MARIN COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL
Corte Madera, California

DIRECTOR OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION
Start Date: July 2021
mcdfs.org
OVERVIEW

Children are at the center of everything at Marin Country Day School (MCDS), an independent K-8 coeducational day school. With a vibrant community and well-regarded programs, MCDS provides a distinguished education based on distinctive values, aspirations, and practices. Students at MCDS enjoy the benefits of innovative teaching, enhanced understanding of how children learn, tools for clear and creative expression, and an increasingly diverse student body.

The founders of MCDS believed in creating a school that blended the best of traditional pedagogy with a progressive approach to teaching and learning, within an environment that would allow children to be connected to nature. Set on 35 beautiful acres, the campus is part of the curriculum, and provides students with boundless opportunities to explore, do field research, play, and feel joy. Through an academically rigorous and engaging curriculum, MCDS students gain excellent academic preparation, self-awareness, and confidence to succeed in high school and well beyond. The heart of the school's programs are its exceptional teachers, who inspire and challenge students, respecting each of them for their unique strengths and identities.

The school seeks a dynamic, collaborative, and inspiring educational leader to serve as its Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion starting July 2021. The successful candidate will be an experienced educational leader devoted to the school’s mission and programs. The Director works with the administration, faculty, and students to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are integrated throughout the school’s curriculum, structures, policies, and practices. Working closely with the senior leadership team, the Director will partner across all levels of the school to develop, implement, and track progress on ongoing strategic and tactical initiatives that help dismantle inequities and enhance MCDS’ inclusive environment.
THE SCHOOL

Marin Country Day School is a vibrant, nurturing, and rigorous learning community of 594 students. Supported by an outstanding faculty and staff, each child is encouraged to become passionately engaged in his or her own education while acquiring a strong foundation of values and skills. The school’s supportive learning environment inspires children to learn individually and alongside their classmates, exploring, taking risks, and establishing a foundation for success. Students develop the capacity and motivation to become responsible citizens who work toward making the world a better place.

Faculty and staff nurture a dynamic community of hearts and minds and bring people together in a campus full of possibilities. MCDS is a friendly, comfortable, and busy school. Students and their teachers participate with gusto in and out of the classroom, the playing fields, the labs, and the theater in a community with a high level of trust between children and adults. All interactions are guided by the core values of respect, responsibility, and compassion.

When MCDS was founded in 1956, its founders were committed to creating a diverse community comprised of families from both sides of the Golden Gate. The Bay Area is now one of the most diverse places in the country and the school is committed to reflecting these vibrant diversities. Families, faculty, and staff represent an increasingly broad spectrum of economic backgrounds, family structures, racial, ethnic, and gender identities. This diversity of experience equips students with the perspectives and skills necessary to thrive in a complex, multicultural, and increasingly connected world.

MCDS is accredited by the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS).
ACADEMICS

MCDS is a place where all students fall in love with learning. Each child is challenged to think independently, make connections, take risks, and overcome adversity in their educational journey. The school provides academic rigor through a hands-on learning approach that combines traditional academics with the best qualities of progressive education to inspire, nurture, and challenge students. Teachers emphasize the fundamentals, while also allowing children to learn actively through exploration and discovery.

Varied instructional methods and learning opportunities range from teacher-directed to student-centered, and from individual projects to cooperative-learning situations. Throughout, active participation and engagement are the norm. The school encourages integrated thinking and broad, practical application of knowledge, concepts, and skills. Teachers offer varied and frequent feedback to students and encourage self-reflection and goal setting.

The school’s rich curriculum includes classes in traditional academic disciplines: English, Mandarin, Spanish, mathematics, science, and social studies. Offerings in art, music, drama, and athletics are also integral elements of the MCDS experience. Multi-day outdoor education trips begin in third grade, which are a natural extension of classroom learning. These overnight excursions foster a sense of community among students and include visits to Yosemite National Park, Joshua Tree National Monument, Ansel Adams Wilderness, and the historic town of Columbia, CA, to study the Gold Rush, among other trips. Further, Aikido/Energy Time, physical education, and age-appropriate lessons in nutrition, human sexuality, and substance abuse promote health and wellness while ensuring students are cared for physically and emotionally.
Lower School
Lower School consists of students in kindergarten through fourth grade. The Lower School experience provides students with a strong foundation in basic skills, develops habits of heart and mind essential to 21st-century learning, instills a commitment to service and civic engagement, builds students’ social and emotional skills, and fosters a life-long love of learning in a joyful and child-centered environment.

Math and literacy skills are emphasized, and social studies units at each grade level provide students with opportunities to apply basic skills and learn about topics in depth. Students explore the scientific process in relation to life, environmental, and physical science. The school’s campus is regularly used as an outdoor classroom: students study the ecosystem of the Bay and monitor water quality from MCDS’s dock and marsh. Specialized classes in art, music, physical education, world languages (in grades three and four), and library round out a robust Lower School curriculum.

Upper School
In Upper School, grades five through eight, students develop critical thinking and reasoning skills in a rigorous and highly engaging program. Students continue to hone their skills while gaining a strong foundation that prepares them for the challenges of high school. As they face new academic and social challenges, students are supported by a dedicated and compassionate faculty.

Courses in Upper School include English, Spanish or Mandarin, history, mathematics, science, art, music, drama, social emotional learning, and physical education. More than 30 electives are offered—ranging from knitting to computer programming—which allows students to discover new interests and develop their passions. Participation in the after-school athletics program begins in grade five, and students may also choose to participate in one of the school’s choral groups, band, plays, ensembles, Mathletes, or Community Council. Addressing the changes and issues students at this age face, the curriculum also features drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs, health and human body education, internet safety, and media literacy.
Upper School begins in fifth grade, which is homeroom style, and in sixth grade approximately 25 new students are added to the community, making the grade level number of students approximately 85. In grade six, students are in an advisory-based system with students moving around campus for all subjects.

ARTS, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, AND ATHLETICS

The performing arts are both nurtured and celebrated at MCDS. All students perform in concerts and plays throughout the school year: in Lower School, students in kindergarten through second grade perform a winter concert in December; third graders perform an original play based on their study of San Francisco; and fourth grade students celebrate the music, dance, and food of Latin America and China. In Upper School, several concerts showcase myriad genres of music, including original student songs, while various plays give theatre enthusiasts a chance to shine onstage. Musical offerings are open to musicians of all skill levels.

Understanding the importance of fostering confidence, teamwork, and a healthy lifestyle, MCDS offers comprehensive physical education and athletics programs. A team of committed teachers and coaches equip students with the skills and knowledge to lead healthy, active lives and enjoy physical activity beyond their years at MCDS.

In all grades, physical education classes meet three to four times each week and cover a range of sports and movement-based activities. Using a rotating class system, students benefit from exposure to a wide range of topics, interests, and instructors. The campus’s state-of-the-art facilities are utilized for both instruction and recreation. For those students interested in competitive sports, interscholastic athletics with the Bay Area Independent Athletic League begins in fifth grade. Students may participate at the Club (sixth grade), Junior Varsity (predominantly seventh grade), and Varsity (predominantly eighth
grade) levels. Offerings include volleyball, cross-country, soccer, track and field, and basketball. At all levels, coaches ingrain within student-athletes lessons of commitment, persistence, and perspective.

**SCHOOL LIFE**

Students at MCDS are engaged, passionate learners. Opportunities for students to deepen the learning process, pursue their passions, and gather as part of a larger community abound at the school. They sing songs and share stories at weekly assemblies, assist with daily lunch service, perform in concerts and plays, serve on student councils, play on athletic teams, and enjoy clubs and extracurricular activities in a nurturing environment. After-school enrichment programs also offer formal instruction, supervised study hall, and indoor and outdoor games and activities.

Service at MCDS brings students, faculty, staff, and families together while nurturing a sense of respect, responsibility, and compassion for oneself and for others. The community participates in a number of service activities both on and off campus that integrate the school’s mission and core values into the life of MCDS. These experiences are vital in helping students see their place and role in the community and demonstrate how their connection to the community is integral to the development of equity and social justice. By eighth grade, students are fully engaged in Community Internships, with five full days spent off campus working with community partners and practicing design thinking strategies to gain empathy, identify a need or an opportunity, prototype solutions, and share their ideas with agency staff.

For parents and guardians, the Family Association offers opportunities to be actively involved in the life of the school. From leadership roles, one-time volunteer activities, or participation in more than 20 committees, there is something for everyone. In collaboration with faculty and staff, the Family Association helps organize a range of events during the school year, including beloved traditions such as the Back to School Parent Coffee, Kite Day Fall Family Picnic, Community Dinner Dance, and more.
CAMPUS

Situated on 35 acres between the gentle hills of Marin County and the waters of the San Francisco Bay, MCDS is surrounded by the beauty of the outdoors. Many areas of the campus are utilized as outdoor classrooms, offering students an environmental education that is integrated into the curriculum and teaches them to be good stewards of the environment.

Campus highlights include 40 classrooms, science laboratories, the Learning Resource Center (Library, Technology, Student Support Services), music and art rooms, performing arts auditorium, marine science dock, gymnasium, physical education pavilion, multi-purpose rooms, tutoring/practice rooms, athletic fields, gardens, a greenhouse, a chicken coop, and an orchard.

CORTE MADERA, CALIFORNIA

Corte Madera is a town of approximately 9,000 located in Marin County in California, just under four miles from San Rafael to the north and 15 miles from San Francisco to the south. With views of the San Francisco Bay on one side and mountains on the other, the town offers access to Point Reyes National Seashore, Muir Woods National Monument, and Stinson Beach, and several shopping malls and local stores attract visitors from surrounding areas. Corte Madera neighbors other southern Marin communities of Mill Valley, Larkspur, Sausalito, and Tiburon, which all have charming town communities with dining and shopping opportunities. The Head’s residence is halfway between Corte Madera and downtown Tiburon, approximately two miles from the school. The house is located 350 yards from the San Francisco Bay, with water views.
Corte Madera offers easy access to the attractions of nearby San Francisco, the cultural, commercial, and financial center of Northern California. Known for the Golden Gate Bridge, cable cars, Fisherman’s Wharf, Victorian houses, Alcatraz, and first-rate food scene, San Francisco is iconic and a popular tourist destination, but it also ranks highly on world livability rankings. With a population of around 865,000, the city’s colorful neighborhoods provide distinct and unique areas to enjoy culture and arts events, food, and shopping. Many localities feature a mix of businesses and venues that serve both residents and visitors and contribute to the city’s lively atmosphere. San Francisco also has a very active environmental community and has been at the forefront of many global discussions about our natural environment.

Like the students, MCDS faculty and staff live throughout the Bay Area, with the majority residing in Marin County and San Francisco.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AT MCDS

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is one of the major strategic initiatives set forth by the MCDS Board of Trustees. “This is the most important work that we’re doing,” the Board Chair stated recently, “and it will change our culture forever in a good way. We embrace that!” The school has set thoughtful goals for its students, faculty, staff, and parents that intentionally create and nurture a sense of belonging. Hiring for a full time Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has been identified as essential in the school’s overall goals and strategic vision.

Recent Background
Approximately 15 years ago, DEI work and initiatives formally became part of the responsibilities of one of MCDS’s former assistant division directors. Professional development opportunities for faculty and staff and the establishment of Fusion, a faculty/staff affinity group, occurred around this time.
As part of a strategic plan, MCDS hired a Director of Community Connection in 2008 and framed his work around the goals of that strategic plan, including the idea of phasing out his position and embedding the work across all parts of the school and across the curriculum. The Director worked across the community, shifted the perception of DEI work, and developed the foundation of structures and support. His work concluded in 2013.

In the intervening years, MCDS formed a DEI Committee that includes Trustees, senior administrators, and representatives from the Family Association. This group remains very active and engaged and meets monthly. Within the internal community, two Diversity Coordinators served three-year terms; faculty members stepped into those roles and developed programs and support for and with students and faculty and staff. Wanting to provide more support for the scope of the work, the two assistant division heads have taken on the roles of the Diversity Coordinators this year and also established a DEI Leadership Team. The Diversity Coordinators will continue to work closely with the new DEI Director.

**DEI at MCDS Today**

Students are engaged in DEI work through a multicultural education that permeates all aspects of school practices, policies, and organization. Faculty and administrators approach the teaching of social justice and action by weaving anti-bias practices and lessons throughout the curriculum. Identity development is emphasized in each grade level at MCDS, contributing to a deeper understanding of what it means to be culturally competent. In Upper School, T.E.A. (Teaching Equity and Acceptance) is a student-led initiative that engages in conversations related to DEI and social justice, presents at assemblies, and supports other Upper School initiatives.

Faculty, staff, and administrators are also deeply involved in DEI work. The DEI Leadership Team guides the faculty and staff in DEI work and leads the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, which aims to build community through a lens of DEI. Many faculty and staff participate in professional development activities focused on DEI.
development conferences and workshops each year or the peer-led SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) group which meets monthly to address personal, institutional, and community change.

As noted previously, the DEI Committee, comprised of Trustees, senior administrators, faculty, and representatives of the Family Association, meets monthly to set goals and support the work throughout the community. This academic year, for example, the committee successfully helped the school establish Community Norms, which have been warmly received. Affinity groups for students, faculty and staff (called Fusion), and parents provide support, connection, and safe space.

Since the phasing out of the Director of Community Connection, MCDS leadership has recognized that while there is a strong commitment to DEI across the school and many committed volunteers who are moving the work forward, the school needs a point person to lead the work. There is strong consensus on the “why” of the work and on the need to coordinate and prioritize the “what” and the “how.” Commented one faculty member, we “need to celebrate the work that’s been done, identify the gaps, and put it all together!”

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

**Recognize, celebrate, synthesize, and centralize the equity and inclusion work that is being done across the school.** MCDS has been operating with a distributed leadership model of DEI work over the past few years with significant progress. The Board’s DEI Committee has partnered with school leadership to set priorities. The two division assistant heads as well as a team of faculty members have taken leadership roles while managing their other responsibilities. The community looks forward to welcoming a Director who can work with these teams and the senior leadership to prioritize and implement initiatives as well as to establish systems to recognize, celebrate, and share with the whole community.
Continue to develop and partner with the DEI Leadership Team. This committed team of 12 volunteers is the think tank and sounding board for DEI work. The Leadership Team takes the lead in offering training and workshops for faculty. The new DEI Director will continue to work with the team and determine how to best engage and deploy their skills and passions.

Support community members wherever they are in their DEI learning and journey. The MCDS faculty and staff are at different stages along their DEI journeys. The Director will develop recursive professional development to meet faculty and staff at different stages of engagement and sophistication and support them as they continue to evolve their practices and work to engage all of their students. The Director will engage with parents whose levels of understanding, interest, and engagement vary widely.

Develop clear curricular progression. The foundations for this work have been set and faculty interest is high. The Director will help to coordinate and connect the work moving forward.

Continue to build partnerships with community-based organizations. The school has strong relationships with local organizations such as Bridge the Gap College Prep and Next Generation Scholars, and a member of the counseling team works closely to support the students and their families from those programs. The next Director has the opportunity to continue to deepen those relationships and seek new ones.

Partner with a dynamic and committed leadership team. The MCDS leadership team is dynamic, forward thinking, and collaborative. Each member of the team leads and supports the work of DEI in their respective capacities and will be invested partners in thought and in action with the new Director.
DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

• An ability to embrace hopes, ambiguity, and opportunities and to work collaboratively with others to shape and define the role.
• An entrepreneurial ability to identify needs, take initiative, and engage partners in strategic change.
• Knowledge of best practices in equity and inclusion work and demonstrated experience in presenting and leading such work with community members whose understanding and journeys span a wide range.
• Demonstrated experience in developing equity and inclusion strategy and effecting significant change.
• Ability to co-create, articulate, and move toward a bold vision while thoughtfully pacing change and engaging a wide range of stakeholders collaboratively and empathetically.
• Highly effective communication skills: inclination to listen to understand; clear and compelling written and verbal skills.
• An empathic, self-assured, and strong leadership style with ability to work with broad constituencies in an approachable, optimistic, and diplomatic manner.
• A systems-thinker with excellent organizational skills, strong attention to detail, and great follow-through, who can guide the school toward institutional equity and inclusion.
• An inclusive, transparent, and trusted decision-maker.
• An educator at heart and in practice.

TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are encouraged to speak with the consultant in confidence. All applicants will be expected to ultimately submit (preferably in separate PDFs) the following materials:

• A cover letter expressing interest in this particular position;
• A current and comprehensive résumé;
• Writing samples: 2-3 pieces geared towards different constituencies;
• A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate’s permission) to:

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