

Martha McNicholas has been on the SONGS Community Engagement Panel since 2017, and has served as Secretary for the past 2 years.

Martha has served on the Board of Trustees of the Capistrano Unified School District (CUSD) for 8 years, including three years as Board President, retiring in 2022. She also has served on the Governing Board of College and Career Advantage and has been a Delegate to the California School Boards Association. She continues to serve on CUSD's STEM Advisory Committee. She served on Senator Pat Bates' Women's Roundtable and received the Education Award as a 2021 Woman of Distinction by Congresswoman Michele Steel.

Martha earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Mechanical Engineering from Stanford University. She holds 3 patents and has retired with over 35 years of real-world engineering experience. After 5 years at Mattel Toys, she worked primarily in medical device design for both cardiovascular and oncology diagnostics and therapies, at Bentley Laboratories, Baxter Critical Care, Nexell Therapeutics, Edwards Life Science, and ran her own independent consulting business.

She currently serves as President of the American Legion Auxiliary, South Orange County Unit 281, and is also a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the Laguna Niguel Chamber of Commerce, the Dolphin Foundation at Dana Hills High School, and a Life Member of the Stanford Alumni Associates.

In her education advocacy work, Martha served by invitation to the CUSD Superintendent's Advisory Council as well as other District Committees, including high school attendance boundaries, WASC accreditation and school calendar. Besides being a tireless school site volunteer, she served in PTA leadership positions from school site to District to County levels. She actively worked for safe and sober High School Graduation celebrations and advocated for public education at the State and National level both with the PTA and with the California School Boards Association. She currently serves as the Capistrano Unified Council of PTSA's liaison to Union High School, CUSD's alternative high school.

Martha has twice received the Golden Oak Service Award – California State PTA's highest honor for outstanding volunteer service to children and youth and has twice been nominated as Laguna Niguel Citizen of the Year.

She is a native Californian, growing up in Humboldt County. Martha and her husband Tom (also an Engineer) raised their 2 children in Laguna Niguel, where they have been residents and homeowners for 35 years. Both of their children attended CUSD schools and graduated from Dana Hills High School.

Martha celebrates 35 years of surviving cancer and has served in leadership roles with the American Cancer Society's (ACS) Relay for life. She is passionate about the mission of ACS to celebrate survivors, remember those lives lost and fight back against cancer.