



THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL  
OF SAN FRANCISCO

## HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

Position Starts July 1, 2026  
San Francisco, California







**This is how we make the world a better place.**

## **MISSION**

**Guided by the principles of academic rigor and diversity, The International School of San Francisco offers programs of study in French and English to prepare its graduates for a world in which the ability to think critically and to communicate across cultures is of paramount importance.**

*Guidé par des principes de rigueur académique et de diversité, The International School of San Francisco propose des programmes en français et en anglais, pour assurer la réussite de ses diplômés dans un monde dans lequel la pensée critique et la communication interculturelle seront déterminantes.*

## **One of the most celebrated international schools in the United States.**

The International School of San Francisco is the city's oldest and largest bilingual school. The International School of San Francisco is the first school in San Francisco to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, and the fourth in the U.S. to do so. Globally, The International School of San Francisco is recognized for its leaders and innovators in education.

A key aspect of The International School of San Francisco is the ability to balance change and stability. Over the years, the school has changed names four times, locations twelve times, and expanded significantly, but it has always remained committed to the core principles.

Founded in 1962 by a visionary group, The International School of San Francisco aimed to offer bilingual French education that would shape compassionate, confident, and principled individuals with an international outlook. This mission remains at the core.

Over the past 63 years, the community has empowered students with the skills and perspectives to navigate the world. The school offers rigorous bilingual French and IB programs, supported by a vibrant, multilingual community of educators and families.

By Grade 8, students at The International School of San Francisco are fluent in both French and English. In Grade 9, the community expands, welcoming students from across San Francisco and the world, many of whom are not yet bilingual but share a passion for global learning.

At the International High School, students earn both an internationally recognized IB diploma and a U.S. high school degree, preparing them to thrive at top universities globally.



## Values

The international community brings together people from many backgrounds. Together we strive to create a shared culture that develops compassionate, confident, and principled people who will make the world better. We base The International School of San Francisco community on these values:

Notre communauté internationale rassemble des personnes de toutes origines. Ensemble, nous contribuons à créer une culture qui forme des êtres altruistes et déterminés. Dotés d'un sens moral, ils œuvrent à un monde meilleur. Notre communauté repose sur les valeurs suivantes:

### **Respect: Build Trust** — **Respect: cultiver la confiance**

We celebrate the dignity, shared humanity and potential in everyone. We listen attentively, speak thoughtfully, and act with courtesy and kindness. We take care of ourselves, the community, and the environment.

### **Integrity: Own Our Actions** — **Intégrité: assumer nos actions**

We speak and act with honesty. We take responsibility for our actions and we meet our commitments.

### **Inclusion: Celebrate Difference** — **Inclusion: célébrez la différence**

We celebrate the diversity that defines our school, our community, and the world. We seek to understand one another and to appreciate differing perspectives. We act with empathy and compassion.

### **Collaboration: Grow Together** — **Collaboration : évoluer ensemble**

We prize the benefits of working and learning together. We succeed through shared effort and by seeking excellence in ourselves and one another.

### **Curiosity: Delight in Discovery** — **Curiosité : savourer la joie de la découverte**

We are inquisitive about the world and our place in it, about ourselves, and about one another. We ask questions, take risks, and delight in discovery.



## Commitment to Equity

The International School of San Francisco commits to advancing equity and social justice in its diverse, urban community. The school fulfills this promise through its programs and practices, and inspires and equips its students to live this commitment locally and internationally.

*Nous nous engageons à promouvoir l'équité et la justice sociale dans notre communauté urbaine diversifiée. Nous tenons cette promesse grâce à nos programmes et pratiques, et nous inspirons et équipons nos étudiants pour vivre dans cet engagement localement et internationalement.*

## Nondiscrimination Policy

The International School of San Francisco admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

*The International School of San Francisco accorde aux élèves de toute race, couleur, origine nationale et ethnique tous les droits, privilèges, l'accès à tous les programmes et activités dont bénéficient généralement ses élèves. Elle ne pratique aucune discrimination fondée sur la race, la couleur, l'origine nationale ou ethnique dans l'administration de ses politiques éducatives, d'admission, des programmes de bourses et de prêts, des programmes sportifs et autres gérés par l'établissement.*



## Academics

### Maternelle/Preschool

In France, early learning centers are called “Maternelle.” At The International School of San Francisco, the Maternelle offers a unique bilingual immersion program for students starting at age 2 (PK2, PK3, PK4). Classes are conducted in French for 80%-90% of the time, allowing children to progress from no French to age-appropriate proficiency by the end of PK4. By Lower School, students communicate, understand, and respond in French, gaining lifelong cognitive and social benefits. Research shows that bilinguals excel in problem-solving, creative thinking, and cross-cultural connection, preparing them for the future workforce.

The Maternelle program is hands-on, child-centered, and focuses on both linguistic and social-emotional development. Children transition from home to school in a nurturing, independent environment. Bright, colorful classrooms and expansive shared spaces foster creativity, cooperation, and critical thinking, while teachers provide personalized guidance to each child's growth. The Maternelle students also go on local overnight trips.

### Lower School

At The International School of San Francisco, the Maternelle's pedagogical approach is continued and strengthened in Lower School, with a bilingual curriculum in English and French that meets U.S. and French standards. By Grade 1, students are resourceful, independent, and confident due to their growing bilingualism.



As they move through Lower School, students develop self-sufficiency, collaboration, and the ability to express themselves logically while listening to others. Working with classmates and teachers from around the world broadens their understanding of diversity.

By Grade 5, students apply their bilingual skills during a two-week stay with a host family in France, becoming curious, independent learners. They enter Middle School confident and ready for new challenges. The Lower School students also go on local overnight trips.

### Middle School

As students progress at The International School of San Francisco, they become fluent in at least three languages, study math in two languages, and engage in arts, athletics, and global travel programs. They participate in local and global service learning, and develop strong critical thinking skills in a challenging, engaging curriculum. In Middle School, 60% of instruction is in French, 30% in English, and 10% in a third language.

By Grade 8, students are fully bilingual, able to read and analyze both Victor Hugo and Shakespeare, and deliver fluent presentations in both languages. The International School of San Francisco is an IB/MYP candidate school and anticipates approval in 2026-27.

Middle School students also take on leadership roles, explore new interests, and deepen their global citizenship. They study a range of subjects with different teachers, including English, French, Math, Science, Third Language, PE, Art, Music, Theater, and in Grade 7, Physique-Chimie. By Grade 8, they also add U.S. History. The experienced faculty at The International School of San Francisco supports students as they build independence, organization, and adapt to the middle school environment.

### High School

At The International School of San Francisco, students who pursue the International Baccalaureate (IB) or French Baccalaureate (French Bac) diplomas push their boundaries, excel in collaboration, and build real confidence. These programs prepare students to thrive globally.

The IB program, created over 50 years ago, is recognized worldwide. The International School of San Francisco was the first school in California, and the fourth in the U.S., to offer the IB diploma. It's highly customizable, allowing students to tailor their studies to their strengths and interests.

About a quarter of the high school students pursue the French Bac, a rigorous and rewarding path. Many top-performing students in the French Track come from non-French-speaking families, showcasing the strength of the bilingual education from PreK to Grade 8.



## The International School of San Francisco At a Glance

### Founded: 1962

- Coed, Preschool (Age 2), Elementary, Middle School, High School
- Independent School
- Bilingual French-English Age 2 - Grade 8 (French is not a requirement for High School)

### Finances

- Budget: \$49.4M
- Reserves and Endowment: \$87M
- Debt: \$4.1M
- Annual Giving (annual fund and auction): \$2.2M

### Student-Body

- Students: 1069
- Maternelle: (Age 2 - 4): 106 Students
- Lower School: (K - 5): 417 Students
- Middle School: (6-8): 179 Students
- High School: (9-12): 367 Students

### Teachers, Staff, Administrators

- Total: 212, 20 Nationalities Represented
- Board of Trustees: 21

### Campus

- Classrooms light-filled, student-centered workspaces
- Separate Building for Preschool
- Outdoor spaces with play structures
- Main Campus renovation to begin Summer 2025



### Tuition for 2024/2025

- Elementary School  
Grades TK - 5: \$39,180
- Middle School  
Grades 6 - 8: \$39,180
- High School  
Grade 9-12: \$56,130
- 30% Received Financial Aid

### Affiliations

- National Association of Independent Schools, (NAIS)
- California Association of Independent Schools, (CAIS)
- International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO)
- AEFE, the MLF, and Ministère De L'Éducation Nationale De L'Enseignement Supérieur et De La Recherche
- Council of International Schools (CIS)
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)
- Global Education Benchmark Group (GEBG)
- San Francisco Green Business
- College Board





## School Life

**The International School of San Francisco, it's not just about learning. It's about life.**

Being a student at The International School of San Francisco is about so much more than sitting in a classroom. An education at The International School of San Francisco involves extra-curricular activities that are both organized and self-directed. From world travel to sports to theater to volunteering to being a part of Student Government and beyond, opportunities to join a club, team, or leadership group are widely available and open to all students.

### Arts

At The International School of San Francisco, students from Maternelle to Grade 12 develop a love for the arts through a personalized curriculum that integrates French national and IB standards, emphasizing creativity and critical thinking. With a faculty of professional artists and performers, the school fosters a rich, collaborative arts environment, offering masterclasses and events to both students and the broader community. [Click here](#) to know about the extensive arts program.

### Athletics

At The International School of San Francisco, student-athletes build strong relationships and develop a balanced mind, body, and character through competitive team sports. The school's athletic program emphasizes commitment, leadership, sportsmanship, and inclusivity, with students participating across all three seasons and embracing a variety of sports. [Click here](#) to know about the athletic program.



## Global Travel

Every year, students have the opportunity to participate in unforgettable trips all over the globe. These unforgettable experiences, inextricably shared yet deeply personal, are full of transformative learning moments that truly embody the school's mission and values. [Click here](#) to know more about The International School of San Francisco's global travel program.

## Clubs and Leadership

The International School of San Francisco offers over 40 student-run clubs, where students create, lead, and organize activities based on their interests. These clubs span a wide range of topics, from activism and hobbies to academics, and play a key role in the school's traditions and community-building. Whatever students are passionate about, there's likely a club to serve it. [Click here](#) to know more about the school's clubs and leadership opportunities.

## Makerspaces

The International School of San Francisco's makerspaces consist of the Tinker Space in the Lower School and the Design Lab in the Middle and High School. These spaces are sanctuaries where students are free to imagine and create without fear of failing. Through hands-on experiential learning labs, we empower and encourage students to experiment in the fields of science, technology, engineering, art, and math while maintaining an alignment with the curriculum and school initiatives. [Click here](#) to know more about the makerspaces program.

## Service Learning

The International School of San Francisco integrates community service into its curriculum across all grade levels, offering service learning opportunities that address global and local issues. Through the Urban Engagement Program, students and families actively contribute to initiatives focused on education, equity, and neighborhood sustainability. [Click here](#) to know more about service learning at The International School of San Francisco.







### Student Support

At The International School of San Francisco, students focus on personal growth and resilience, with support from counselors, as they build strong relationships, manage stress, and prepare for future success. [Click here](#) to find out more about student services.

### Libraries and Technology

At The International School of San Francisco, the library and technology programs support creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking through libraries, information technology, and makerspaces. The library offers a wide range of print and digital resources in multiple languages, and librarians provide personalized support for research and digital literacy. With a focus on innovation, the library fosters a dynamic learning environment, collaborating with faculty to meet students' evolving needs. The library also serves as an inviting space where students can study, relax, and engage with exhibits and community projects. [Click here](#) to find out more about libraries and technology.



### Extended Care Program

The Extended Care Program at The International School of San Francisco offers a safe, stimulating environment where children engage in extracurricular activities like science, sports, arts, and learning labs to promote creativity, physical, and cognitive growth. [Click here](#) to know more about activities and fees.

### Community

The International School of San Francisco is more than just a place for learning; it is an international community that welcomes 1,100 students and their families from diverse backgrounds, fostering engagement and support. Parents and families build lifelong friendships while actively participating in school life through events like movie nights and the Salon Series, Spring Soirée, Back-to-School Picnic, and Schoolwide Day of Service, contributing to the school's vibrant culture.



The [Urban Engagement Program](#) connects the school to the broader community through internships, service projects, social justice initiatives, and sustainability efforts, fostering hands-on learning in various fields like arts, civic life, and entrepreneurship.



# La Lettre

French American International School and International High School ■ June 2024



The [Parent Association](#) is a volunteer group that supports The International School of San Francisco by collaborating with school leadership to engage parents and promote community involvement.

Many alumni of The International School of San Francisco stay connected years after graduation through LinkedIn, Facebook, and regional events, forming a global network. Their ongoing engagement reflects the lasting impact of the school and the lifelong value of thinking internationally.

## Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees maps and maintains the course of The International School of San Francisco. Trustees are charged with protecting the mission and values of the school, as well as ensuring The International School of San Francisco's long-term fiscal health and vitality, and the successful fulfillment of The International School of San Francisco's mission. The Board is responsible for providing the highest level of leadership and support around issues of critical policy and works closely with the Head of School. The Board does not get involved in the school's day-to-day affairs, disciplinary or personnel issues, or administrative decisions—which are the responsibility of the Head of School. Trustees act as stewards and ambassadors of the school.

## Strategic Plan of The International School of San Francisco

The strategic plan envisions the future of The International School of San Francisco and guides the school in celebrating its identity; enhancing innovative, international programs; developing its urban campus; cultivating its proud, engaged community; and advancing its culture of giving. The goals include strategic work in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and in environmental sustainability—central concerns for the school and critical issues for our time. Students, families, faculty, and staff will be involved in realizing this vision, just as they have been in creating it. [Click here](#) to know more about the school's Strategic Plan.

## La Lettre: The International School of San Francisco Annual Magazine

La Lettre is the annual magazine of The International School of San Francisco. Published each summer, La Lettre features news, photos, highlights, and reflections from the past school year. [Click here](#) for the digital version of the magazine.





## Leadership Profile

The Board of Trustees of The International of San Francisco is conducting a national and international search to identify its next Head of School. To that end, and to assist them in clarifying the opportunities and challenges, Mary Seppala and Eric Temple of Educators Collaborative received input from individuals during their site visit and by means of an electronic survey. Those interviewed and surveyed included faculty, administrators, staff, parents/guardians, trustees, alumni and students. Based on this input and the impressions of the consultants, as well as input from the search committee, the following represents a summary of The International School of San Francisco's strengths and the challenges and opportunities it faces in the next three to five years, as well as the qualifications and attributes of the next Head of School.

### Strengths

As San Francisco's premier International School, The International School of San Francisco is deeply committed to the value of bilingual education, and the development of global citizens who will contribute in meaningful ways to an equitable and just society. The dynamic environment offers significant opportunities in academics, the arts, athletics, and extensive global travel experiences. Other strengths include:

- A strategic board that plans for the school's future while supporting its current mission and programs.
- A dedicated faculty, staff and administration committed to the school's bilingualism and international ethos.
- Strong financial planning and reserves, as well as sound strategic and fiduciary stewardship of the school's resources.
- An academically motivated and fully participatory student body.
- Strong connections to the City of San Francisco and partnerships with surrounding art and music institutions.
- Generous financial and institutional support for continual professional development and growth.
- A purposefully designed campus for its two through four year old students that supports a dynamic pre-school program.
- Mission aligned families who embrace and contribute to the school's commitment to an international education.

## Challenges

The next leader of The International School of San Francisco must preserve and further strengthen the position of the school as a highly sought after, life-changing opportunity for students, in the face of a decline in the school-aged population of students in San Francisco, and be a passionate and highly effective advocate of the value of international education. Some of the challenges facing the school in the next three to five years include:

- In a market with healthy competition as well as unique demographic shifts, ensuring robust enrollment while navigating the benefits and challenges of a fully bilingual Age 2 through Grade 8 program, and a 9-12 International Baccalaureate or French Baccalaureate tracked high school will be a high priority.
- Making full use of the school's campus, and integrating the improvements completed during the campus redevelopment project into the school program in order to best meet its mission and the needs of students, faculty and staff.
- Navigating the school's identity as a French-English bilingual school with its identity as an expansive international organization.
- Nurturing the school's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, including global cross cultural understanding.
- Retaining and recruiting highly qualified faculty and staff.

## Qualification and Attributes

The Board of Trustees seeks as the School's next leader an individual whose personal and professional attributes match The International School of San Francisco's culture and who will provide effective leadership in the coming years. To best serve The International School of San Francisco, the next Head of School will be someone with the following skills and dispositions:

## Leadership & Strategic Vision

- Experienced in independent school leadership and management.
- A strategic systems thinker who understands how change influences and reverberates across a school community.
- Innovative and forward-thinking with an entrepreneurial mindset.
- Resilient and capable of making difficult decisions.
- Committed to working productively with Union leadership to advance the mission of the school.





### **Cultural & Educational Philosophy**

- Deeply values and understands French culture and international education. A fluent French speaker is preferred.
- Deep knowledge about child and adolescent development that spans Pre-K Grade 12, combined with a strong understanding of best practices in bilingual pedagogy that foster a rigorous academic experience rooted in critical thinking.
- Experienced in leading an environment committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within the context of an international school.

### **People & Talent Management**

- Committed to building leadership capacity and delegating to others throughout the school community
- Maintaining a strong relationship between the administration and the faculty, including the leadership of the Teachers Union.

### **Financial & Operational Acumen**

- Has strong financial and budgeting acumen accompanied by a proven track record of successful fundraising.
- Skilled in enrollment management.

### **Personal Attributes & Leadership Style**

- Honest and trustworthy with strong personal integrity.
- Evidences an abundance of characteristics typically found in successful school leaders: present, approachable and responsive, courage with kindness, character above reproach, excellent verbal and written communication skills, an active listener, relationship builder, data-informed decision-maker, lifelong learner, humility, a sense of humor, and the ability to work collaboratively and productively with stakeholders to work through conflict and build consensus.







THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL  
OF SAN FRANCISCO

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[www.internationalsf.org](http://www.internationalsf.org)

## SUMMARY OF THE SEARCH PROCESS

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials in a **single merged pdf file** to Mary Seppala and Eric Temple as soon as possible. Dossiers will be reviewed upon receipt.

Applications due **April 13, 2025**. Semi-finalist interviews: **May 3 and 4, 2025**.

- EC Summary Sheet (Contact Mary Seppala or Eric Temple for this document)
- Letter of Interest addressed to the Search Committee
- Current Résumé
- Statement of Educational Leadership Philosophy
- A list of five or more references with contact information (name, relationship to candidate, phone and email address)
- Disclosure Statement (Contact Mary Seppala or Eric Temple for this document)

### Send application materials via email to:

Mary Seppala, Partner, Educators Collaborative  
Email: [mseppala@educatorscollaborative.com](mailto:mseppala@educatorscollaborative.com)

Eric Temple, Partner, Educators Collaborative  
Email: [etemple@educatorscollaborative.com](mailto:etemple@educatorscollaborative.com)