



## 2026 Admission Conference

May 4-5  
Hilton Dallas/Park Cities

May 4 | 8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Ballroom Coffee, soda, light snacks, conference check-in, informal networking

Foyer *Please eat breakfast before the conference begins*

May 4 | 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

### Strategic Takeaways from EMA's 2026 State of the Independent School Enrollment Industry Report

Ballroom AB This session offers an in-depth look at the key findings from the fifth edition of EMA's flagship State of the Independent School Enrollment Industry (SOTI) Report, conducted every three years. Drawing on insights from more than 700 schools, the report identifies critical trends shaping independent school enrollment management. Organized around major themes, it presents essential data on office structures, compensation, and the evolving role of the senior enrollment leader across the United States and Canada.

Attendees will gain a clearer understanding of industry trends, practical ideas for translating data into actionable strategies, and information to support advocating for resources and strategic change within their own institutions.

*Kitsana Salyphone, Director of Membership & Business Development, E3n*

May 4 | 10:00 – 10:15 a.m.

Break

May 4 | 10:15 – 11:30 a.m.

### Legal Issues That Matter Most

Ballroom AB Running an independent school admission office means navigating legal issues that directly affect your role and your school. The legal landscape is constantly shifting. In this fast-moving session, independent school attorney Kristin Smith will cut through the noise and deliver the must-know legal updates for ISAS schools today. You'll walk away with practical insights, real-world examples, and a clear sense of what should be on your radar for the year ahead. Don't miss this chance to get the legal lowdown that you need to stay ahead of the curve.

*Kristin Smith, Fisher & Phillips LLC*



May 4 | 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Ballroom AB Lunch Buffet – tables are designated by discussion categories. Please choose the topic you wish to discuss.

May 4 | 12:30 – 1:45 p.m.

**Financial Aid Today: Trends, Strategy, and Practice**

Ballroom AB An overview of current financial aid trends and best practices, this session will examine how strategy and daily operations intersect to support access, enrollment, and institutional sustainability in large and small shops.

*Amy deBorst, Greenhill School and Louise Thompson, Lakehill Preparatory School*

May 4 | 1:45 – 2:15 p.m.

Break

May 4 | 2:15 – 3:30 p.m.

**Tabletop Discussions**

Ballroom AB Pick a topic to discuss with your peers. Each group will have a facilitator with guidelines for running the discussion.

- Surveys: What are people using/What works and what doesn't?
- Retention Programming: How are you building community and outreach with families?
- AI Use: What tools are you using and why?
- Veracross and Blackbaud: Time to share tips and tools
- Admission Events: Where and how are you innovating?

May 4 | 3:30 – 3:45 p.m.

Break

May 4 | 3:45 – 4:45 p.m.

**The Changing Landscape of the Student Learner: Bridging Admission and Classroom Realities**

Ballroom AB The profile of the modern student is evolving, shaped by shifting demographics, diverse learning needs, and new expectations for education. This session will explore how these changes impact admission decisions and classroom experiences, addressing common concerns from faculty about student readiness and caliber. Participants will examine data trends, unpack the factors driving these shifts, and consider how to foster alignment between admission goals and academic expectations. Through discussion and practical

strategies, this session will help admission and enrollment leaders better understand the evolving needs of today's students and explore how their admission process may need to adapt.

**Objectives:**

- Analyze trends in student demographics and learning profiles to understand the evolving characteristics of the modern student.
- Evaluate how admission policies and practices influence perceptions of student readiness and academic standards.
- Propose strategies for collaboration between admission teams and faculty to ensure alignment and support for the changing student learner.
- Develop skills to communicate with parents of neuro-diverse students.

*Casey Bell, Consultant, ISM*

May 4 | 4:45 – 5:45 p.m.

Grain (hotel  
restaurant) Reception at Hilton Dallas/Park Cities

Tonight's reception is graciously underwritten by

**metric**  
MARKETING

May 4 | 6:00 p.m. Dinner and Evening on Your Own

You are welcome to venture out in Dallas on your own. There are numerous restaurants within walking distance of the hotel.

**Day 2**

May 5 | 7:30 – 8:30 a.m.

Ballroom AB Breakfast Buffet

May 5 | 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.

**Hear from Your Peers**

Ballroom AB Attendees are encouraged to [submit questions in advance through this link](#). All questions will be asked of the group and answered collectively.



May 5 | 9:30 – 9:45 a.m.

Break

May 5 | 9:45 – 11:15 a.m.

### Telling Your School's Story and Making Sure It's True

**Ballroom AB** The Admission office sells families on dreams of what our schools can be for their children. That dream is made up of the schools' compelling value propositions, curriculum, facilities and personalities in the halls. But how do we ensure that this vision reflects reality.

During this interactive workshop, we will dive deep into what goes into telling our school's story, what's at stake if we do it well (or don't), and how to activate every person in the school as an ambassador, telling your school's story in the way it should be told. This work is not easy, but with smart systems in place, and knowing best practice from schools around the world, you will walk out with concrete, applicable strategies.

Key Takeways:

- **Sharpen your admission story.** Get clear on what you promise families and how to pressure-test that message against real student experiences.
- **Reduce friction in the funnel.** See how gaps between story and reality show up in tours, interviews, yield, and retention.
- **Mobilize campus storytellers.** Learn concrete ways to equip faculty and staff to reinforce your admission message before, during, and after the tour.

*Miriam Stein, Saddlerock Strategies*

May 5 | 11:15 a.m.

Adjournment and travel home

## Speakers

### Kitsana Salyphone



Kitsana Salyphone is the Director of Membership & Business Development at E3n, where she leads strategies to deliver an exceptional, relationship-driven member experience and expand professional learning and development opportunities. A relationship-centered, data-informed enrollment leader with more than 25 years of independent school experience, her work spans strategic enrollment management, admissions, financial aid, and summer/auxiliary programs, with a strong commitment to advancing access and belonging for students and families from underrepresented communities. She has held leadership roles at independent schools in the San Francisco Bay Area and Chicago and has served on the Board for People of Color in Independent Schools of Northern California and the Advisory Board for Summerbridge at San Francisco University High School.

### Kristin Smith



Kristin Smith's practice with Fisher & Phillips LLP focuses exclusively on independent and private schools. She advises, counsels and represents religious and secular schools, including those serving pre-kindergarten-grade 12, kindergarten-grade 8, grades 6/7 – 12, and grades 9 – 12.

Kristin assists schools in a variety of areas, including student and employee discipline; faculty, staff and student contract drafting; handbook and policy drafting, implementation, and enforcement; LGBTQ issues, including transgender students and employees; board governance and training; discrimination claims and EEOC charges; administration and faculty training and development; school entanglement in family court proceedings; and investigations, litigation, arbitration and mediation.

She is a frequent presenter to independent school associations on current legal issues.

### Amy deBorst

Amy deBorst has led Greenhill's financial aid program since 2004, supporting families with tuition and supplemental needs. She is currently the Director of Financial Aid. She also serves on the NAIS Financial Advisory Council and co-chairs her regional professionals' group.

### Louise Thompson

Louise Thompson is in her fourth year as Director of Enrollment Management at Lakehill Preparatory School, overseeing admissions and financial aid. Previously at Greenhill School for 14 years, she led data-informed assessment practices in Lower School admission. She has also served on the Dallas consortium Testing Taskforce.

### Casey Bell

Casey Bell began her independent school career at Linfield Christian School in California, where she held multiple roles from 2005–2018, including Chief Advancement Officer, Director of Admissions, and Director of College Counseling. She went on to lead enrollment efforts at Spartanburg Day School in South Carolina and All Saints' Episcopal School in Texas. Across all roles, Casey focused on building collaborative, data-driven systems that aligned internal practices with the school's value proposition and engaged the entire community in the enrollment process. She joined ISM as adjunct faculty in 2019, and became a full-time consultant in 2023.

Casey earned her bachelor's degree in Communication Studies from Azusa Pacific University, pursued master's coursework in both Business and Learning Design & Technology, and completed her Ed.D. in Organizational Change and Leadership at the University of Southern California. She holds a Leader Certification through ISM's International Advancement Program (IAP-L).

### Miriam Stein



Miriam Stein is a graduate of independent day school, and believes in the importance of day school education to our future. After working in education and in strategic enrollment for more than 20 years, she founded Saddlerock Strategies, a boutique consulting service that offers enrollment strategy, program design and professional development. She lives outside Washington, DC with her family (and dog), and loves working with school leaders on helping them get better at what they do.

Miriam is a frequent presenter on enrollment strategy and workplace productivity. She is a regular presenter for Enrollment Management Association (EMA), FinalSite, the Association of Independent School Admission Professionals (AISAP), the Summer Program and Auxiliary Revenue Collaboration (SPARC), and other regional associations. Miraim is honored to be a part of this program.