

POSITION STATEMENT

Marin Horizon School

MILL VALLEY, CALIFORNIA



HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH
START DATE: JULY 1, 2026 OR 2027





OVERVIEW

Two words come immediately to mind to describe Marin Horizon School: Integrity and Heart, with capital letters! “Integrity” because since its founding in 1977, Marin Horizon has been living its values with thoughtfully crafted and unique educational expectations for its students. The program is both personalized and challenging, the teachers are collaborative and brave, and the mission and vision have been carefully developed and honed. And “Heart” because there is impressive consistency across all constituencies about how students grow and thrive in the community of the School: “A deeply connected community where students learn that their voice matters.” “We feel protective of the spirit of our school and the joy and self-esteem we develop in our students.” “We are there because the school is wonderful—soulful, fun, unique, small, a little groovy, mixed-ages, community-service-awesome, and caring.” And finally, “Our children...are really seen and valued at MHS.”

As Marin Horizon begins the search for its next head of school, the School offers a compelling opportunity for a leader who resonates with a vibrant and intentional student-centered

culture that delivers a thoughtful set of challenges for all students and enjoys the support of a warm and down-to-earth community.

An independent, coed day school serving students from Toddler through Grade 8, Marin Horizon has long embraced a holistic approach to education. “Montessori-inspired” and experiential, the School cultivates a personalized approach to learning. Creativity, collaboration, and student agency are top priorities. Located at the foot of iconic Mount Tamalpais in Mill Valley, California, the School benefits from the proximity to extraordinary outdoor adventures so that students can be hiking on Mount Tamalpais trails and exploring nearby beaches regularly. The School also promotes active civic engagement for students in all grades. Of singular note is the School’s having helped create a permanent, high-quality early childhood program, Horizon Community School, for an historically underserved community, just a few miles from the main campus and where students from both campuses can interact. As one member of the community aptly summarizes it: “The uniquely engaging, experiential, and bespoke education at Marin Horizon empowers students to develop their voice and sense of purpose in order to have impact in their communities.”

This search comes at a time when Marin Horizon is ready to refine its story, strengthen its systems, and position its distinctive program for long-term sustainability in a competitive market. The next head of school at Marin Horizon will help articulate and champion the distinctive value proposition for the School. A central focus will be conveying continuity, rigor, and outcomes across the Toddler to Grade 8 journey to ensure that the strength of the exceptional early years program translates into sustained enrollment and community commitment across the K–8 years. This leader will also serve as the School’s chief storyteller, bringing clarity and inspiration to communications both internally and across the broader Bay Area. The new leader will continue to cultivate a culture where every child is truly known, showcase the academic program by naming the elements that produce such capable and grounded graduates, and bring greater coherence to the School’s operational and leadership systems. Strong partnership with the Board will be essential as the School positions itself for the future.

The ideal leader for Marin Horizon will be a mission-driven educator who values student voice, cultivates belonging, and leads with warmth and steadiness as well as executive and strategic capabilities—and likes to hike! We invite you to consider this special professional opportunity to lead Marin Horizon and to shape the next chapter of its story, commencing in July 2026 or July 2027.

MISSION, VISION, and MINDSETS

Mission:

We ground students in a deep sense of belonging so they become enthusiastic learners, develop confident voices, and emerge as beacons of kindness in their communities.

Vision:

We envision a world where young people's confident voices spark meaningful, positive change.

Mindsets:

- We are insatiably curious.
- We are complex thinkers.
- We embrace challenge.
- We are active community members.
- We have a voice.



PROGRAM

Marin Horizon is a deeply purposeful educational community that encourages students to wonder, to question, and to step into new challenges with confidence. It is also a program where character, social emotional development, and a strong sense of belonging are interwoven with academics to shape confident, compassionate learners. Faculty and students share a spirit of inquiry that is balanced by empathy and a genuine joy in learning together. The result is a vibrant, student-centered culture that values intellectual challenge and grounds learning in meaningful human connection. In short, students at Marin Horizon think “learning is fun, and kindness is cool.”

Toddler and Primary Programs: Designed for students aged 2 (Toddler) and 3-5 (Primary) years, the Toddler and Primary Programs draw robust interest to the School. The Toddler Program has a “Montessori-inspired” environment and focuses on language skills, social awareness, creativity, independence, and gross and fine motor skills. For the Primary Program, the curriculum features Montessori materials and blends math and reading readiness skills with practical life skills. The curriculum is divided among Reading & Language Arts, Math, Science, and Cultural Studies. Students also have significant exposure to art, music, PE, and Library time. One parent declared, “It has been a very loving and educational experience, which is exactly what we were looking for.”

Kindergarten-Grade 8 Program: The project-based curriculum at Marin Horizon is centered on a core curriculum that is orchestrated through an intentionally designed scope and sequence. Teachers differentiate instruction to serve the individual strengths of each student, and this careful balance between aspirational

academic goals and “challenging students at their academic frontier” means that teachers at Marin Horizon are both skillful and creative in delivering instruction. Primary academic disciplines are math, literacy, science & engineering, social studies, Spanish, visual arts, music, and drama, and experiential programming in addition to outdoor education. Exciting, schoolwide exhibitions of learning are touchstones for students: the recent “Rubes, Rumbles, and Rolls” had all students and families engaged in learning about the variety of topics, from “force in motion” to “animal adaptations,” and a balloon rocket challenge!





The orchestration of the curriculum and support for student learning is exceedingly impressive and seamlessly integrated into classrooms. The School employs excellent strategies to identify student strengths and needs for support and challenge. The Director of Teaching and Learning describes the pedagogy as academically rigorous and progressive, and cites cutting edge, well-orchestrated programs in reading, writing, science, and social studies as examples of the strength of the academic program. The program, with its emphasis on developing critical thinkers and excellent communicators is particularly well positioned to prepare students for a changing world, tackling technology and AI through project-based learning and student exhibitions. The program also blends seamlessly the academic goals of the program with the social-emotional support each student needs.

Report cards are competency based, although the older students receive grades for transcripts for high school placement. The School also uses Educational Records Bureau (ERB) testing to measure student growth and achievement. Results in both areas are strong.

Finally, Marin Horizon achieves an enviable balance in its program.

Holistic, yet Academic: The School offers a holistic program that honors the whole child, but also delivers academic challenge for the individual student.

Informal, yet Professional: The School's warm, approachable culture invites authentic relationships and ease of interaction, even as faculty and leadership bring deep expertise, clarity of purpose, and high professional standards to their work.

Remarkable, yet Unpretentious: Marin Horizon's program and community are quietly exceptional, defined not by showmanship or prestige but by substance, humility, and a genuine focus on what matters most for children.

Learn more about the Program at Marin Horizon:

<https://www.marinhorizon.org/academics>

And learn more about "What Sets Us Apart":

<https://www.marinhorizon.org/about/what-sets-us-apart>



THE COMMUNITY

Students: The students at Marin Horizon love their school! The list of “things they love” about their school is long and varied. It starts with their teachers who “pinpoint what they teach for each student.” (A student quote.) They love the Morning Meetings and all-school assemblies led by eighth-grade students, and they are enthusiastic about outdoor education which begins with China Camp excursions for kindergarten and includes river rafting and mountain climbing for the older students. They love their clubs and activities, everything from the Green Team, Film and Book Clubs, also Cubing and “You Chill,” as well as affinity groups. The commitment to service learning is also important to the student experience at MHS.

Marin Horizon currently enrolls 292 students with students from 16 different zip codes from the surrounding area of the School. Students of color: 33%. Approximately 83 students, approximately 29% of students, receive some form of indexed tuition. Ninety-five percent of Marin Horizon graduates will enroll at their first or second choice high school. Graduates move on to top independent, public, and boarding schools—known for their curiosity and community-minded leadership—and often qualify for accelerated math and Spanish courses.

Faculty and Staff: The number of faculty and staff at Marin Horizon hovers roughly around 70, full-time and part-time employees, and distributed across three campuses. The average number of years of experience at the School is eight years for faculty and seven for staff. Attrition is low at approximately 9% as of June 2025.



Commitment to the MHS mission is a high priority for faculty and staff, and in their own words: “We collaborate daily, discuss difficult issues, and thrive on the spirit and passion for learning of our students and the dedication and talents of our teachers, staff, and administration. Creativity, forward thinking, dynamic problem solving and nurturing care for one another is valued.” They laud the “warm, supportive environment where students can thrive.”

Families: Parents and guardians at Marin Horizon are clear about what they love about the School and the community: individualized attention for each student and the “committed, high-quality” faculty and staff. They also appreciate the student-centered teaching practices and how well their children are known and supported, commenting on the encouragement of “intellectual curiosity and deeper thinking” along with a rigorous curriculum that is “creative and integrated.” Finally, they voice their appreciation for the strong sense of community and they also like the other parents! Outdoor education also gets a thumbs up from parents in this remarkable outdoor setting. Parents are also looking for improved communication and clearer systems to support their children’s experiences at the School.



Governance: Currently, the Board at Marin Horizon has 17 members which includes the head of school, the president of the Community Association, and two faculty representatives as *ex officio*. In recent years, the Board has held at least six full Board meetings and five open Executive Committee meetings per year. The Board is committed to regular governance training and thoughtful leadership transition. Regular Board terms are three years; faculty representatives serve two-year terms. The Board is cognizant of the importance of having a connection to Horizon Community School through Board members because of the connection of HCS to the School. Finally, the Board is a committed group of professional volunteers who are looking for a strong, positive, and transparent relationship with the next Head of School to advance the MHS mission and long-term success.

Horizon Community School: Horizon Community School is a defining expression of Marin Horizon's commitment to equity and community partnership, offering a high-quality, tuition-free, early childhood

education to children ages two through four in Marin City, CA. Launched in 2017 with 12 students, through philanthropic leadership and as result of Marin Horizon's strategic plan, Horizon Community School has grown steadily in scale and impact over the past nine years and has diversified its revenue stream through contracts with Sausalito Marin City School District. Today Horizon Community School serves 48 students. Horizon Community School is a remarkable testimony to the "mission, vision, determination, and grit" of Marin Horizon and the power of "doing good and doing well." Marin Horizon continues to support Horizon Community School, primarily through student partnership activities as well as human resources and facilities services. Horizon Community School is now moving toward financial and governance independence to allow for continued growth, but the ties to the founding of the impactful preschool opportunity for students of Marin City will always reflect MHS's commitment to their community.

Learn more about Horizon Community School:
<https://www.marinhorizon.org/horizon-community-school>

FINANCES, FUNDRAISING, FACILITIES

Finances: Marin Horizon operates with a strong and stable financial profile. The yearly operating budget hovers around \$10MM, and the school has a track record of generating a balanced budget. The current endowment is approximately \$8MM, and the School holds four months of operating reserves. Currently, the School awards just over \$2.6M in tuition assistance which represents approximately 22% of gross tuition for the entire school and 33% of gross tuition for students in the K-8 program.

The School carries debt of approximately \$9.8M that was used to expand the school and purchase the head of school's house. The school is in good standing with all of the relevant bank covenants. In addition to debt financing for facility expansion and improvements, the school is also in the midst of a \$3MM capital project to improve the outdoor space, which has been entirely funded through fundraising efforts and operating reserves.

Fundraising: Marin Horizon does an annual fundraising campaign to support the Horizon Fund, which supports the school's operating budget. The goal for this year's fund is \$350K. In addition, each outgoing eighth grade class selects a project for its 8th Grade Legacy Fund, and parents of graduating students are encouraged to contribute to that fund. Recent Legacy Fund projects have included lunch seating and umbrellas, camping equipment, musical instruments and performing arts audio equipment, and basketball hoops.

In addition, the Community Association puts on an annual spring fundraiser that uses sponsorships, ticket sales, a live and silent

auction, and a Fund-A-Need to raise approximately \$185,000. The Spring Fundraiser is also a fun community event bringing faculty, staff, and parents together. During the year, the Community Association also plans community-building events including annual outdoor Movie Night, Pancake Breakfast, and Spring Carnival.

The School recently held a capital campaign to support a new outdoor playground and landscaping. This project raised approximately \$2.7M and the outdoor renovations are expected to be complete in February 2026.

Facilities: Marin Horizon has a long-term lease with over 50 years of term remaining from the Mill Valley public school district and sits on 2.2 acres of land with the classroom/administrative offices building footprint totaling roughly 27K sq. ft. The School is currently modernizing 8,200 square feet of outdoor play area to incorporate meeting, gathering, and playing spaces, out of a total of 12,000 square feet of outdoor space. The remainder of outdoor space includes a basketball court, a turf area, and an amphitheater used for various presentations. The three main buildings include 19 classrooms, a large Library that can be divided into conference space, numerous administrative offices and a number of rooms specifically designed for tutoring and counseling.

Additionally, the School owns outright two houses, one for the head of school and a second used as a rental for a senior administrator. The site for a second Toddler program is a cottage located near the School, acquired in 2023, leased from a private owner, and the School has the option to renew in a few years through June 30, 2031. The School operates under a Conditional Use Permit which requires close monitoring of the number of employees, traffic patterns in the community, and the number of amplified events on campus among other obligations.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next head of school at Marin Horizon will build on the School's strengths and work collaboratively with all constituencies to take on the opportunities and challenges ahead:

- Preserve and elevate the longstanding, distinctive culture of warmth, inclusivity, and child-centered education. The next head of school will revel in leading a small school community where every child is known and seen. Building relationships in the community through visibility, presence, and good humor will be key to success in the role.
- Communicate with authenticity and inspiration to build trust and confidence in the School's mission, values, and direction. Marin Horizon seeks an inspiring storyteller, thought leader, and ambassador to communicate the warm, relational, and purpose-driven culture of the School on campus and in the neighborhood and the greater Bay Area.

- Ensure that a winning enrollment strategy is established and implemented effectively. Marin Horizon offers a top-flight early years program that does not always translate into K-8 enrollment. The next head of school will tackle this issue with enthusiasm and appreciation for the strengths of the K-8 program which reflects the popular early years program.
- Clarify the ingredients that produce outstanding academic results in Marin Horizon students. The next head of school will understand and celebrate the elements of the program that lead to the development of high-performing students who are also strong communicators, comfortable self-advocates, and community-oriented.
- Foster innovation and future-ready learning. The next Head will build on Marin Horizon's strength of developing critical thinkers by focusing on how the school prepares students for a changing world, considering how to best integrate interdisciplinary learning, technology, and AI while staying true to the School's whole child approach.

- Professionalize the operational systems of the organization. The next head of school will bring well-honed executive management skills to guarantee efficiency and accountability in all aspects of the school experience for educators and families.
- Support and mentor the senior leadership team collectively and individually. The next head of school has the opportunity to establish an effective administrative structure for the School. Also to clarify roles and responsibilities and decision-making authority.
- Establish a collaborative partnership with the Board of Trustees, and articulate the compelling value proposition of a Marin Horizon education. The next head of school will work together with the Board to further the strategic objectives and generative work of leading Marin Horizon.



THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

The successful candidate will be someone who has a winning track record in the following areas and will:

- Champion the program and values and strategic direction of Marin Horizon and interact with all members of the community with warmth and empathy.
- Build trust and confidence in the program that Marin Horizon offers in the Bay Area and communicate the value proposition of a MHS educational journey, now and for the future, with authenticity and enthusiasm.
- Be a top-flight educator who recruits and retains a high-performing teaching cadre to deliver the MHS program
- Engage strategically and effectively with the enrollment goals for the School.
- Ensure decision-making clarity and implement top-notch operational systems across the organization.
- Be unafraid to bring bold imagination and creativity to the educational direction of the School.
- Bring honesty and integrity along with highly developed emotional intelligence to the position. Also, a sense of humor to daily life at MHS to relish the playfulness and joy and unique identity of this special School!

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The anticipated base salary range for this role is \$375,000-\$500,000 commensurate with experience. Additionally, the School provides an attractive three-bedroom house within ¼ mile of the school for use by the head of school and for the benefit of the school community, so housing is included as part of the total compensation and benefits package. Marin Horizon also offers additional competitive benefits, including a retirement plan with employer contributions, comprehensive insurance benefits, and support for professional growth.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Marin Horizon School has retained Resource Group 175 (RG175) to support the search for its next head of school. Interested candidates should prepare a cover letter, an updated resume, and a writing sample(s) as part of the application materials. Five references are also a required component of the application materials.

The application deadline is February 20, 2026 for a start date of July 1, 2026 or July 1, 2027. Candidates are encouraged to submit their materials in a timely manner at <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>.

For any questions about this exciting leadership position and to register your interest, please contact the RG175 consultants directly:

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