



**Association of Independent
Maryland & DC Schools**

Executive Director

July 1, 2027



The Association of Independent Maryland & DC Schools (AIMS) is seeking an inspiring and strategic Executive Director to begin their tenure on July 1, 2027. This is a critical leadership role guiding a dynamic association that serves 125 member schools across Maryland and Washington, DC, each with its own unique mission and community. The Executive Director works in close partnership with the AIMS Board of Trustees to shape the future of independent education in the region.



About AIMS

AIMS is committed to strengthening the sustainability, diversity, and inter-dependence of its member schools through a comprehensive suite of services.

- **Accreditation:** Providing rigorous and meaningful accreditation services, overseen by the Commission on Accreditation.
- **Professional Learning & Collaboration:** Offering extensive professional development for school leaders, educators, and trustees.
- **Advocacy & Public Voice:** Serving as the key advocate and public spokesperson for independent schools in Maryland and Washington, DC.
- **Collective Resources:**
 - Providing high-quality, competitive health insurance benefits to employees of AIMS member schools through AIMS-owned Educators Benefit Services (EBS)
 - Offering retirement education, planning, and investment services through its 403(b) Multiple Employer Plan (MEP)
 - Providing access to property and casualty coverage through the Cherry Blossom Consortium, in partnership with the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington (AISGW)
- **Research & Analysis:** Conducting research, collecting data, and providing analysis to inform member school strategy.
- **Career Center:** Maintaining a robust platform for job search and listing positions within AIMS member schools.

AIMS Core Values and Purposes

Advocacy & Independence: To support, advocate for, and promote independent schools and independent education in the region.

Collaboration & Affiliation: To facilitate communication and peer networking among schools, and to engage and affiliate with regional and national educational organizations.

Responsiveness & Service: To design and provide professional programming, offer advice/consultation on operations and governance, and oversee the health benefits and MEP consortia.

Innovation & Improvement: To plan for the organizational evolution of AIMS, provide rigorous accreditation, and envision the future directions of independent schools.

Efficiency, Flexibility & Professionalism: To ensure internal operations and support for members are responsive, nimble, transparent, efficient, and school-centered.



Opportunities and Challenges for the Next Executive Director

Accreditation Leadership

Continue to strongly support AIMS's meaningful and robust accreditation framework, ensuring its long-term relevance and effectiveness as a tool that maximizes school performance, credibility and responsive support for all member institutions in an evolving educational landscape.

Strategic Financial and Benefits Oversight

Strategically oversee and optimize member benefits programs, including effective management of the Multiple Employer Plan (MEP) and complex health care administration (EBS), with a focus on assertively negotiating favorable EBS rates for member schools.

Cultivating High-Impact Staff

Supporting and cultivating a high-performing culture within the AIMS staff by committing to regular, structured evaluation and feedback for staff, grounded in coaching, growth, and professional development to maximize organizational impact.

Proactive Advocacy and Risk Management

Serve as a powerful and nimble advocate for member schools by proactively engaging with relevant federal and state education bodies (e.g. Maryland State Department of Education) and expertly navigating an evolving and complex policy landscape. Actively promote the value of independent schools, AIMS membership, and rigorous accreditation across the region.

Dynamic and Innovative Professional Development

Champion the expansion and delivery of high-impact professional development programs that meet the diverse needs of all member schools—large and small, urban and rural—driving systemic improvement across the association.

Elevating External Relations

Forge and deepen collaborative partnerships with peer association leaders and key stakeholders at the local and national levels to amplify AIMS's influence and impact within the broader educational ecosystem.

Candidate Experiences and Attributes

The Board of Trustees and member schools seek a leader who will enthusiastically embrace and promote AIMS's mission and collaborative community culture.

- Deep Credibility in Independent School Leadership
 - Possesses a profound understanding of and love for the independent school model.
 - Has prior experience as a Head of School or extensive senior leadership experience, providing the wisdom to credibly guide Heads and schools in difficult situations.
 - Brings practical wisdom regarding core challenges facing independent schools, including enrollment, finance, DEI, governance, compensation, technology, and accreditation/compliance.
- Trusted Relationship Builder and Listener
 - Highly relational, approachable, and visible leader with active, discerning listening skills who can connect and build trust with diverse constituents.
 - Serves as a resourceful and calming influence during moments of stress or conflict; possesses high emotional intelligence.
 - Demonstrates patience and a collaborative style
- Compelling Communicator and Public Voice
 - A visible, confident, and inspiring communicator, comfortable speaking to both large and small audiences.
 - Skill in serving as the public face and spokesperson for independent schools, communicating strategically with boards, school leaders, schools, and the general public.
 - Possesses excellent written and oral communication skills
- Strategic and Forward-Thinking Leadership
 - Functions as a proactive thought leader who can "see around the corner," spot trends, and keep schools' attention on emerging issues.
 - Has a strong vision for the future of independent schools, combining strategic acumen with practical and informed risk-management judgment.
 - Uses data, trend analysis, and thought leadership to help schools understand and respond to shifts in the educational, political, economic and technology landscape, including the impact of AI in education.
- Operational and Financial Acumen
 - Applies business, financial, and technical competence to oversee complex systems, including the annual budget, Multiple Employer Retirement Program, and Educators Benefit Services.
- Organizational and Team Leadership
 - A proven leader adept at guiding organizational processes and empowering a professional team.
- Unwavering person of character
 - Operates with integrity, humility, empathy, warmth, and inclusion
- Commitment to ongoing professional development and growth
 - Possesses a growth mindset toward professional development and promotes the same with colleagues in the AIMS office and across member schools
- Strong technological proficiency and comfort troubleshooting and managing one's own day-to-day technology needs

Required Qualifications

- Previous Head of School, Senior Leadership, or Similar Experience
- An advanced degree
- Commitment to living in Maryland or DC

Application Procedures

AIMS has engaged the national executive search firm Educational Directions ([EduDx](#)) to partner with the Search Committee, Board, and AIMS community.

Application Deadline: April 6, 2026

Interested candidates are expected to have already contacted the consultants at least 7 days prior the April 6 deadline before submitting their application portfolio.

Please direct all inquiries, applications, and nominations in confidence to:

- Mike Murphy: mike.murphy@edudx.com
- Highley Thompson: highley.thompson@edudx.com

Candidates should submit the following, in this order, in a single PDF:

- A letter of interest addressed to the AIMS Search Committee explaining their interest in the role
- A current resume
- A writing sample (speech, newsletter, etc.)
- The names, e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, and affiliation to the candidate of five professional references (References will be contacted after obtaining permission from the candidate. Finalists will be expected to provide five additional references.)

Search Calendar

April 6, 2026: Application Deadline

- Interested candidates are expected to have already contacted the consultants at least 7 days prior the April 6 deadline before submitting their application portfolio.

April 17, 2026: Semifinalists Selected

April 22 and April 23, 2026: Semifinalist Interviews

- 90-minute interviews conducted via Zoom with the Search Committee

May 12 and May 13, 2026: Finalist Interviews

- Finalists meet with AIMS Board, Search Committee, Executive Director, and AIMS Staff

End of May, 2026: Announce New Executive Director

July 1, 2027: New Executive Director Starts Role