



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Director of Systems Design and Technology Services

SUMMARY

Location | Burbank, CA

Post Date | January 3, 2018

Application Deadline | February 5, 2018

Decision Announced | March 2, 2018

Start Date | March 19, 2018 *(or later if necessary)*

Reports To | Executive Director



BACKGROUND

The California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) is the leading organization of independent schools in California. The Association serves and strengthens its schools by setting standards of academic quality and ethical conduct, by providing for the professional growth of faculty, administrators, and trustees, and by promoting ethnic and socio-economic diversity.

Technology has become an increasingly vital component of the organization's mission and member services. One critical application is the CAIS accreditation portal, which is a custom-designed web application powered by Ruby on Rails. The portal is transforming the accreditation process, allowing for deeper reflections during the self-study phase and more impactful recommendations during the visiting phase. The accreditation portal has been so successful that other regional associations have licensed the portal. Meanwhile, the association leverages other technology systems for various internal and public-facing initiatives, and has plans to do even more — particularly in the areas of data collection, content management, research, and professional development.

The outgoing director of technology was instrumental in the design and construction of the portal. CAIS is looking for an experienced systems designer to assume responsibility of the portal and its ongoing development, in partnership with external Ruby consultants and internal CAIS stakeholders. The next director should have experience in application design and data integration, and some prior coding experience. Candidates fluent in Ruby would be especially welcomed, but this is not an absolute requirement.

CAIS ultimately needs a technology-focused, customer-centered project manager who can lead the big picture with respect to systems development and improvement, but also work at the tactical level to ensure that applications and data systems meet the needs of the CAIS community. While CAIS is prepared to onboard someone as early as March, the association is willing to wait until June if the right candidate is unable to start sooner.

KEY STATISTICS

Founded: 1941

Website: www.caisca.org

Location: Burbank, CA

Membership: 228 schools: 105 schools in Northern California, and 123 schools in Southern California

School profiles: CAIS schools range in size from 45 to 2030 students, with a mean enrollment of 399. The oldest CAIS school was founded in 1850; 54 were founded before 1950. Eighteen CAIS schools have a boarding component.

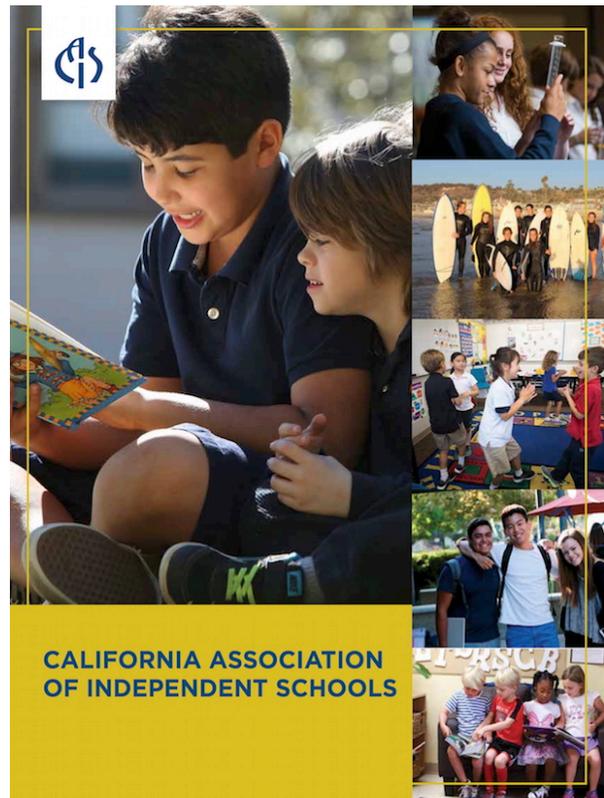
Students served: CAIS schools serve some 90,000 students.

Diversity: Approximately 45% of CAIS school students are people of color. 24% of CAIS school teachers are people of color. Fifteen CAIS schools are all girls, and four are all boys. Ten CAIS schools are dual language immersion.

Financial aid: CAIS schools provide significant financial assistance to families, granting over \$300 million to 15,000 students annually.

CAIS staff: CAIS has eight full-time employees.

For a short history of the association, please watch this four-minute video: <http://bit.ly/2A69zn4>



CAIS STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

The current CAIS strategic plan identifies six major areas of strategic focus. Technology will continue to play a significant role in several of these areas.

1. UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS

Assist schools in better serving underrepresented students — particularly Latino and Latina students — so that CAIS school communities more clearly reflect local, regional, and state populations.

2. SCHOOL FINANCIAL STRENGTH

Explore financial models for CAIS schools that are less tuition-reliant and that build long-term stability and security.

3. INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Research trends and projections regarding the continued integration of technology in teaching and learning, and inform member schools about the implications, cautions, and opportunities for educational programs.

4. RESEARCH

Conduct and review research relevant to CAIS schools, and disseminate findings about trends, practices, and model programs that hold the highest potential value for members.

5. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Actively promote effective governance throughout CAIS schools.

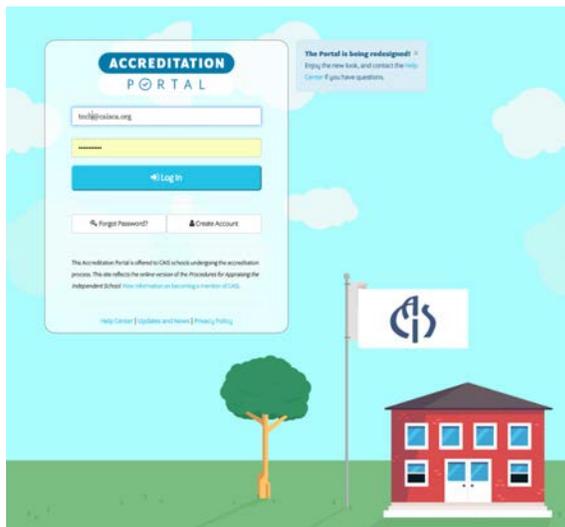
6. ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

Provide professional learning opportunities for heads and senior administrators that will enable them to lead their schools with vision, inspiration, competence, and integrity.

ABOUT THE POSITION

All CAIS employees agree: one of the best aspects of working at CAIS is the ability to have an impact on such a diverse and broad set of schools. As CAIS introduces new systems, improves workflows, and delivers professional development resources, the impact of those initiatives can affect over 200 schools and 89,500 students. It is important to note that CAIS employees have minimal connection with teachers and students, so this is not the right job for someone who is seeking an “on-the-ground” educational technology role in a school. However, for a visionary system designer and technology leader who wants to make a vital contribution to the overall independent school ecosystem in California, this unique opportunity could be a perfect match. The director of systems design and technology services will be at the nexus of several exciting initiatives at CAIS. Some initiatives are well underway, some are just getting started, and some are still in design phase.

The accreditation portal is an example of a technology system that is well underway. Originally conceived of nearly five years ago, the system was built from the ground up by leveraging internal and external resources. The portal helps coordinate the time-



consuming and data-intensive self-study and accreditation processes, which CAIS schools undertake once every seven years. What used to be run by a series of disconnected documents and files is now powered by a centralized, server-based application that manages work flow, data collection, and user access. The portal has been so successful that other associations license the system for their regional communities.

The new director will assume technical ownership of the system. The programmatic ownership is a joint partnership between the technology director and other members of the CAIS team, most notably the director of accreditation and the director of services for governance and accreditation. CAIS would like to find a technology director who has the programming capability to work on some tactical parts of the software environment, but is also comfortable and willing to manage outsourced code development when appropriate.

Other technology-based systems will also be important projects for the new director. CAIS maintains numerous databases and data systems, some entirely on the back-end, and others connected to front-end websites and content management systems. Although CAIS

is not seeking to develop more applications as complex as the accreditation portal, the CAIS team has seen the value of implementing more user-friendly, interconnected data systems. For example, CAIS maintains separate databases to manage personnel assignments for accreditations, presentation participation for conferences, and administrator profiles at its schools. CAIS would like to explore commercial solutions for managing and integrating these database needs, and when possible develop interconnectivity between these databases to front-end websites and even the accreditation portal itself.

CAIS has long-term goals with other technology services. As one example, the executive team would like to explore technology-powered professional development offerings. CAIS schools are geographically scattered across the state, and it is not always easy for school administrators to attend in-person events. Technology could play a major role in giving school administrators alternatives for participating in different events and trainings. As a second example, CAIS is committed to enhancing its research initiatives. CAIS has partnered with NAIS (National Association of Independent Schools) on major data collection and aggregation initiatives, and it is exploring a similar collaboration with Cal-ISBOA (California Independent Schools Business Officers Association). CAIS itself has its own rich sets of data, some of which comes from internal research, and some of which comes from the annual accreditation cycles. In the next several years, CAIS would like to deliver reports and analysis of aggregated national and regional data to its member schools.

Admin Features

Schools

- Schools are first grouped by survey year.
- You may view progress for each school currently undergoing the accreditation process as well as past forms.
- At the bottom of the list, there is a searchable and sortable table of school specific details and links to view or edit school profiles.
- You may add a school not currently in the system.
- Click a school name to see institution details, contact information, and more school accreditation information.

Surveys

- A survey for a school year will include forms you create for it.
- Surveys are listed most recent first.
- You may issue a new survey for any school year.
- When creating a survey, select the start of the school year and the app will automatically append the end year.
- Click on a Survey year to edit, add, and delete forms.
- Once all forms are drafted, you may select multiple schools at once to participate. Once they are added as participating schools, you are free to invite any type of user from that school.
- Users for participating schools will see their progress throughout the accreditation progress when they log in. See right for user permissions.

Roles

Users

- The administrative backend allows you to view, add, edit, deactivate, or delete any current users.
- From here, you may invite users who have schools participating in a survey.
- You may invite users multiple times if needed. If the user's email is in the database and they have not accepted a previous invitation, they will receive another one. (E.g., duplicate accounts will not be created for a single invited email address.)
- When a user tries to join the site without an invitation, she will receive an email from accreditationportal@cais.org about the new user. Users may be approved only by a CAIS Super Admin from the User Management page.
- Important Note:** Before approving a user, make sure the user's role and school are accurate.

User Permissions

CAIS Super Admins

- Create, edit, and delete all CAIS schools, surveys, forms, and users.
- View all completed forms and responses from school and Visiting Team users.

Heads of Schools

- Invite Self-Study Coordinators and Collaborators.
- Answer, edit, and delete any question in a Self-Study or Future Planning Document currently in progress.
- Assign chapters to Collaborators registered to their school.
- Approve answers, accepting them into the final version of the form.
- Reject answers, sending them back to Collaborators for further editing.
- View progress of Self-Study as questions are responded to by school users.
- View visiting team report completed by the visiting team committee submitted to them by CAS.

Self-Study Coordinators

- Coordinators have the same permissions as heads of schools, except they may not view Visiting Team Reports.

Collaborators

- View Self-Studies for their school.
- Answer any questions assigned to them.
- Submit questions for review by Head of School or Self-Study Coordinator(s).

Visiting Team Chairs

- Answer, edit, and delete any question in a Visiting Team Report currently in progress.
- Assign chapters to Visiting Team Members for their assigned school.
- Approve answers, accepting them into the final version of the form.
- Reject answers, sending them back to Visiting Team Members for further editing.
- Submit a complete Visiting Team Report, signaling CAS for their review.

Visiting Team Members

- Answer any questions assigned to them.
- Submit questions for review by Visiting Team Chair.

The CAIS accreditation portal supports over 30 accreditations each year. School administrators, accreditation teams, and the CAIS staff all leverage the portal to support the critical tasks of the self-study process and accreditation visit.

Other components of this technology leadership position are more operational in nature, but no less important. The director acts as the main liaison and coordinator of all technology deployed to CAIS staff. Major annual events, which usually leverage third-party A/V vendors, nonetheless require some coordination of technology services. CAIS maintains listservs and other communication tools, both for its member schools and the CAIS staff. The next director will need to have a customer-service and team-first mindset, demonstrating a willingness to support technology initiatives big or small.



OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CAIS TEAM

James McManus | Executive Director

Jennifer de Forest | Associate Director

Teal Gallagher | Director of Services for Governance and Accreditation

Lorena Macias | Administrative Assistant

Jeanne Marcoux | Executive Assistant

Mariana Robles | Director of Accreditation

Cathy Shelburne | Director of Professional Development

MISSION STATEMENT

The California Association of Independent Schools establishes ambitious educational standards, fosters respect for the diversity and dignity of humanity, and promotes collaboration and social responsibility. The Association supports and challenges its schools through an innovative accreditation program that provokes deep reflection, analysis, and institutional commitment to action, as well as through the offering of professional development, relevant research, and informed counsel to the heads and trustees who endeavor to lead those schools effectively. Strengthening schools since its founding in 1941, CAIS strives to bring a compelling and compassionate voice to statewide and national conversations about education, advocating for the continual improvement of learning environments for all children and adolescents — both in CAIS schools and beyond.

DIRECTOR OF SYSTEMS DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

SPECIFIC DUTIES

As the director of systems design, you will...

- Manage all application development, engineering, and evaluation processes.
- Oversee and direct consultants that provide third-party systems support.
- Facilitate design and evaluation meetings with internal CAIS employees, external subscribers and licensees, third-party developers, and key end-user stakeholders.
- Manage industry-standard development protocols, including: a four-tier deployment environment, user-centered design, formal code reviews, version control, distribution of code updates, pull requests, Agile methodology, application monitoring and logging, backup and recovery services, knowledge base software, and continuous delivery.
- Design, write, test, and implement code modules, patches, and updates.
- Design, write, test, and implement APIs that interconnect CAIS data systems.
- Evaluate system performance in terms of speed, security, functionality, and errors, and ensure the implementation of any necessary fixes and improvements.

As the director of technology services at CAIS, you will...

- Support other members of the CAIS team in identifying and implementing technology-based solutions that support major CAIS strategic initiatives.
- Deliver trainings and produce support materials that help the internal and external CAIS communities leverage the technology services and systems of CAIS.
- Manage the deployment of underlying servers, databases, and client hardware.
- Ensure that support requests are addressed in a timely and professional manner.
- Coordinate technical production services for CAIS events.
- Administer technology-based collaboration and communication tools for the CAIS community.

General

- Other duties as assigned

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

CAIS is looking for candidates who can demonstrate...

- Experience designing, engineering, developing, and/or managing web-based, server-side software applications.
- A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.
- Experience with UI design and user-centric application development principles.
- Experience writing, developing, implementing, and improving enterprise software code in a collaborative team environment. Experience with Ruby on Rails, JavaScript, Redis, and/or Resque is preferable.
- Experience managing an enterprise data environment and developing API-based interconnectivity among disparate data systems. Experience with SQL, MySQL, PostgreSQL, NoSQL, and/or FileMaker Pro is preferable.
- Experience working in an industry-standard production environment for designing, deploying, and maintaining on-premise and cloud-based technology services.
- Experience evaluating and overseeing third-party vendors and consultants for software development, system implementation, database design, IT services, and/or hardware support.
- Experience working with internal stakeholders to identify programmatic goals, conduct needs assessments, and evaluate and implement technology solutions.
- Experience designing and delivering technology trainings and developing technology support materials.
- Excellent relational and communication skills — oral and written.
- Strong project management skills.
- Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills.
- A collaborative, cooperative, and patient mindset.
- Capability to lift up to 25 pounds and access hardware in hard-to-reach spaces.

HOW TO APPLY

Ed Tech Recruiting is acting on behalf of CAIS to recruit exceptional technology professionals to fill this unique opportunity to serve a diverse set of schools.

PLEASE DIRECT ANY INQUIRIES TO:

Gabriel Lucas
Principal, Ed Tech Recruiting
gabe@edtechrecruiting.com

APPLICATIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED THROUGH FEBRUARY 5, 2018.

Candidates should send the following four separate PDF attachments to jobs@edtechrecruiting.com:

- Cover letter introducing yourself to CAIS search committee
- CV or résumé
- A list of at least four professional references (include each person's name, organization, title, phone number, email, and relationship with you — though we will not contact any references without obtaining your permission first)
- A summary of two software application or data system projects to which you made a major contribution. Each summary should be no more than one page. For each project, be sure to include:
 - The organization for which you worked
 - The high-level tech specifications of this project
 - The goals of this project
 - The years you were involved on this project
 - Your role on the project
 - Any URLs that provide further insight into the project, such as live links or references to a digital portfolio of your work

CAIS does not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, marital status, age, sex, or sexual orientation in the hiring or in the administration of its hiring and employment policies.