



**PRESIDENT PROFILE:**  
*Information for Candidates*

**SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION  
OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**

*Atlanta, GA*

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SAIS  
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**CONTENTS**

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<b>SAIS</b>	<b>Page</b>
Introduction.....	3
Mission.....	3
Vision.....	3
Values.....	3
Accreditation History.....	3
Relationship with SACS.....	4
Recent History.....	5
Non-discriminatory Policy.....	5
Governance.....	5
Membership and Dues.....	6
Services and Programs.....	6
 <b>THE POSITION</b>	
Overview.....	7
President.....	7
Administrative Offices.....	8
Staff.....	8
 <b>THE FUTURE.....</b>	<b>9</b>
 <b>THE NEXT PRESIDENT .....</b>	<b>10</b>
 <b>BECOMING A CANDIDATE.....</b>	<b>10</b>

# SAIS

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## **Introduction**

SAIS is a membership organization comprised of independent K-12 schools throughout the region. As of June 30, 2014, SAIS has 364 member schools and represents over 200,000 students. The staff of 8.5 FTEs operates out of an office in Atlanta, GA.

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## **Mission**

The mission of SAIS is to strengthen member schools by providing high-quality accreditation processes, comprehensive professional growth opportunities, and visionary leadership programs.

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## **Core Strategy**

SAIS provides a system of resources to help Southern independent schools attain a level of excellence they could not achieve through other means.

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## **Early History**

SAIS began its organizational life in 1903 as the Mid-South Association of Independent Schools (MAIS), providing training for teachers in private schools and some early public schools in the Southeastern states. In 1953, another organization began as the Southern Association of Independent Schools, providing a forum for independent school administrators to work with public schools through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and to contribute to the larger interest in regional accreditation. MAIS and SAIS merged in 1986 to form the present-day SAIS, with an emphasis on accreditation and professional development.

The focus of SAIS's interest when it began in 1953 was to develop and maintain relationships with the expanding organization of SACS in order to ensure significant input from independent schools into the exploding world of public school accreditation. The post-WWII years of baby booming, facility planning, teacher training, and legislative entitlement funding eclipsed the scope and role of private education in America close to the current level of service.

Part of this history of negotiating standards in a predominantly public school oriented world of education caused SAIS to embark on its own method of accreditation in the late '90s. The efforts resulted in the "SAIS-only" method available to member schools.

## **Accreditation History**

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SAIS has always been concerned with accreditation and its impact on the quality of school organization and service. Since the 1986 merger of the former SAIS and the former MAIS, schools in the Southeast have argued more and more forcefully for a place at the decision tables related to accreditation in the Southeast, despite the modest proportion of schools. During the course of the past 20 years, independent school quality and benefits have been recognized only after hard-fought argument. Now, at the beginning of this century of educational service to the nation, independent schools are becoming the model of educational method even for many new conceptions of public schools, for emerging charter schools, and for home schooling networks.

The past five years have provided SAIS with a platform to design and use two significant programs of accreditation to assist member schools as they develop and promote high quality education in this region. The SAIS-only and the SAIS-SACS dual methods of accreditation are the components of this program. SAIS member schools may choose which method is best suited to their needs. Either leads to recognition of high quality by SAIS; one also leads to recognition by SACS.

Since the SAIS-SACS dual accreditation program began in 2005, SAIS has experienced an increasing demand for membership and accreditation. In order to maintain the quality and meaning of the SAIS “brand” of accreditation, the organization’s membership criteria has been updated. The membership criteria in place for SAIS today are much different from in the past. Schools that joined the organization under the old criteria were grandfathered. However, all member schools (even those that were grandfathered) are encouraged to meet the current criteria and seek accreditation, both of which show signs of a quality school.

## **Relationship with SACS**

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Established in 1895, the [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools](#) (commonly referred to as SACS) is a non-governmental, voluntary organization that accredits more than 13,000 public and non-public institutions from early childhood through university. Since its inception, SACS has served the educational community by dedicating its mission to helping schools improve student learning. Today, SACS is the largest accrediting agency in the world and is one of only six agencies that accredit both public and nonpublic educational institutions.

The current SAIS-SACS partnership offers schools a process for dual accreditation. In today’s world of accountability in schooling, accreditation serves as a critical component of a school’s demonstrated effectiveness and ability to provide successful schooling for children. A school that is able to achieve accreditation demonstrates a commitment to a process that requires the school to meet a set of rigorous, research-based standards; to engage in a program of continuous school improvement; and to demonstrate quality assurance to its stakeholders through self-evaluation and peer review. SAIS-SACS accreditation provides schools access to an integrated network of services and technical

assistance that supports every school's ability to identify and meet its goals for improving student performance and the teaching and learning process.

A SAIS-SACS accredited school is part of an international network of accredited schools that have demonstrated success in educating children. As such, SAIS-SACS accreditation is recognized throughout the world as a symbol of quality in education for students and teachers.

To earn accreditation, schools must meet quality standards, be evaluated by an outside group of peer professionals, and implement a school plan focused on strategic improvement and student performance. Accreditation is voluntary and must be renewed each year.

### **Non-discriminatory Policy**

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SAIS complies with all federal and state non-discrimination laws, and requires that all schools submit a copy of their non-discriminatory admissions policy with their membership application. SAIS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin.

### **Governance**

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The SAIS constitution states that the purpose of the organization "shall be to further in every way the cause of education in the South through the promotion of mutually beneficial programs among member schools. The association shall work to develop a cooperative relationship with public school leaders in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Further, the association shall promote more effective evaluation and accreditation for member schools by encouraging its members to become active in accrediting agencies." SAIS is governed by a 16-member board of trustees. The SAIS President is employed by the board, which "shall have the responsibility of making a written assignment of all duties, powers, responsibilities, and prerogatives of the President (including also the salary and location of the office)."

### **Membership**

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According to Article 3 of the SAIS bylaws:

*Any independent school demonstrating compliance with the candidacy criteria determined by the board shall be considered a candidate for membership in the association upon the acceptance of its application, submission of supporting documents, and payment of dues. If not already accredited, candidates must earn accreditation in accordance with the published criteria, at which time they will be considered members of the association. Other non-school organizations may be given non-voting affiliate status in the association if approved by the board.*

## **Dues**

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SAIS membership dues are based upon the size of expense budget for each member school. For the 2014-15 year, dues range from \$1,211 for schools with budgets under \$1,000,000 to \$5,384 for schools with budgets at or above \$18,000,000.

## **Services and Programs**

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SAIS provides a wide variety of services and programs, such as workshops, conferences, institutes, and retreats, and also provides its membership with statistics, resources, news, white papers, and an online career center. SAIS also maintains close relations and some joint programming with NAIS, state associations, and other related groups.

In order to appreciate and understand the full array of SAIS offerings, please visit [www.sais.org](http://www.sais.org).

## THE POSITION

### **Overview**

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On July 1, 1986, the Mid-South Association of Independent Schools (MAIS) merged into the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS) at which time a search was underway for a new Executive Director for the newly shaped association.

Dr. Tom Redmon served as SAIS Executive Director from September 1, 1986 until his retirement on June 30, 2007, after 22 years of distinguished service.

Dr. Steve Robinson began serving as SAIS President on July 1, 2007 and has announced his intention to resign effective June 30, 2015 to begin serving as Superintendent of Schools for the Episcopal Archdiocese of Honduras.

The SAIS Board of Trustees has appointed a Search Committee from the Board for Dr. Robinson's successor.

### **President**

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The President is an ex-officio and non-voting member of the SAIS Board of Trustees and *"performs such administrative duties and exercises such administrative authority as may be delegated by the Board of Trustees"*. The President works with the standing committees and has the authority to *"appoint ad hoc committees as necessary to fulfill the general program responsibilities of the association"*.

The SAIS President's responsibilities include:

- Assuring the association's adherence to its stated mission and vision
- Managing the overall financial and asset wealth of the association, under the guidance of the board
- Overseeing all aspects of staff administration, including hiring, training, termination, salary administration, and performance evaluation
- Providing the management logistics and information resources necessary to assist the board in its governance role
- Generating new ideas and methods for accomplishing the mission and strategic plans
- Communicating regularly with member schools and with state and national affiliates
- Planning and coordinating meetings of the board
- Developing the presence and reputation of the association on behalf of its membership
- Attending, when appropriate, meetings of state and national affiliates
- Serving as staff liaison to the board and its committees

- Keeping the board and the membership aware of issues of national and regional concern
- Evaluating the association's programs and activities

## **Office Location**

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The SAIS office is located at 5901 Peachtree-Dunwoody Road in the Palisades office complex. The location is convenient to I-285, GA-400, MARTA, and many nearby hotels and restaurants. The office features nine private offices, reception area, conference room seating up to 24, kitchen, and two storage closets. The office is leased through February 2019.

## **Staff**

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As of July 2014, the SAIS staff is comprised the following individuals and positions:

### **Andruscavage, Joanne**

*Director of Accreditation*

- Hired June 2014
- Reports to Vice President of Accreditation & Membership
- Assigns accreditation teams and chairs

### **Spear, Lori**

*Executive Vice President*

- Hired August 2003
- Reports to President
- Manages day-to-day operations
- Oversees event logistics and implementation
- Supervises organizational communications
- Board liaison
- Authorized signer on bank accounts
- Supervises 4 staff members

### **Kavanagh, Damian**

*Vice President of Membership & Accreditation*

- Hired July 2010
- Reports to President
- Oversees membership and accreditation
- Presents accreditation workshops and chair trainings
- Manages the Stakeholder Survey Center
- Curates SAIS tv content
- Supervises 2 staff members

**Minnick, LeeAnne**

*Director of Member Services & Technology*

- Hired May 2008
- Reports to Executive Vice President
- Telecommutes on Wednesdays & Fridays
- Oversees website and database
- Serves as primary contact for registration/login issues
- Manages the Career Center

**Grantham, Julia**

*Director of Administration*

- Hired January 2012
- Reports to Executive Vice President
- Works 4 days/week (Monday-Thursday)
- Oversees accounting and financials
- Manages accounts payable and receivable
- Produces monthly financial reports
- Directs HR efforts

**Stewart, Sarah**

*Content & Member Engagement Manager*

- Hired August 2013
- Reports to Vice President of Accreditation & Membership
- Manages social media presence and accounts
- Creates content for *HeadLines* e-newsletter

**Taylor, Anna**

*Events & Marketing Assistant*

- Hired May 2014
- Reports to Executive Vice President
- Assists with event planning
- Produces event materials
- Orders office supplies and maintains inventory of needed items
- Manages set-up and break-down of on-site events

**Swart, Danielle**

*Assistant to the President*

- Hired August 2013
- Reports to Executive Vice President
- Part-time (based on President's schedule)
- Manages President's calendar
- Responds to requests for presentations
- Liaison between school and President for on-site presentations

## **THE NEXT PRESIDENT**

Knowing the vital leadership role in Southern independent education to be exercised by the next President, the SAIS Board of Trustees seeks candidates who:

- Understand and appreciate the culture of the region served by the association
- Possess outstanding people skills
- Are proficient with technology, including contemporary social media platforms
- Hold an advanced degree
- Demonstrate strong oral and written communication skills
- Have experience in managing budgets
- Are entrepreneurial
- Evince strong organizational and management skills
- Are able to maintain good relationships with member schools
- Will inspire respect and confidence in others
- Are diplomatic
- Have prior experience as a Head of School
- Can confidently organize and motivate volunteers
- Delegate effectively
- Have demonstrated a capacity to both lead and manage effectively

## **BECOMING A CANDIDATE**

Brigham Hill Consultancy is pleased to assist SAIS with the search. To submit a resume, please email L. Lincoln Eldredge and Jessica D. Cockrell of Brigham Hill at [cockrell@brighamhill.com](mailto:cockrell@brighamhill.com).

The SAIS Search Committee plans to select candidates for interviews at the Annual Conference in October 2014 and to recommend a new President to the SAIS Board of Trustees in December 2014. The new President will begin employment on July 1, 2015.

Priority consideration will be given to applications received before September 15, 2014.

SAIS is an equal opportunity employer, and compensation packages are open and competitive. Visit [www.sais.org](http://www.sais.org) for more information about the association's programs and services.