



DIRECTOR

Start Date: July 2026

Marin Waldorf School

San Rafael, California | marinwaldorf.org



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Marin Waldorf School is to educate children to reach their highest potential with activities that fire the imagination, engage the mind, and strengthen the will.

OVERVIEW

Now in its 54th year, Marin Waldorf School (MWS) has a proud history and an exciting future. Located in San Rafael, 15 minutes north of the Golden Gate Bridge, MWS occupies a beautiful ten-acre campus surrounded by rolling hills of Marin County, California. The school is a proud exemplar of EC-8 Waldorf Education. While true to the practices and values of Waldorf pedagogy, the school also understands the necessity of educating for 21st century life in the US.

The school's 165 students enjoy facilities well adapted to Waldorf practices. They are almost always out of doors enjoying the gardens, the fields, the nearby hiking trails and more. Guided by a faculty that everyone agrees is exceptionally strong, the students feel known, valued, and cared about. Faculty as well remark that MWS is the most collegial, caring, embracing and mutually supportive place they have ever worked and they cherish each other and their collective work. One member of the faculty observed that they are in "the golden age of Marin Waldorf School."

As in any school, there are always opportunities for growth. In a very competitive independent school marketplace in a highly educated, high-parental-expectations community, the school must always be on top of its game and be able to celebrate and communicate the uniqueness and value of the distinctive educational model that is Waldorf.

The current School Director is retiring after 8 years in the role. With a solid foundation, a strong team of faculty and administration, the school seeks a new School Director to start in the summer of 2026. While not required to be Waldorf trained, successful candidates must be comfortable with progressive education, eager to learn about and embrace Waldorf pedagogy, and experienced in leadership skills of managing people, budgets, marketing, enrollment, fundraising. Most of all, they must love children, understand and connect with parents, and bring both vision and management to lead the school into a bright future.

STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

Among the many strengths of MWS, the new School Director will find:

- The first thing everyone mentions is the exceptional faculty: Waldorf trained lead teachers; subject matter experts; deeply caring about and connecting with their students. Equally important is the exceptional collegiality and mutual support among the teachers. They love and care for each other.
- An unshakeable commitment to authentic Waldorf values and pedagogy. It is THE most significant differentiator of the school in the crowded independent school market in Marin County. Still, the school is open to implementing the curriculum and program in ways that recognize contemporary needs. For example, they trained the faculty and recently implemented a structured literacy approach to reading.
- The campus is the envy of many. MWS hosts The Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training every summer and visiting teachers marvel at the spacious fields and grounds as well as the Waldorf-adapted indoor spaces.
- Parents are active and supportive of the school.
- The school is academically rigorous, and its graduates are well prepared for whichever high schools they enter.
- The school has dedicated learning support services and welcomes a diversity of students.
- The school has a mix of long-tenured faculty and staff as well as some energetic newcomers, providing a nice balance between institutional knowledge and fresh ideas.
- The school has been blessed with many years of engaged and supportive boards of trustees who continue to provide wise counsel and visible support.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

There is a sense that Marin Waldorf School is on the cusp of breaking out as a leader in an exciting new era of relevant-to-today's-world Waldorf education. At the 35,000 foot level, the school is looking for a visionary to lead the school to that exciting future while also being an astute manager assuring that daily operations and student experiences are as good as they can be. The school has many strengths but also some challenges and opportunities awaiting the new Director, including:

- As with many schools in a very competitive private school landscape, MWS would benefit from increased enrollment. It has a good story to tell but needs significantly refined messages, increased marketing and outreach. Specifically, the next Director must lead a comprehensive effort to counter the negative-but-incorrect perceptions of Waldorf education that, absent compelling messages passionately and convincingly delivered to the contrary, persist.
- Increasing linkages between the EC, the Grades and the Middle School will increase a sense of one unified school. A sense of one school continuity from youngest to oldest ages will help reduce attrition at common transition points (EC into Grades, elementary into middle school), and would help fill underenrolled classes.
- The new Director will have the opportunity to professionalize daily operations by clarifying roles and responsibilities, improving administrative systems and processes, and enhancing communications both within and external to the school.





- It is ongoing work to continue to provide the rich depth and breadth of student experience and options while operating in a fiscally prudent and sustainable way. Recent planned operating deficits have provided valuable investments in program but cannot continue indefinitely.
- With unflinching fidelity to Waldorf pedagogy, curricula and values, the new Director must collaborate with all school constituencies to continue to grow MWS' academic rigor and seek out progressive, innovative new educational practices. The culture of cohesion within the faculty is rare and must be nurtured.
- The school would benefit from a comprehensive review of approaches to tuition and financial assistance.
- The new Director must be responsive to parental concerns while articulating and enforcing appropriate parental boundaries. The Director must continue to expand constructive pathways for parent engagement, including parent education and as informed ambassadors for the incredible benefits of Waldorf education
- Building an enduring culture of philanthropy and implementing proven fundraising approaches will access untapped potential for increased contributed income.
- The new Director must engage with and support DEIJB efforts within the school community, including neurodiverse learners' needs.
- It is ongoing work to attract and retain excellent faculty and staff. A more supportive and professional hiring and onboarding process would be welcomed by new employees.

QUALIFICATIONS & PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES



The new School Director should:

- First and foremost be an authentic, engaging people person; eager and able to connect with everyone in the school community and make everyone feel known, welcomed and valued. Be as comfortable on the floor with a toddler as with a high-potential donor, a school-district landlord, or a prospective family.
- Be an excellent and experienced communicator, able to inspire those within the school community with a sense of common vision, purpose and values; and be able to captivate external audiences with the transformative power of Waldorf education on students' intellect, academic ability, spiritual and character development.
- Be an approachable and accessible leader, highly visible in the daily life of the school, open to listening to everyone, collaborating wherever possible, but also able to make timely and well-communicated decisions. Proven ability to set high expectations, provide support, and hold everyone accountable to those expectations.
- Have proven ability to successfully relate to parents, support teachers in the face of strong parental anxieties and pressure, hear and validate parental concerns, but ultimately assure that parental engagement is appropriate and that boundaries are clear and enforced.
- Be a systems thinker who has prior experience with all financial aspects of school operations; budgets, tuition and financial assistance policies and procedures; equitable faculty and staff compensation; risk management and highly efficient operations.
- Support and be familiar with DEIJB work on school campuses. Familiarity with the ways that schools best serve both neurodiverse and accelerated learners.
- Be able to grasp and honor bedrock institutional culture and traditions while also inspiring innovation and blending the old and the new.
- Possess high EQ: excellent listening and conflict resolution skills.
- Have experience with all aspects of successful annual and capital fundraising.
- Be ultimately a student-centered leader who, while much of the work is managing “adult matters,” always first asks what is in the best interests of the students.

LEARN MORE

- [Marin Waldorf School](#)

- [Strategic Plan](#)

- [Equity and Inclusion](#)

- [About San Rafael, California](#)





TO APPLY

Because time is of the essence, interested and qualified candidates are invited to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- A two-part statement of your experience and familiarity with Waldorf and/or progressive education; AND your experience with the business-side needs of school operations as listed above;
- 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:

SKIP KOTKINS

Senior Consultant

skip.kotkins@carneysandoe.com

The full-time equivalent salary range for this position is \$150,000-\$180,000. The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to, several factors that include years of experience and expertise.



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