



Zurich
International
School



Position Statement

Director Search

Zurich International School

Wädenswil, Zurich

Start Date: July 1, 2024



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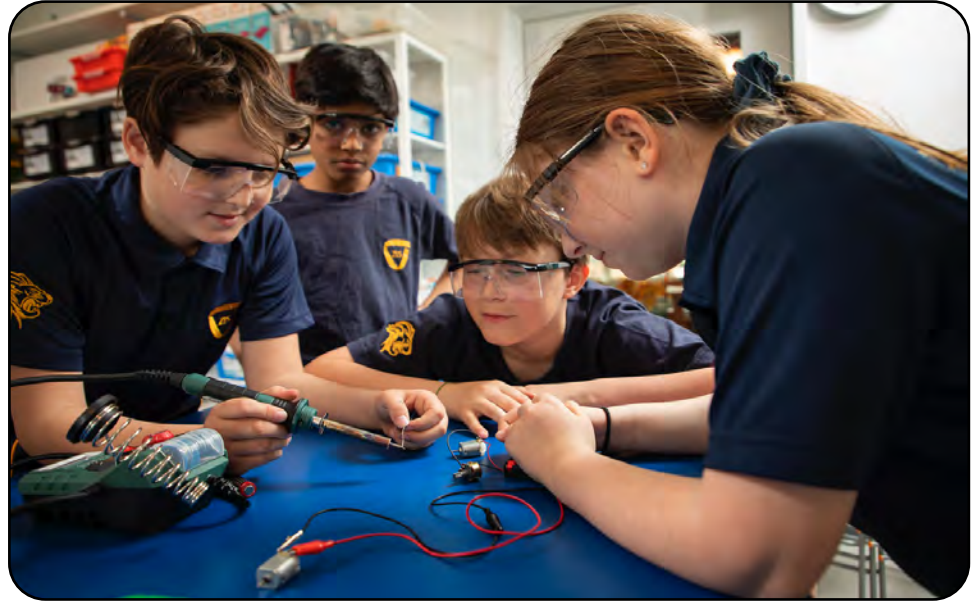
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OVERVIEW

A few hundred meters above the Lake of Zurich, and just 11 kilometers down the lake from one of the most beautiful cities in the world lies Zurich International School. ZIS is a non-profit, coeducational day school, enrolling over 1200 students (Preschool – Grade 12) who speak 40 different languages and represent 50 different countries. ZIS was formed in 2001 through the merger of the American International School of Zurich, founded in 1963, and the International School of Zurich, founded in 1970. Both schools were created to support the growing expat community in Zurich, one of the most important financial centers in Europe. The school has grown and evolved over the years and has finally realized its goal of a two-campus hub.

The modern Secondary Campus is a purpose-built facility, located in Adliswil. The brand new Middle School building opened in the fall of 2022, and connects to the 14 year old Upper School building via a media center and around a beautiful sports field. The campus includes theaters, maker space, art and music rooms, a gymnasium, cafeterias, and classrooms – all that one would expect in an excellent fully equipped international school. Most windows on



campus look out to the sports field or to the wooded hills of the Albis beyond.

Fifteen kilometers further down the lake is the Lower School, another attractive and purpose-built facility, constructed in 2002. The Lower School campus has access to its own sustainable food forest and community garden, both of which are actively used for learning and play. The campus has a large sports field and three newly renovated playgrounds. In addition, there is a spacious library and a well-equipped Design Lab, and STEM, music and art rooms.

With excellent facilities, sound financial management, a long serving and dedicated faculty, and strong governance, ZIS has earned the reputation for being one of the leading international schools in

Europe. The school now seeks their fourth Director, an individual who will embrace the school's mission, shepherd the recently established bilingual pathway, and lead the school to continued success.

As school opened this fall, current Director Lisa Lyle announced her plans to retire after the school year 2023-24. Lisa has been highly regarded since arriving in Zurich in the summer of 2019. She has stabilized admissions, initiated an English-German bilingual pathway, brought the community together around a shared commitment to a strategic plan, and has earned high praise for helping the school to successfully navigate the pandemic.

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MISSION

The ZIS mission is to create a learning community of students, faculty, staff, and parents where everyone is committed to Learn, Care, Challenge, and Lead.

VISION

The ZIS vision is for their students to join and strengthen a global community of citizens determined to make a difference to the organizations and communities in which they work and live. The school is committed to ensuring that all students develop the intellect, skills, and character to become caring individuals, as well as adaptable and independent thinkers.

ZIS offers students a safe, intimate and personalized learning experience. The school strives for excellence in every area and provides the challenge to help each student reach their potential. As an inclusive school with open enrollment, ZIS offers the requisite support to ensure that each student is successful. There is support for English language learners, academic and behavioral support, social and emotional support, individualized learning support, and speech and language support.

LOWER SCHOOL

The Lower School (Preschool-Grade 5) enrolls 350 students. While each student is unique, the caring ZIS community ensures that every child finds a place to belong. In the Lower School children learn the value of focus and problem-solving, but also the importance of play, curiosity, and enthusiasm. The concept-based curriculum provides a consistent approach to teach deep understanding of concepts, facts and ideas. Children develop a sense of wonder and possibility, are inspired by their own ideas and innovations, and are nourished as creative thinkers.

For children in the Early Childhood Program (ages 3 to 6 years) the curriculum is both concept and play-based, allowing them to discover the world around them and supporting the development of the whole child. Play sparks joy, imagination, and curiosity, allowing children at their varying stages of readiness to connect to ideas and learn.



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BILINGUAL PATHWAY

At the start of the school year 2021-2022, Zurich International School launched a German and English bilingual pathway in the Lower School. Initially serving 16 Kindergarten children, the program has expanded to Grade 2 this year and presently serves 70 children. The program will expand by one grade each year through Grade 6. The bilingual pathway has been exceptionally well received by all stakeholders, including the local authorities, and is helping to connect the school more deeply and authentically to its surrounding Swiss community.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Building on the strengths of the Lower School foundation, the ZIS Middle School (grades 6-8 with an enrollment of 350 students) encourages students to develop creative problem-solving skills and independent thinking. The faculty supports the students as they navigate the challenges of early adolescence and prepare to transition to Upper School. The Middle School program strives to support and advance the academic achievement and individual growth for every child. ZIS students leave Middle School empowered to succeed in high school.

Middle School is a distinct stage where students need encouragement to be open to new challenges, even if they do not excel at them, and to value new experiences. The newly opened state-of-the-art facilities allow students to connect and learn in a beautiful space. Within a safe community, Middle School students enjoy a supportive environment where respect for individual differences and the rights of others guide their behavior.

UPPER SCHOOL

The Upper School is a global community where 530 students can feel at home. The Upper School encourages students to stretch themselves academically, while also stressing the importance of good character, care for others, and leadership. Through a flexible schedule and breadth of opportunity and choice, students are encouraged and supported in their learning journey through the Upper School. The impressive academic and co-curricular choices



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and opportunities are a distinguishing feature of the Upper School.

ZIS offers a rigorous Upper School curriculum, although the details and individual paths are left to each student with the help of their parents and advisor. Upper School classes for Grades 9 and 10 align with international benchmarks. In grades 11 and 12, students can choose from the International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), or from one of the ZIS-developed courses. The world's top universities respect ZIS students' academic achievement. In the school year 2021-2022, the average IB Diploma score was 37, with nearly 40% of ZIS students scoring at least 40 points. The average AP score was 3.9, with 37% of students scoring a 5 on exams.

At every grade level, excellent instruction drives learning at ZIS. The school has a strong professional development program with a commitment to peer coaching, and a talented and experienced faculty dedicated to professional growth. The school's 200 faculty members have an average tenure of more than seven years, well above the average for International Schools.

ZIS has a rich data culture. Teachers confidently draw on both internal and external assessments to plan and deliver curriculum that provides just the right challenge for each student. Survey data is collected from all constituents and used to support the ongoing growth and development of the school.

ADMISSIONS

The objective of the ZIS admissions process is to attract, advise, and enroll the most mission-appropriate students to attend ZIS. Students who matriculate are appropriately challenged and supported, and they feel known and valued. As defined by the Board of Trustees, ZIS aims to serve the educational needs of three distinct demographic groups: traditional expats, long term international families, and globally minded Swiss families.

Traditional expats have been the largest demographic. However, this cohort has been on the decline, while the number of globally minded Swiss families continues to grow. In recent years ZIS has experienced some attrition in the Lower School, but the introduction of a ZIS bilingual pathway has helped to stabilize enrollment. The ZIS Secondary Campus (comprising Middle and Upper School grades 6-12) typically operates at high levels of capacity with frequent waiting lists.

With the growth of the bilingual program, ZIS seeks to be better positioned within the German-speaking segment. The next Director will play a significant role in shaping and guiding this endeavor.

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PHILANTHROPY

ZIS has enjoyed significant fund-raising success. The school employs a full time Director of Community Relations who leads a growing advancement program. There is an annual fund organized around specific projects, and also a capital campaign to support occasional larger investments. The current capital campaign, in support of the new Middle School “Building the Future of Learning”, has raised 4.4 million Swiss Francs so far, toward a goal of 5 million. ZIS is growing its Alumni initiatives and has recently launched a community-wide networking platform to increase engagement between alums and current students and parents.

In addition to the active fund-raising program, there are approximately 30 corporate

partners at ZIS. The school has an agreement with these companies whereby children of their employees get priority on the ZIS waiting list. Seats are not guaranteed, but ZIS makes its best effort to enroll the children of their corporate partners. In return, these companies pay a surcharge beyond tuition that is placed into a facility reserve used for campus facilities and infrastructure.

ZIS has started an initiative to expand its relationship with Corporate Partners, hosting a design-thinking event. By collaborating with the school to share interesting real world challenges with ZIS students, corporate and community partners contribute to developing a future generation of great problem solvers. In addition, a number of Corporate Partners offer internships to ZIS students.

FINANCES

The finances at the Zurich International School are strong, with solid cash flow, minimal debt, and excellent oversight and transparency by the COO/Chief Financial Officer and the Board of Trustees.

Tuition and fees are the primary drivers of ZIS finances, therefore stable student enrollment is critical to the financial health of the school. The recent enrollment decline in the Lower School has resulted in some belt tightening and increased financial controls to benefit the school as a whole. There is confidence that Lower School enrollment has stabilized.

The recent construction of the newly opened Middle School facility was financed by a combination of financial reserves, government contributions, corporate agreements, long term debt, and fundraising.

GOVERNANCE

The ZIS Board of Trustees is an impressive and dedicated group of volunteers selected through a rigorous process. They view their role as guardians of the school mission, ensuring that it is relevant and vital to the school community. The Board has set clear policies that support the ZIS mission, set strategic direction for the school, and ensure prudent stewardship of the school’s resources.

The Board understands that their only employee is the ZIS Director, an ex-officio member of the Board, to whom they give authority and responsibility for implementing the school’s mission, vision, and strategic plan. The Director is assisted by an able and dedicated Leadership Team.



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The Board is well organized and effective through its standing committees, clearly understands its stewardship role and is very supportive of the current Director. The next Director of ZIS will inherit a healthy and strong partnership with a high functioning Board of Trustees.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE NEXT DIRECTOR

The Director of the Zurich International School is an extraordinary leadership opportunity for an experienced educator to lead one of Europe's outstanding schools. ZIS is a diverse and vibrant international school community located in one of the world's most beautiful and historic cities. Expectations for the next Director of the Zurich International School will include the following:

Continue to clarify Zurich International School's educational philosophy, core values, and the profile of students that ZIS admits and challenges

Support the further development of the bilingual pathway as a key strategic priority

With the opening of the new Middle School facility, there is an opportunity to create one school on two campuses. There is a desire to create curricular and cultural coherence connecting the Middle and Upper Schools on the Secondary Campus, not to mention inclusion of the Lower School to ensure one cohesive school

Refine and execute the compelling and shared vision of the ZIS strategic plan that supports its students through the following:

- A sustainable school financial model, including increasing non-tuition sources of revenue
- Transparent and effective communication with stakeholders
- Excellent campus facilities on two sites, while functioning as one school
- Academic rigor and pathways that challenge and support each ZIS student
- A strong and thriving school community that is integrated with the local community
- Attracting and retaining an excellent faculty and staff, and providing appropriate resources to support new initiatives and higher expectations



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LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

The successful candidate for the next Director of the Zurich International School will ideally possess the background, experience, and disposition characterized by the following qualities:

- Successful school leadership experience as a thoughtful and forward-thinking educational innovator who understands best practices, has experience with the IB and AP programs, and who thrives in a diverse and complex community.
- A highly relational, visible, warm, and welcoming campus presence; comfortable as the face of ZIS in the international and local communities.
- An open-minded, curious, and adaptable learner with inter-cultural sensibilities who is eager to integrate ZIS into the local community. If not a German speaker, ideally someone who is multi-lingual and open to learning German.
- An excellent judge of people, possessing a nose for talent, skilled at hiring, and putting together successful and collaborative teams while creating an environment in which the teams can do their best work.
- A performance-oriented leader who embraces data, and who possesses the ability to draw conclusions and take actions that incorporate facts.
- An inspiring and effective communicator; a community builder with the ability to instill trust, and to bring diverse stakeholders together around a shared educational vision.
- Experience in, and an openness to, leading a multi-age school community that is inclusive and welcoming of diverse student learning styles and abilities.
- Deft at working with an expressive multicultural and international constituency, and with the capacity to embrace hard decisions through an inclusive and collaborative leadership style.
- Experience and confidence with school financial management and fundraising, with an eagerness to cultivate relationships in support of the school's future.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested candidates for the position of Director of Zurich International School should apply through the portal on the RG175 website:

<https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

The application should include: a Cover Letter of interest, a Resume or CV, and a Personal Statement

The deadline for applications is **Monday, December 19, 2022**

Should you have any questions, please reach out to either consultant assigned to the search:

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