



PRINCIPAL

Start Date: July 2026

Mission Dolores Academy

San Francisco, California | mdasf.org



Carney
Sandoe
& ASSOCIATES

MISSION STATEMENT

Mission Dolores Academy, an inclusive faith-filled school community, empowers confident students who are academically prepared, leading lives motivated by integrity and committed to the common good.

Mission Dolores Academy is firmly rooted in the Catholic tradition. We are dedicated to developing every facet of the whole child, intellectually, spiritually, socially, and emotionally, and celebrating each child's self-worth, dignity, and cultural diversity. MDA promotes an educational environment that instills in every student a love of learning, a connection to God, and a desire to be a changemaker in the world.

We recognize that parents and guardians are the primary educators of their children. We take pride in the teamwork and camaraderie that exists between the school and its family community.

At a Glance



2011
established



138
total enrollment



99%
students of color



24
total faculty and staff
(14 faculty, 11 staff)



9
faculty with
advanced degrees



15:1
student-teacher ratio



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OVERVIEW

Community, family, faith and joy are at the root of the Mission Dolores Academy experience. A richly diverse kindergarten through eighth grade independent Catholic school located in San Francisco's Mission District, the school serves students and their families with a rich and individualized curriculum that focuses on critical thinking in mathematics, language arts, science and social studies. The comprehensive and innovative Wellness Program addresses mental health, social-emotional learning, speech and language therapy and nutrition.

Founded in 2011, MDA was the result of a merging of two San Francisco Catholic schools: the Megan Furth Catholic Academy and Mission Dolores School. The merger allowed the new Mission Dolores Academy to move to a location at 16th and Church Streets that provided room to evolve while supporting the needs of the Bay Area's most deserving youth. Founder, Father Charles Gagan, S.J., still opens the doors to the Academy every morning, and he is a true gift to the entire MDA community.





MDA is truly a unique institution. We provide each student with equal access to quality education, technology, and the social-emotional resources needed to flourish. Our commitment is to foster a community that reflects the cultural and economic diversity of San Francisco. We follow an individualized curriculum that teaches critical thinking in mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies; and a comprehensive Wellness Program that supports our students' Mental Health, Social-Emotional Learning, Nutrition, and Speech and Language Therapy needs. MDA is a Catholic independent school that can offer tuition assistance to the majority of its students and rigorous academic curriculum. This allows MDA to fill a crucial role in the San Francisco Bay Area. As costs of living rise and testing scores continue to be of concern, MDA is vital in providing quality education to underserved communities. The team is highly qualified, driven, and passionate about this mission and the role they serve in the wider SF Bay Area.

Each year, members of MDA's graduating class carry the core values of empathy, compassion, inclusion, determination, and integrity with them as they continue their academic rigor at top preparatory schools in the Bay Area. In fact, over 92% of the Class of 2025 are attending selective Catholic, charter, and independent high schools in San Francisco.

The next Principal of MDA will embrace these same values and inculcate a sense of family and belonging to all who are fortunate enough to join the MDA school community. This is a leadership opportunity that is truly unique and transformative for the students and families who are served.

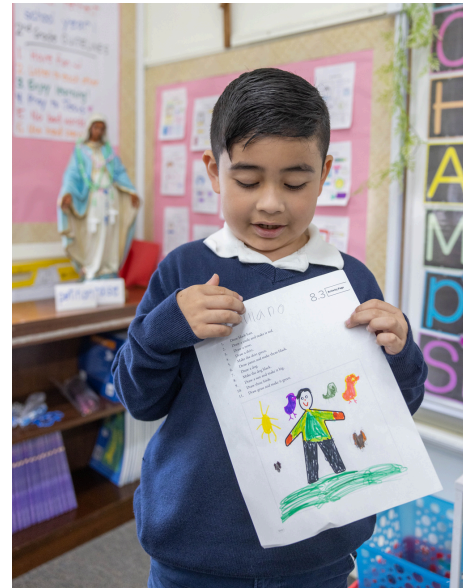
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

This is not only a unique institution, but also an exciting time for MDA. Specifically:

- Our Board is strong, diverse and committed to MDA. We continue to attract committed industry and community leaders who are adept at mobilizing the wider SF community in support of MDA.
- We have refreshed our strategic plan to provide a strong endowment and financial base at a time when we can take full advantage of the increasing interest in MDA (as public school systems continue to create challenges for families).
- We have invested in preserving a dynamic, aligned and entrepreneurial model that allows the board to support two important areas for MDA: principal/educational areas and advancement/funding activities directly.

The next Principal of Mission Dolores Academy will be presented with a number of opportunities that will need to be addressed in aspects of academic operations and student life. The Principal will report directly to the Board and assist the Board in setting a strategic vision for MDA. The following are areas of priority:

- Promoting the mission and values of a Mission Dolores education in the school and community;
- Reinvigorating the fibers of community that have always been a defining factor of Mission Dolores Academy;
- Fostering a culture of academic excellence by monitoring all aspects of teaching and learning, curriculum oversight and assessment;
- Promoting an ongoing process of faculty professional growth;
- Ensuring a healthy balance of academic rigor and extra-curricular programs;
- Overseeing the daily operations of the school with joy, energy and collaboration;
- Marketing the value of the Mission Dolores education in order to increase enrollment;
- In collaboration with the Director of Operations and Finances, creating opportunities to thank members of the existing donor base and building new partnerships with potential donors.



\$422,621

financial aid budget
for '25-26



87%

students receiving
aid



\$12-15M

endowment goal
(currently fundraising for)



\$3.56M

current operating
budget

QUALIFICATIONS & PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

The most competitive candidates for MDA will possess most or all of the following qualifications and qualities:



- An advanced degree in education (preferred) or in a relevant field from an accredited college or university;
- A background in leading creative and visionary academic initiatives and programs combined with a willingness to find-a-way to creative solutions;
- Experience as a school administrator guiding, coaching, leading, and supervising faculty and staff with compassion, vision, and a commitment to best practices in academia;
- Experience in teaching in an elementary or middle school environment (required);
- A commitment to fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion in a school environment;
- Has a strong ability to communicate the value proposition of an independent, K-8 educational program in a faith-based tradition;
- A visionary academic leader who can design and implement organizational systems that support all components of a strong educational program;
- Possesses excellent communication and presentation skills;
- Is visible, approachable, loving and supportive of a diverse student body and faculty;
- Ability to establish community partnerships and/or the ability to activate the community.



LEARN MORE

- [School Website](#)
- [School History](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [High School Matriculation](#)
- [About San Francisco, California](#)





TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- A completed Candidate Questionnaire (to be provided by the consultants);
- 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:

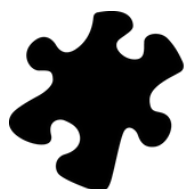
CATHY SHELBURNE

Consultant and Executive Coach
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BARBARA DAUSH

Senior Consultant and Catholic Schools Practice Leader
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The full-time equivalent salary range for this position is \$xx-xx, commensurate with experience. The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to, several factors that include years of experience, education level, and expertise.



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