

# A FIELD GUIDE TO LIVING YOUR EDUCATION

at Midland School  
Santa Barbara County, California



THE  
FIELD  
GUIDE  
TO  
LIVING  
YOUR  
EDUCATION

**"Today we are seeing  
the dreams of inspired  
poets merging with  
the findings of careful  
scientists. The dreamer  
and the doer are  
showing the thinker  
new vistas of life on  
earth. New glories  
are coming to light for  
thoughtful minds."**



Paul Squibb  
Founder, 1932

MIDLAND SCHOOL

COLLEGE-PREPARATORY • BOARDING • CO-ED • PLACE-BASED AND EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION





Midland School, located on a 2,860-acre ranch in Santa Barbara County, is the leader in place-based, experiential education.

Everything we do—from how we maintain our co-ed campus to the way we feed ourselves to the rigorous courses we teach—originates from an intentional curriculum that focuses not only on high-caliber, college-preparatory classes, but also on true leadership, intentional community, and environmental stewardship.



COME  
PREPARED



**Living your education starts with taking control of your education.**

In 1932, Paul Squibb and the first class of 9 students bravely founded a school that would be an alternative to the regular thing. They defined its optimistic spirit. Today, each incoming class leaves its own indelible mark on Midland's legacy.

Follow in their footsteps or chart your own course. Or, take the best from both endeavors. You'll have the freedom to explore, discover and shape your own learning—*to live your education.*



## WHAT WE DO MATTERS

The Midland program merges high-caliber college preparation with innovative experiential learning. With extraordinary resources at hand—2,860 acres in Santa Barbara County, a 90-year-old culture of responsibility to community and environment, and a deeply committed faculty—we develop personal agency in our students.

Midland cultivates the belief that it matters what we do, and we actively engage students in their high school journey, both within and outside the classroom.

### CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:

Students and faculty install a new set of campus solar panels, Mattox '24 shares her senior project, Kevin '26 works with Memphis at the barn, students relax in a cabin, the farm crew shows off fall produce







## GEAR UP

Having the right tools is essential for any venture.  
Whether for work or for play, you'll want to be well equipped.

### SOME OF THE ITEMS MIDLANDERS OFTEN BRING:



Jot down class notes, plan your homework and study schedule, or write a short story inspired by your Midland adventures.



Delve into research, master Google classroom, catch up on the news, or simply watch a funny video with friends.



Learn how to split wood with the help of your prefect, and get that wood burning stove glowing hot!



Zoom from your cabin to Stillman Hall, or ride out to the Res for a dip in the swimming hole on a hot afternoon.



Take your first Natural Horsemanship lesson, or head out for a group ride on Golden Horseshoe Trail.



Catch a glimpse of our campus' beautiful landscapes and diverse flora and fauna, and snap a photo to share with friends and family back home.



Head out on an Outdoor Program backpacking trip on the Midland property, to Los Padres National Forest, or through Joshua Tree National Park.



\*Hang\* out with friends during an afternoon half holiday, catch up on your English reading or learn a new song on the guitar.



Bring your favorite furry (or scaly!) friend from home. That's right: dogs, cats, horses, iguanas... they're all welcome here at Midland.





ASK  
QUESTIONS



**When you're curious and eager to learn,  
living your education becomes second nature.**

Midland students come from all different  
backgrounds and interests, but the one trait they all  
share is a desire to know more, how, and why.



**MIDLAND 101:** One of our place-based course offerings is Midland 101, a UC-approved science course that delves into the geology, topography, history, anthropology, and the flora and fauna of our campus.



# A TEACHER

# A STUDENT

# & AN IDEA

**These three essential ingredients for learning guide our instructional efforts.**

Students and faculty work together to gain a deeper understanding of the world. Our teachers don't know everything there is to know about their subject; they work with their students to discover as much about the subject as they can—together. Of course, our teachers do have a solid knowledge of their field, a necessary foundation to help discover what's most important.



# PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

## Connection to Place and Environment

- » Observe and engage with the natural and physical world
- » Understand natural resources and human impacts on the environment
- » Care for place and its inhabitants



## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

- » Develop self-awareness and identity
- » Show compassion, kindness, respect for self and one another
- » Understand and appreciate a diversity of cultures, identities, and ideas



## Being of Use

- » Practice self-care, self-advocacy, and self-management
- » Be an active follower, team member, and leader
- » Demonstrate integrity, initiative, and volunteerism





## ○ Craftsmanship

- » Build work ethic
- » Work through multiple drafts/iterations
- » Select proper tool and/or resources for the job and use effectively



## ○ Literacy and Voice

- » Communicate effectively (listening, speaking, and writing)
- » Cultivate discipline-specific fluency
- » Convey meaning in creative ways



## ○ Problem Solving

- » Identify problems that need solving
- » Plan, execute, and adapt with appropriate available resources
- » Evaluate successes and failures



## ○ Critical Thinking and Analysis

- » Read closely, analyze, and synthesize
- » Use quantitative and scientific reasoning
- » Formulate questions and conduct research

## LEARN BY DOING

▼

**Explore** the natural and cultural history of the world beneath our feet in field-based UC-approved science and social science courses



▼

**Research**, write and present your own senior thesis on an issue that's important to you, such as Teen Social Media Use or Homelessness in California



▼

**Build** a toolkit of college preparatory skills by activities like analyzing real-world data in statistics class or testing the laws of physics out at the field



**"Midland offers a unique educational experience that not only prepares you for college and future academia, but also for your life."**

—Ruby '25

### Take a variety of classes

With courses ranging from Algebra 1 to Calculus 3 and English 9 to British Literature, Midland meets students where they are and challenges them to think critically and problem solve resourcefully.

Construct picnic tables in geometry, annotate archival documents in English, analyze crop ratios at the farm, or conduct a chemistry lab at the beach!

*(See the curriculum guide for a list of courses we offer.)*





**GETTING YOUR HANDS DIRTY:**

In April of every year, the Junior class travels to the Central Valley to build affordable housing for low-income families.

# SATURDAYS ARE FOR TRYING NEW THINGS

**Discover a new passion during a  
Saturday experiential block!**

Our weekly Saturday experiential programming provides structure for ungraded 3-hour blocks of exploration that tap into the passions of faculty and students, including farm, ranch, and outdoor activities; cultural events and talks through UCSB's Arts & Lectures program; projects on campus; health and wellness discussions; and diversity, equity, and inclusion workshops at peer schools.







**FROM TOP, CLOCKWISE:**

Students learn about beekeeping while working with Midland's hives; octopus discovery during a Marine Biology trip to the Central Coast; students work with the Farm Manager in the garden; freshman return home from a night out on the Midland property.





# HOW TO DEVELOP A

## ► 1.

### **Learn with faculty.**

The learning environment at Midland extends beyond the classroom to the outdoors, farm, kitchen, and campus. All adults are teachers and guides who partner with students in exploring and caring for our place while working together and honing their craft in the jobs program, on projects, on trails, in athletics, and at meals.

## ► 2.

### **Think critically.**

Midland students are challenged and supported to observe and read closely, to synthesize information, and to use evidence to craft arguments. Across disciplines, we cultivate effective communication skills—written and spoken. Students practice quantitative and scientific reasoning while also exploring a diversity of cultures, identities, and ideas. Not only do Midland students think, they also identify problems that need solving and they act, using appropriate available resources.

# LOVE OF LEARNING:

## ► 3.

### **Never settle.**

At Midland, every student is known, valued, and needed. A mark of Midland students is that they're more resourceful, responsible, and adventurous than typical teenagers. Just as Midland students develop internal motivation to finish each job strong in the dining hall or dish house, they also work through multiple drafts and iterations in their writing and research.

## ► 4.

### **Stay curious.**

With a program built around caring for our place and each other, students develop their inner resources and know they can contribute anywhere. Committed to experiential and lifelong learning motivated by the interests of students and faculty, our schedule offers dedicated weekly blocks that expose students to activities, places, perspectives, voices, and modalities that open new frames of experience, both on and off campus.



**BEING OF USE:** In the Midland Jobs Program, students learn to demonstrate integrity, initiative, and volunteerism. Every student's first campus job is in Stillman Hall, where they learn how to sweep, mop, clear the table, and wash the dishes.



## TAKE ON REAL RESPONSIBILITY

### Learn on the job

Learn self-reliance, leadership, and responsibility in our jobs program. Daily duties contribute not only to the operations of the school, but to students' sense of belonging and ownership of their community.

### Help run Midland

Every aspect of our operation is supported by our students, from washing dishes to picking produce in our garden. Seniors step into leadership roles as job heads and prefects, guiding and mentoring underclassmen in their work.

### Contribute and benefit

Throughout the Midland experience, students internalize the benefits of working as a team, knowing that we're all in this together, as well as the responsibilities of mastering real tasks as an individual.



**"At Midland,  
every student is  
important, and  
the jobs program  
demonstrates this  
thoroughly."**

—Simon '25

# "I'LL TAKE CARE OF THAT"

## **Contributing to your community**

What's remarkable is that volunteering at Midland isn't remarkable. Midland students jump to the task when they identify a community need. Be it covering dish house duty for a classmate, Squibbing (picking up trash anytime you see it laying around), or lending a shoulder to a friend in need, our students bravely endeavor to be the best stewards of our land and citizens of our community. It's all part of learning the life well-lived.





**HAVING FUN, HELPING OUT:**

Students finish up the dishes after a farm fresh, homegrown meal in the dining hall, as their favorite music plays in the background.



## THE PREFECT SYSTEM

At Midland, senior class members have responsibilities focused on **supporting freshmen, sophomores, and juniors** succeed academically and socially. They teach, coach, and supervise students in the school-wide work program.

As prefects, Midland seniors are typically assigned responsibility for a certain class (e.g. Freshman prefect). Two students each year are **Head Prefects**, with responsibility for supporting the overall jobs program, work periods, and leadership of the Student Council.

**The Student Council**, which includes elected representatives from each class, has responsibility for student advocacy as well as input into disciplinary policy in partnership with the Head of School and the administrative team.

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**Show up:** — Acknowledge that you have a responsibility



**Do your job:** — Be motivated and build self-confidence



**Do it well:** — Identify the need you're meeting and own your success



### Work effectively

**with others:** — Be dependable, show initiative and grow in your leadership, but also know when to ask for help



**Develop a sense of agency:** —

Know what you do is important, set priorities and manage your time well



**Pass it on and create a legacy:** — Teach the next person what you've learned



**PASSING IT ON:** At Midland, Prefects serve both as leaders and mentors, checking in with their prefectees during the week to ensure they're supported throughout the boarding experience.

BE INTENTIONAL





**In a committed and supportive community,  
living your education becomes a way of life.**

A technology policy that puts our community first, a commitment to caring for our land and the environment that goes back to 1932, and a community of people who choose to be here: Midland has long been the place that thoughtful and driven students love to call home.

# UNPLUG AND CONNECT

## Choose to connect differently.

At its core, Midland's intentional technology fosters a tight-knit educational community based on face-to-face relationships. We find that those relationships develop best without a cell phone glued to our hands, so we ask our students to leave them at home when coming to school.

### WHAT MIDLAND MEANS TO ME:

"Midland shows us what is possible when a group of people truly come together to work as one. It teaches us what exists beyond the daily distractions of technology, and needless wants, while remaining relevant. It tells us who we are, and who we want to be."

—Duncan McCarthy '17





And, all of our students have wifi-accessible chrome books that they use both inside and outside of the classroom—meaning Midland students learn how to use Google Classroom, among other online educational platforms, throughout all four years at Midland.

We have Midland students who delve deep into coding, GIS mapping, computer creating and

electric car building. There's also plenty of time in the day to sit and watch funny YouTube videos or movies in the library with your friends.

That's what we mean by intentional technology: we use our technology to delve deep into learning and to spend time together as a community, rather than feeling tied to our cell phones and social media throughout the day.





# LIFE AT MIDLAND IS ONE BIG ADVENTURE

Midland students live in wood cabins in the shadow of mighty oak trees at the foot of Grass Mountain. From their doorsteps lie 2,860 acres of campus wilderness to explore, a 10 acre farm to pick strawberries from, faculty homes filled with warmth and homework help, a herd of 23 horses to ride, and adventure-seeking friends living in the cabins next door.

Our students learn responsibility and accountability through Midland's jobs program; they work hand-in-hand with our faculty to take care of our campus, facilities, and trail system as part of their daily routine. Midland students can bring their dogs with them to school, filling our cabins, classrooms, and hiking trails with happy wagging tails.





8.00 AM morning dish house  
duty this week!

8:30 AM bring field ecology guide

9.55 AM algebra II quiz ask Faith re:  
next Ceramics  
PROJECT

11.20 AM finish ming & pick glaze color

12:15 PM announce club idea @ assembly!

1:10 PM Harkness Roundtable in English  
★ REMEMBER: BRING  
READING NOTES!!

2:35 PM Study for History w/ Sophia  
& Phoebe

3.40 PM Natural Horsemanship  
meet @ new BARN TODAY

6.00 PM Lucia's Chapel → wish her  
Luck!!

6.20 PM dinner @ Christopher's table

7:30 PM Chemistry Project  
w/ Faiza & Lauren

10.00 PM group check in  
w/ PREFECTS

10:20 PM zzzzzzz... lights out!



# MIND YOUR SURROUNDINGS

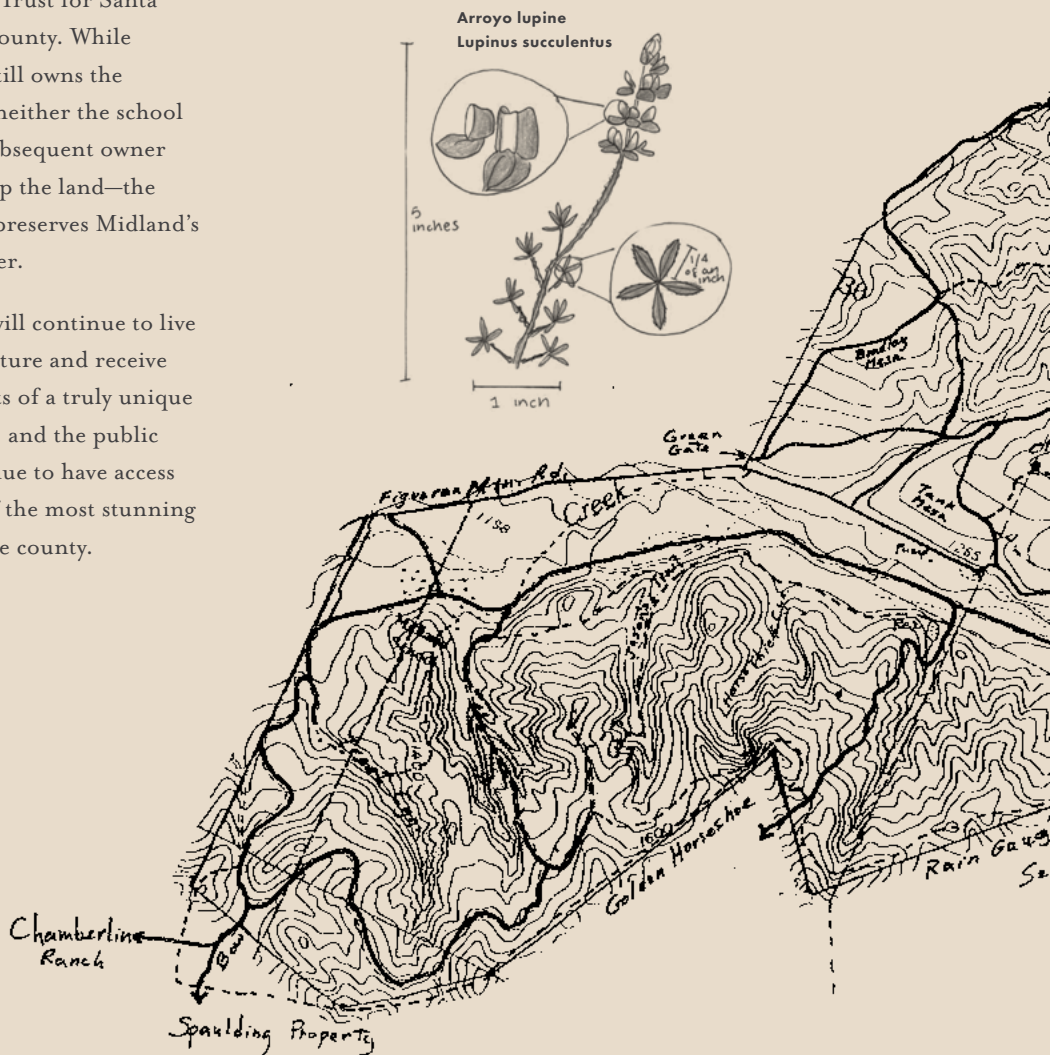
## What brings us together is a love for the land.

In 2008, Midland placed 95% of its land into a conservation easement with The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County. While Midland still owns the property, neither the school nor any subsequent owner can develop the land—the easement preserves Midland's land forever.

Students will continue to live close to nature and receive the benefits of a truly unique education, and the public will continue to have access to some of the most stunning trails in the county.

## FLORA AND FAUNA FOREVER:

"An environmentalist long before we had a word for it, Paul Squibb never stopped taking responsibility for his surroundings, immediate or remote... He reveled in paradox but held one truth to be simply and always true: It matters what we do." — Gary Lewis '45



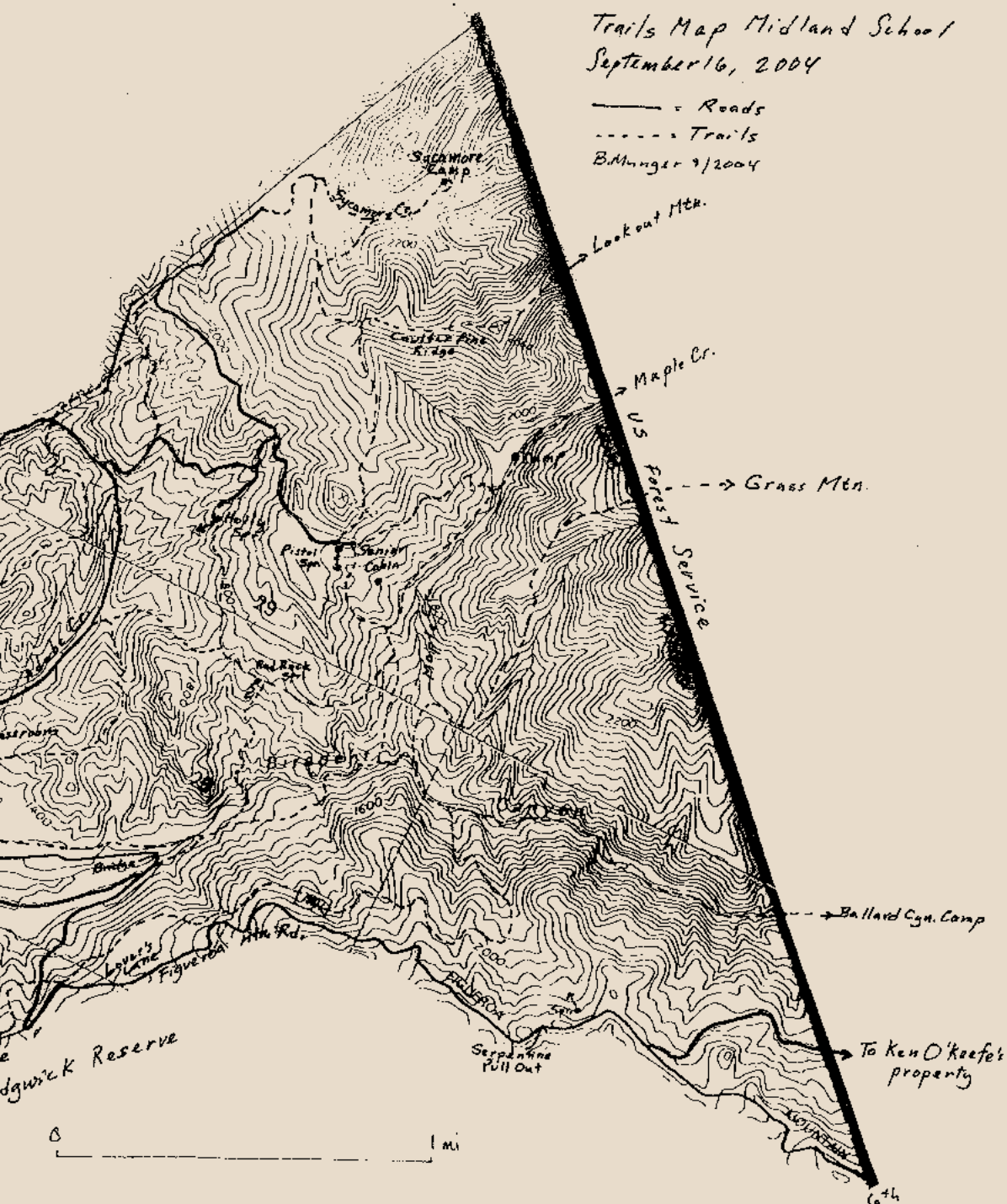


# Trails Map Midland School September 16, 2004

— = Roads

- - - = Trails

B.M. Minger 9/2004



## LIVE IN COMMUNITY

### Actually farm-to-table

Our 10-acre organic garden and orchard produces 35-40 varieties of fruits and vegetables. 50% of what we eat, we grow on campus.

### Family style dinners

Midland students share meals with faculty families 5 nights a week, engaging in lively conversation while enjoying the bounty of the ranch and garden.

### Meaningful connection

A working understanding of what it takes to get healthy food from “farm to table” results in a deeper level of appreciation and sense of fulfillment in the community.

### Encouraging one another

Students and faculty lead short, inspirational talks in Midland’s historic chapel. This serves as a space for reflection, encouragement and learning.



### Taking care of our environment

Living in community means being a good steward. Midland received a Governor’s Award for Environmental and Economic Leadership, California’s highest environmental honor.













# TRAIN, PRACTICE, COMPETE AND PLAY

## Midland Horse Program

Rooted in the principles of natural horsemanship, go beyond the basics of riding and learn horse behavior, preventative veterinary care, nutrition, pasture management, cowboy dressage and more!

## Surfing

Beginners and experienced surfers are welcome to ride the waves on the California coastline. Outings may be combined with beach clean up or other ocean activities.

## Competitive Sports

The field, court and trails are extensions of Midland's learning environment. Compete hard, have fun and develop leadership skills in a sport or activity of your choosing. As part of the Condor League, Midland participates in soccer, cross-country, basketball, and volleyball.

## Outdoor Program

Learn and master the skills needed for backpacking, environmental stewardship, trip planning, camp craft, basic first aid, knots and trail work. Qualified students can pursue the Midland Steward program to be able to lead their own overnight trips on the 2,860-acre Midland property.



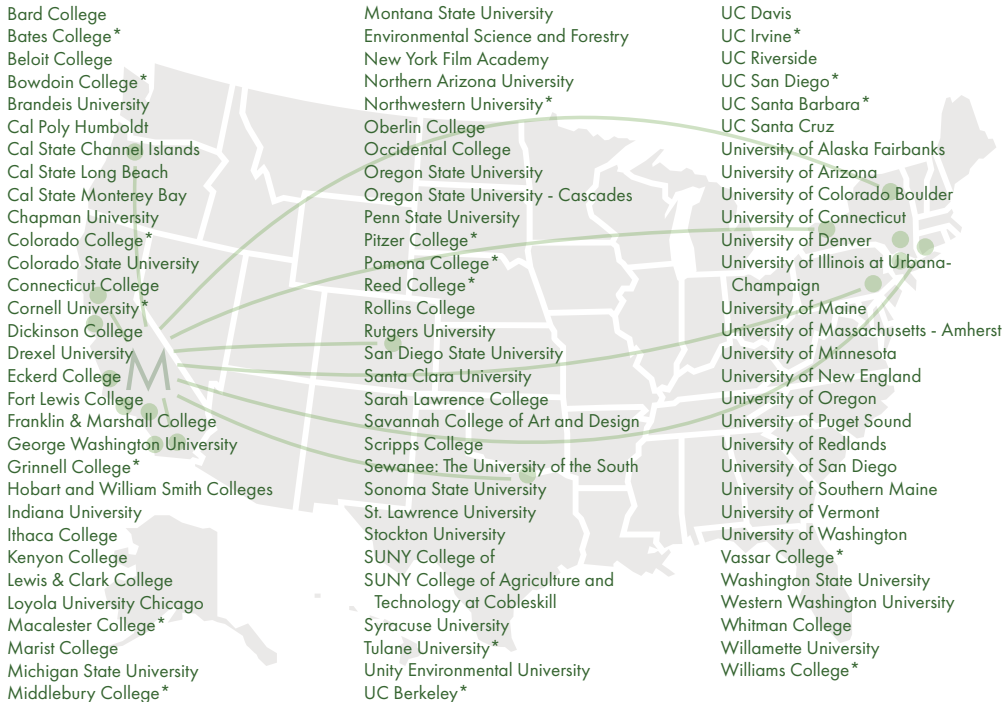
# FROM HERE, YOU CAN GO ANYWHERE.

**And we'll help you get there.**

Midland's college counseling office provides the tools, resources, and support to enable students to navigate the college search process, each step of the way.

College representatives visit and recruit Midland students each fall. Our graduates stand out from the pack because of enriched leadership and experiential opportunities supported by our setting and academic and jobs programs.

## **Our recent graduates were admitted to top universities and liberal arts colleges:**



*This list is comprised of institutions where Midland School students were accepted.  
Institutions with an acceptance rate under 30% are noted by \*.*



# APPLICATION CHECKLIST

## ▶ Application

- ☐ Apply online
- ☐ Student interview

**PRIORITY DEADLINE:**  
**FEBRUARY 15**

## ▶ Supplemental Forms

- ☐ English teacher recommendation
- ☐ Math teacher recommendation
- ☐ School counselor recommendation
- ☐ Transcript release and confidentiality

Additional information about the admission process can be found online at [www.midland-school.org/admission](http://www.midland-school.org/admission).



**VISIT  
MIDLAND**

**You really should see our campus for yourself!**

Midland is located in Santa Barbara County in the town of Los Olivos, CA. Los Olivos is north of the cities of Santa Barbara and Buellton, and south of the cities of San Luis Obispo and Santa Maria.

**SCHEDULE YOUR VISIT: 805-688-5114 or [admissions@midland-school.org](mailto:admissions@midland-school.org)**

# MIDLAND SCHOOL

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