

# **Board Policy Manual**

## **2023**

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## **Introduction - Welcome to the Team!**

Hello and Welcome to the Miles Ahead Charter School Board!

We are very excited to have you join this esteemed Board of Directors!

From an idea from our Founding School Executive Director, Kolt Bloxson in December 2019 to reality in August 2023, Miles Ahead Charter School has persevered and opened its doors to the families in Georgia who were looking for an alternative to the public schools they were zoned for. They were looking for a school that would provide a quality, whole-child academic experience for their children ... and they found it in Miles Ahead Charter School. The school opened with about 200 students, grades K-4 with plans to grow to over 500 students, grades K-8 by the 5th year.

As we move forward after opening our doors in August 2023, this Board Policy Guide will help all board members with understanding the requirements of their role as board members for a charter school. This Guide will also provide you with the details of the various resources that we use to guide us in the process of building and managing a charter school. These resources include but are not limited to the SCSC Local Educational Authority (LEA), Comprehensive Performance Framework and the SCSC Operational Monitoring.

As you continue through this Policy Guide, feel free to reach out to me with any questions or if you need help finding information that you need.

Again, welcome to the MACS Crew! We are excited for you to join us on this journey and to see where your skills, dedication and enthusiasm can take us!

Sincerely,

*Henry L. Lust*

Henry L. Lust

Board Chair, Miles Ahead Charter School

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## Section I – About Miles Ahead

### A. Mission, Vision, and Our Approach

#### Mission

Miles Ahead Charter School is a K-8 school focused on student growth and academic achievement through a whole child approach to education. Our mission is to provide all students with the social and academic skills necessary to help them realize their potential for local impact and global change.

#### Vision

Our vision is to go the extra mile by ensuring the proper academic, social emotional needs for each of our students.

#### Our Approach

1. **A Whole Child Approach:** MACS wants to create well-rounded students. Students who are well-educated, highly ethical, culturally aware, and demonstrate an empathy for others. A Whole Child Approach to education ensures that we are teaching students through the principles of EL Education: Mastery of Skills and Knowledge, Character, and High Quality Work.
2. **The MACS Crew:** We are Crew at MACS. We support one another in the completion of work, through making tough decisions, and in times of triumph or crisis. Our Crew structure is the heart of our community where we work together and serve as crew members and not passengers.
3. **21st Century Learning:** Our goal is to prepare students with the skills necessary to be ready for the 21st century environment. Our College and Career programming ensures that students set goals for themselves, envision themselves in those roles, and work towards getting there. In turn, MACS will provide the academic and critical thinking skills necessary for our students to be competitive and successful beyond their tenure at MACS.
4. **Deeper Learning:** Our innovative structure ensures that students are able to dive deep into meaningful learning experiences as opposed to skimming the surface. Courses are scheduled for 2 Content Areas plus Power Hour to ensure daily commitment to academic mastery and growth. Further, our Expedition Days promote focused, problem-based learning for our students that sees them study topics for 6-8 weeks and then engage in a celebration of that learning.
5. **Collaborative Family & Community Partnerships:** Families and communities are valuable experts that strengthen our school through early, frequent, and thorough collaborative partnerships.

## B. School Legal Status

MACS has been approved by the State Charter School Commission and the Georgia Board of Education to form a charter school, as of April/May 2021. Our charter has been approved for a 5 year term, starting in July 2021 and ending in June 2027. A copy of our official charter can be found [here](#).

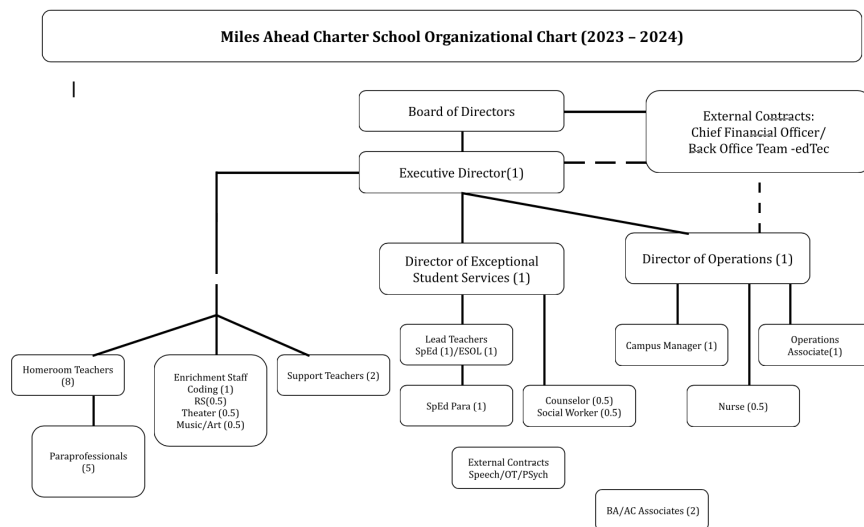
## C. Non-Discrimination Policy

The officers, directors, committee members, employees, and persons served by this corporation shall be selected entirely on a nondiscriminatory basis with respect to age, sex, race, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation. It is the policy of MACS not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, ancestry, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, veteran’s status, political service or affiliation, color, religion, or national origin in admissions, hiring, selection or appointment to any office.

MACS shall maintain its educational programs in compliance with all laws relating to non-discrimination. Procedures shall be established and personnel appointed within the District to deal with student and parent concerns relative to the requirement of non-discrimination. The nondiscrimination policy shall apply to all acts related to school activity or school attendance.

## D. Organizational Chart

The below organizational chart is for the opening year of the school. In Fall 2023, the school will open with grades K-4. Each year we will add a grade level, as well as more staff to support our continued growth.



## **Section II – Board Overview**

### **A. Responsibilities of Board of Directors**

The Miles Ahead Charter School (MACS) Board of Directors will ensure we achieve our mission for our school through strategic planning and progress monitoring, alignment of assets to priorities, protecting financial assets, ensuring legal and ethical integrity, selecting and evaluating the Executive Director, and advocating for the MACS mission and goals to garner support from community. As a Board of 6-15 members, the Board will utilize a subcommittee structure that will report to the full Board monthly to ensure these duties.

The MACS Board Policy Manual contains the policies used to effectively govern the organization for the purpose of creating a high quality public charter school for the students and families of Georgia.

### **B. Responsibilities of the Board**

- Support and advocate for the mission and vision of the school. Evaluate and review the stated mission and purpose that articulates the organization's goals, means, and primary constituents served.
- Select, support, and evaluate the Executive Director. Ensure the Executive Director is qualified for the position and has the moral and professional support necessary to further the stated mission and goals of MACS.
- Ensure effective planning. Actively participate in the overall planning process and assist in implementing and monitoring the plan's goals.
- Monitor and strengthen programs and services. Determine alignment of programming with the mission of MACS and monitor their effectiveness.
- Ensure adequate financial resources. Secure adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission.
- Protect assets and provide proper financial oversight. Assist in developing the annual budget and ensure proper financial controls are in place.
- Build a competent, working Board. Define prerequisites for candidates, orient new members, and annually evaluate Board's Performance. Manage the work ahead with the use of committee structures and personal interests.
- Ensure legal and ethical integrity. Ensure adherence of MACS to legal standards and the highest ethical standards.
- Enhance the school's public standing. Clearly articulate the MACS mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public and garner support from the community.
- Protect assets and provide proper financial oversight. Assist in developing the annual budget and ensure proper financial controls are in place.

### C. Responsibilities of Individual Board Members (“Directors”)

- Support and advocate for mission and vision of MACS
- Commit 10-12 hours per month (includes meetings, phone calls, and emails)
- Attend monthly Board meetings and actively serve on at least one committee
- Commit to annual board member financial commitment of \$625 for the 2023-2024 year
- Support decisions made by the Board as a whole
- Cultivate community support for MACS
- Provide a completed criminal background check upon the start of their time as a Board Member

### D. Code of Ethics

All Board Members of MACS must:

- Uphold and abide by all local, state, and federal laws, court orders, rules and regulations issued by the Georgia Department of Education and any other relevant authority pertaining to schools.
- Effectuate desired changes only through lawful and ethical processes.
- Make decisions grounded on the educational welfare and wellbeing of the children served by the School without consideration to race, religion, color, sex, income level, or any other irrelevant characteristic.
- Use his or her independent judgment in reaching all decisions.
- Not use his or her position as Director for personal gain or profit.
- Conduct himself or herself in a manner that reflects positively on MACS.
- Make all reasonable efforts to support the MACS mission and personnel.
- Complete all work within a timely fashion so that well-informed decisions can be made.

## Section III – The Board & General Policies

### A. Bylaws

As a non-profit organization, the MACS Board is guided by bylaws. To the latest bylaws, adopted in September 2023 by the Board, click [here](#). Some topics that are included in the bylaws are as follows, but are not limited to:

1. Details of Board Members - Term, Powers, Adding and Removing Members, Meetings and Manner of Acting
2. Description of Board Officers - Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer
3. Document Retention Policy
4. Code of Ethics and Whistleblower Policy

### B. Policy Making

1. The Board shall be solely responsible for adopting, repealing or amending policies for MACS. Action by the Board shall be accomplished as set forth in the bylaws.
2. Except in cases of special need, the Board shall follow the following procedure in adopting, repealing or amending policies at MACS:
  - a. Committee Review. The proposed policy shall be submitted to the appropriate committee for review and discussion. When the committee has a final draft of the policy, it will be submitted to the full Board for review.
  - b. Full Board Review. The proposed policy shall be contained in the Board packet distributed prior to the full Board meeting. The policy will be presented at a full meeting of the Board. The Board will review and discuss any necessary changes on the policy. When discussion of the policy is concluded, the Board will decide whether to move the policy to a full Board vote. The board will vote on whether to approve the policy. If the policy receives a simple majority vote, the proposed policy will be adopted and shall become a policy of MACS. If the policy does not receive a majority vote, it will go back to committee for revision and resubmission to the full Board.
  - c. Special Needs. Upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Directors present at a regular or special meeting called for that purpose, a special need may be declared. If a special need is declared, a policy may be adopted on first reading.
  - d. A proposed policy should reference the policy provision it will be amending. Ideally, the entire policy will be shared with new and deleted language displayed in redline.



### **C. Board Review of Administrative Procedures**

The Board recognizes its role of ensuring the fiscal and organizational health of the school through oversight and continuous progress monitoring. The Executive Director shall be responsible for the day-to-day administration of affairs of MACS and shall manage all activities of the school as prescribed by the Board. As a result, the Board need not review administrative policies and regulations in advance of issuance except as required by law. However, the Board should approve in advance any highly sensitive matters of policy and/or regulations that have the potential to impact its duties and obligations to MACS and/or Georgia Department of Education. To that end, the Executive Director shall exercise his or her discretion to identify and bring to the Board's attention any such policies and regulations prior to issuance.

Administrative policies and regulations should reference existing Board policy when applicable. The Board reserves the right to review administrative policies and regulations at its discretion. However, the Board shall revise or veto such regulations only when, in its judgment, such regulations are inconsistent with the Board's policies.

### **D. Summary of Georgia Open Meeting Law**

The Georgia Open Meetings Act covers the meetings of "the governing body of an agency" and committees created by its members. The general rule is that all meetings of governing bodies of agencies must be open to the public. The term "agency" includes the following:

- Every state department, agency, Board, bureau, commission, public corporation, and authority;
- Every county, municipal corporation, school district and other political subdivision;
- Every department, agency, Board, bureau, commission, authority and similar body of each county, municipal corporation or other political subdivision of the state;
- Every city, county, regional or other authority established pursuant to state law; and;
- Non-profit organizations that receive more than one-third of their funds from a direct allocation of state funds from the governing authority of an agency.

A governing body may exclude the public from a portion of a meeting known as a "closed session" if it identifies a specific statutory exemption. Under Georgia Open Meetings Act, a governing body may hold a closed session when it is dealing with one of nine subject-area exemptions found in Ga. Code § 50-14-3. The applicable exemptions per the current GA Code are (subject to change):

- staff meetings held for investigative purposes under duties or responsibilities imposed by law;
- meetings when any agency is discussing the future acquisition of real estate;

- meetings when discussing or deliberating upon the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a public officer or employee;
- meetings of the Board of trustees or the investment committee of any public retirement system when such Board or committee is discussing matters pertaining to investment securities trading or investment portfolio positions and composition; and
- meetings when discussing any records that are exempt from public inspection or disclosure pursuant to paragraph (15) of subsection (a) of Code Section 50-18-72, when discussing any information a record of which would be exempt from public inspection or disclosure under said paragraph, or when reviewing or discussing any security plan under consideration pursuant to paragraph (10) of subsection (a) of Code Section 15-16-10.

To ensure compliance with Open Meeting Law, MACS will:

- Post the annual schedule of meetings on the school website and in a highly-visible location in the front office and other areas frequented by our school community.
- Any changes to the schedule would be published in the same locations at least two weeks in advance, as well as advertised on the school's social media profiles.
- All meeting locations will be announced in advance and held in publicly-accessible locations.
- Meeting agendas will be available at least one week in advance on the school's website.
- The board will provide clear signage, seating, and agendas for any members of the community that want to attend the meeting.
- Up to 20 minutes will be provided for open comment at the beginning of each meeting (2 minutes per speaker, in the order that they have signed into the meeting attendance sheet).
- Meeting minutes will be posted on our website upon approval (from the previous month's meeting). In the event of an executive session (due to personnel matters, negotiations including real estate, or threatened or potential litigation), the board will motion in the open meeting to go into executive session and state the general reason, which will be reflected in the minutes. Meeting minutes will be recorded for Executive Sessions but will not be made public.
- Committee meetings will be held to the same open meetings standards as general board meetings for location accessibility, notice, and meeting minutes.
- Special meetings held outside of regularly-scheduled board meetings will be announced at least 24 hours in advance through the county's legal notice publications, school website, and school social media.

## E. Board Attendance Policy

Because Board meetings are the only forum during which the Board can discuss and vote on major school policies and decisions, attendance at these meetings carries a special importance.

Definitions. *“Notified” Absence*: For absence to be “notified,” a Director must notify the person running the meeting (usually Chair or Vice-Chair) by 12:00pm the day of the meeting that s/he will be absent. *“Unnotified” Absence*: For absence to be “un-notified,” a Director failed to notify the person running the meeting (usually Chair or Vice-Chair) by 12:00pm of the meeting day that s/he will be absent.

Unsatisfactory Attendance. If any of the following conditions exist, an individual Director will be considered to have unsatisfactory attendance: (1) the Director has three *“un-notified”* absences ; (2) the Director has three *“notified”* absences; or (3) the Director misses one third of the total number of Board meetings during one of their term years.

Process for Responding to Unsatisfactory Attendance. The Board Secretary will keep track of Director attendance through Board meeting minutes and will provide this information to the Chair. The Chair will directly contact a Director at risk of potentially violating the policy to discuss the problem as well as issue both verbal and written warning. If a Director does violate the policy, the Chair will bring this to the Board’s attention for discussion, after which point a majority vote will be held to determine possible termination from the Board.

## F. Criminal Background Check Policy

All Board Members are required by the State Charter School Commission (SCSC) to receive criminal background checks. Board Members must get their background check prior to the start of their first term as a board member, and prior to the start of their next term as board member. For each term that the Board Member wants to serve, a new background check must be completed.

To complete this task, Board Members are asked to contact their local county sheriff's office. Board members are personally responsible for the expense of the background check and for submitting the completed background check to the Board Chair.

If at any point during the active term of service to the board, a board member is involved or suspected to be involved in any criminal activity, that Board Member must submit details to the Executive Committee in writing within 48 hours of being made aware of their involvement or

suspected involvement in criminal activity. If the Board Member fails to notify the board within 48 hours of their knowledge of involvement or suspected involvement in a criminal activity, this could result in immediate termination from the Board.

## **G. Board Conflict of Interest Policy**

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect Miles Ahead Charter School Inc. 's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of one of its officers or directors, or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement, but not replace, any applicable state and federal laws governing conflicts of interest.

In summary, the procedures that must take place when managing a conflict of interest is as follows:

1. Duty to Disclose

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an Interested Persons must disclose the existence of the Financial Interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of the committees with governing board-delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement. In an effort to aid such disclosure, each member (board, committee, or staff) shall complete a conflict of interest questionnaire as circumstances warrant, but no less frequently than annually.

2. Determining whether a conflict of interest exists

The board shall review each member questionnaire and any other disclosures regarding the Financial Interests of its members. After disclosure of the Financial Interest, the Interested Person shall leave the board meeting while the remaining board members discuss and vote on whether a conflict of interest exists.

3. Procedures for addressing conflicts of interest

After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether the organization can obtain with reasonable effort a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not produce a conflict of interest. The Interested Person shall not be present in the room during the determination.

4. Disciplinary Action

If the board or committee has reason to believe an individual has failed to disclose actual or potential conflicts of interest, it will inform the member and allow him/her to explain the alleged failure to disclose. If the board or committee still has reason to believe a conflict of interest exists after the alleged conflict is explained, it will take corrective action.

The form asks Board Members to acknowledge and affirm their commitment to uphold the conflict of interest policy, as well as to disclose any possible conflict of interests that they may have at that time. All Board Members are required to sign a conflict of interest policy form prior to starting their term as a MACS Board Member. The full Conflict of Interest policy can be found [here](#).

## H. Board Grievance Policy

MACS will make every effort possible to resolve any concerns from students, families, and teachers at the management level through collaborative meetings to review data, consider student, family, and educator perspectives, and to make the best decision for our students. In any case where families remain unsatisfied, they can engage in our grievance policy:

1. Submit a complaint in writing (mail or email) to the Executive Director.
2. Executive Director will respond to complainant with confirmation of receipt and explanation of grievance process and timeline (which will include notifying families of their rights to engage in due process or file a complaint with the State Board of Education, when appropriate), launch investigation and response, and inform the complainant of all actions taken within five business days. The School Executive Director will also alert the Executive Committee for informational purposes at this stage.
3. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may escalate to the Board Chair of MACS Board Members by submitting written notice to the Board Chair within 10 business days of receiving the communication on actions from the Head of School.
4. The Board Chair will convene a board committee (typically Governance Committee and any other board members needed for specialized expertise) to investigate, make a determination, and share the decision with the complainant within 10 business days. All decisions will also be shared with the entire board in writing for informational purposes.
5. The decision is typically final, however if the committee cannot come to a decision, the committee will convene the entire board to investigate the matter, come to a decision, and share the final decision with the complainant.
6. In the cases of families and students, if the complainant is unsatisfied with the Board's decisions, he/she may appeal to the State Board of Education in accordance with O.C.G.A 20-2-1160.

## I. Board Fundraising Policy

The Board of Directors is a 100% giving Board. Board members are expected to give or fundraise monetary gifts to the School and are asked to make the School a priority in their personal giving. All financial contributions to the school by board members are confidential (known only to the leader of the Fundraising Taskforce).

Each year, the Board votes on the annual board contribution amount. For the 2023-2024 school calendar year, each Board Member will give or fundraise towards the individual contribution amount of \$625, unless another amount has been voted upon at the start of the 2023-2024 Board year same as school calendar year, July 2023 - June 2024). Directors are expected to be involved in fundraising by using their personal and business connections when appropriate, by soliciting funds when appropriate, by serving on fund-raising committees, and by attending fundraising events.

All Board contributions must be paid in full by Giving Tuesday.

## Section IV – Financial Policies

### A. Overview

The Financial Committee and Treasurer have created the MACS Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual. Adopted in May 2021, this manual has been prepared to document the internal accounting procedures for the MACS. Its purpose is to ensure that assets are safeguarded, that financial statements are in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles, and that finances are managed with responsible stewardship. All personnel with a role in the management of MACS's fiscal operations are expected to uphold the policies in this manual. It is the intention of MACS that this accounting manual serves as our commitment to proper, accurate financial management and reporting.

All Board Members are expected to comply with the policies and procedures in this manual, and to engage the Treasurer with any questions or requests for clarifications. All Organization's staff with a role in the management of fiscal and accounting operations are expected to comply with the policies and procedures in this manual.

These policies will be reviewed annually and revised as needed by the staff and approved by the CAO (Chief Administrative Officer/School Leader) and the Board.

To view the full Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual, click [here](#).

### B. Reimbursement of Purchases

It is the policy of MACS to reimburse out of pocket expenses only when supporting documentation has been presented for approved costs incurred. If a Board Member makes a purchase with their personal funds and a reimbursement of those funds are needed from MACS, the Board Member should complete a check request form, which can be found [here](#). Any supporting documentation should accompany the completed reimbursement form, including receipts and invoices. The completed form and its accompanying supporting documents should be submitted to the Board Treasurer by email.

Please be advised that it is highly recommended to plan ahead for your requests and that reimbursements are approved ahead of the purchase by the Finance Committee, to prevent any purchases being bought without approval. Once received, the Finance Committee will provide your reimbursement within two weeks from the date received.