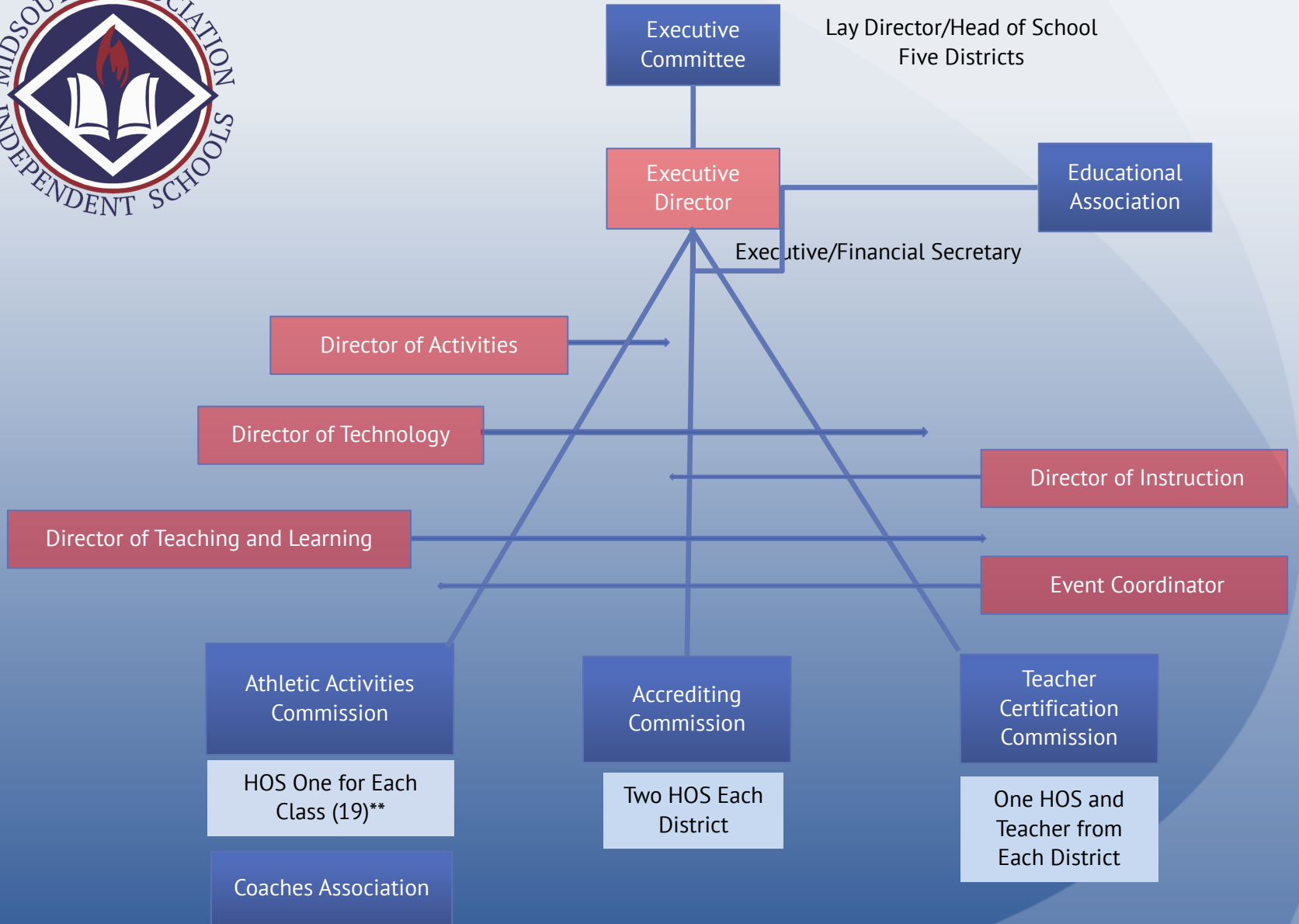
Legal Authority

The Accreditation Commission of the Mississippi Association of Independent Schools, under the authority of Section 37-17-9 of the Mississippi Code of 1972 and in accordance with the By-Laws of the Mississippi Association of Independent Schools (revised July 1993), was established to develop, evaluate, and maintain standards that would be used in determining the initial qualifications for accreditation of non-public schools and to provide for a systematic annual evaluation of member schools based on the fore-mentioned standards.



Organizational Vision

As the champion of independent education in the region, the MAIS will cultivate educational leaders; provide on-line resources such as teacher training, curricula, and inter-scholastic activity coordination for member schools and expand its sphere of influence through partnerships with national and other regional educational agencies.



MDE + MHSAA = MAIS





Midsouth Association of Independent Schools Understanding Independent School Parents





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Independent School Parent Characteristics

- 1.. Generally well educated.
- 2.. They have high expectations for what education will do for their children. 3.

They are accustomed to unusually high levels of control over their lives.

4. Generally on average, pretty anxious individuals.

The Fear Divide

Highly educated people not only care about education and value it for their children, but they also often are frightened of or ignorant about the alternatives. Fear can make them act desperate when they think their children as not getting a quality education.





Things a Head of School Must *Enable/Foster*

Things a Trustee Must *Understand*

The HOS and Board Chair must cultivate the partnership



Board Responsibilities/Vision

- Consistent/Stable Model of Governance
- Trustee Development/Evaluations
- Long Range Plan/Vision/Board Training
- Guard the Mission and Promote the Vision
- Serve as a Sounding Board for Emerging Ideas



Board Responsibilities/Financial

- Enrollment/Financial Aid/Tuition
- Net Tuition Revenue/Cost Per Division
- Tuition Gap
- Debt Service/Federal Money



Board Responsibilities/Head

- Hire the Head of School
- Stay Out of Day-to-Day Operations
- Cultivate/Defend the Role of Head of School
- Head of School/Trustee Evaluations



Board Responsibilities/General

- Understand Role
- Think Strategically
- Represent School
- Maintain Confidentiality
- Operate Efficiently



Things a Head of School Must *Understand*

Things a Trustee Must *Do*

The HOS must understand how to foster these responsibilities.



Trustee Responsibilities

The board adopts a clear statement of the school's mission, vision, and strategic goals and establishes policies and plans consistent with this statement.



Trustee Responsibilities

Authority is vested in the board *as a whole*. A trustee who learns of an issue of importance to the school has the obligation to bring it to the head of school or to the board chairman and must refrain from responding to the situation individually.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee keeps all board deliberations in confidence. Then actively supports the decision when published.



Trustee Responsibilities

As leader of the school community, the board engages proactively with the head of school in cultivating and maintaining good relations with school constituents as well as the broader community.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee focuses on the big picture and enables the head to run the school.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee must ask questions about major issues and participate in appropriate decisions. Fulfill the *private* confidential duties as a trustee to question, think out loud, and even to criticize when appropriate during meetings. Also fulfill the *public* role by advocating and defending. Report (but don't support) of dissent.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee understands and supports the Mission, articulates it publicly, and uses it as a guidepost for making board decisions. A trustee ensures that integrity is a hallmark of the school.



Trustee Responsibilities

The board reviews and maintains appropriate bylaws that conform to legal requirements.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee understands the school's bylaws and the board's fiduciary duties and seeks to be an effective participant in board deliberations, helping to keep board discussions at the policy level.



Trustee Responsibilities

The board assures that the school and the board operate in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, minimizing exposure to legal action. The board creates a conflict-of-interest policy that is reviewed with, and signed by, individual trustees annually.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee must disclose conflicts of interest. A trustee makes sure that the appropriate risk-management policies are in place and that the board is vigilant in assessing potential risks.



Trustee Responsibilities

The board accepts accountability for both the financial stability and the financial future of the institution, engaging in strategic financial planning, assuming primary responsibility for the preservation of capital assets and endowments, overseeing operating budgets, and participating actively in fund raising.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee understands the finances of the school, actively participates in board discussions, and ensures that the necessary financial policies are in place.



Trustee Responsibilities

The board selects, supports, nurtures, evaluates, and sets appropriate compensation for the head of school.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee commits to keeping the board's relationship with the head dynamic and positive. This includes participating in the head's evaluation as appropriate and supporting the head's personal development to help him or her become even more effective.



Trustee Responsibilities

The board recognizes that its primary work and focus are long-range and strategic.



Trustee Responsibilities

The board undertakes formal strategic planning on a periodic basis, sets annual goals related to the plan, and conducts annual written evaluations for the school, the head of school, and the board itself.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee focuses on issues that ensure that the school will thrive in the future.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee enthusiastically promotes a culture of evaluation and participate in all appropriate evaluations.



Trustee Responsibilities

Board composition reflects the strategic expertise, resources, and perspectives (past, present, and future) needed to achieve the mission and strategic objectives of the school.



Trustee Responsibilities

The board keeps full and accurate records of its meetings, committees, and policies. It publishes its decisions widely, while keeping its deliberations confidential.



Trustee Responsibilities

The board is committed to a program of professional development that includes annual new-trustee orientation, ongoing trustee education and evaluation, and board-leadership succession planning.



Trustee Responsibilities

The board works to ensure all its members are actively involved in the work of the board and its committees.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee works with fellow board members and the head to make connections with the school community and, beyond that, to further the school's mission, program, and policies.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee participates in the annual board self-evaluation with candor; seek opportunities for training and education within and beyond the school; and accept a leadership position, if offered.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee is enthusiastic about the school—its mission, head, faculty, students, and curriculum—knowing that such enthusiasm can be contagious.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee stays fully informed about current operations and issues by attending meetings regularly, coming to meetings well prepared, and participating fully in all matters.



Trustee Responsibilities

The board sets policy and focuses on long-range and strategic issues. Trustees do not become involved directly in specific management, personnel or curricular issues.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee speaks up during board discussions but supports the will of the majority both within the board and publicly.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee speaks with candor during board deliberations but keeps such discussions and the views of other trustees in confidence.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee accepts and supports board decisions. Once a decision has been made, the board speaks with one voice.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee is polite to those who contact him with a concern yet firmly in adheres to the trustee role. Refer the person to the head of school or the board chairman, whoever is more appropriate.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee contributes to the development program of the school, including strategic planning for development, financial support, and active involvement in annual and capital giving.



Trustee Responsibilities

A trustee has the responsibility to support the school and its head and to demonstrate that support within the community.



Things a Trustee Must *Understand*

Things a Head of School Must *Master*

The HOS must come to terms with these challenges.



Trustee Turnover

To enable boards to bring in new blood and diplomatically cut ties with minimally effective trustees, many schools have embraced term limits during the past 25 years. There are certainly benefits to this strategy, but there is a downside to term limits as well. Boards need institutional memory, and there are obvious benefits to retaining trustees who have been generous with their wealth, wisdom, and willingness to work. When term limits require that valuable trustees step aside for a year, the school runs the risk of losing that person to another nonprofit institution, be it a museum, a church, or a hospital. To replace these extraordinary individuals is not easy. Often, key board initiatives stall as a result. And guess who must participate in the search process for new trustees? Once again, major demands are made on the Head's time – both to find and to orient new Board members to productive participation.



Communication and Transparency

What qualities are you expecting in a Head of School? Twenty years ago, the idea rarely centered on the, “We need someone who is a superb communicator.” Today, virtually every constituent group is looking for someone who is a skilled communicator, is open and transparent, and is unfailingly responsive to the concerns of faculty, parents, students, and alumni. This expectation that the head will be the Communicator in Chief has been further complicated by the explosion in instant communication devices. Today, heads routinely face scores of electronic messages each day—most from individuals expecting an immediate reply. Responding to this explosion, the conscientious Head of School must allocate time—often significant—to satisfy the communications expectations of the school community.



The Consumer Mentality

Reinforcing the communications challenges facing heads is the underlying attitude of *entitlement* that has emerged with a vengeance among many independent school parents over the past couple of decades. These parents not infrequently introduce their demands with the statement, “Since I am paying tuition, I expect the school to [fill in the blank].” This attitude, unfortunately, gives little or no recognition to the fact that running a school is terribly complex and that decisions need to be made for the greater good of all students, not simply to benefit a few. Second, many parents who send their children to an independent school have expectations that the Head of School should be visible at all the plays, art exhibits, recitals, and games. Obviously, attendance at all these events is incredibly time-consuming. If the Head bows to the pressure of parents to be consistently visible, that person has no alternative other than to log in hours during the evenings or early mornings to respond to emails, correspondence, and telephone calls.



The Price of Privilege

Once parents worked in partnership with schools to discipline students who stepped out of line. Unfortunately, this partnership in the moral and social development of youngsters can no longer be assumed. When I evaluate schools now, I hear about parents entering uninvited the elementary school classes of their children, complaining about grades, or even writing papers for their child—and blindly defending their child whenever he or she engages in inappropriate behavior. In so doing, these parents prevent the students from taking ownership of their own behavior, learning from their mistakes, and developing a sense of responsibility. Parents who go to the Head (whether immediately or after another administrator or teacher did not give them the response they wanted) routinely expect the Head to drop what he or she is doing to address the crisis of the moment. These parents are not just making more demands on the time of the Head; they are creating an environment in which the head feels under siege.



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