

# HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BEIJING

Beijing, China

Start Date: July 2026



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES

[CARNEYSANDOE.COM](http://CARNEYSANDOE.COM)

# Mission Statement

We are an inspiring international community in Beijing, where thinkers and leaders find their place in the world and serve others. So that our learning is at its best, we build strong relationships and set high expectations together. We are committed to challenging and joyful learning with the freedom to explore.

## At a Glance



Established  
**1980**



Total enrollment  
**1,800**



Total faculty  
**227**



Student/teacher ratio  
**1:8**



Annual operating budget  
**\$75M**



Faculty and Staff with  
advanced degrees  
**224**



Campus size  
**32 acres**

Countries represented: 70

Total support staff: 204

Sports: 15

Activities offered: 200+

Service groups: 14+



## Overview

With its invigorating and resolute Dragon Spirit, this extraordinary school projects a spirit of bountiful joy, sincere warmth and intentional care, a place where students want to be and where staff convey pride and belonging. The International School of Beijing holds a tradition of excellence that dates back 45 years, enjoying a reputation as a leading international school in the heart of Asia. Shared principles and beliefs are captured in their aspirational Mission and Vision statements, and these are put into action day to day through Strategic Focus Areas by a team of highly qualified staff. This mutual core set of values is shared by their community of students, families, and alumni where everyone is an ISB Dragon.

ISB has a commitment to diversity, intentional design, and providing robust support so that students and staff thrive both socially and emotionally. Students are sectioned into three divisions – Elementary, Middle and High, each housed in a separate area of one facility with purpose-built accommodations for their needs. ISB students enjoy a vibrant school experience in which they can pursue their passions and achieve impressive outcomes. As one student said, “ISB promotes our thinking and enlarges our interests.”

### School History and Facilities

From its early beginnings in 1980 with 8 students and 2 certified teachers in a small apartment compound, ISB has grown to become a thriving community of 1800 students from Early Years 2 to Grade 12 on a 32-acre campus in the northeastern suburb of Shunyi. Calmer and quieter than central Beijing, with multiple housing options, including single-family homes, and with public and private green spaces, residents have access to various restaurants and shopping centers.





The school has impressive world-class facilities that readily accommodate a variety of student interests. The campus includes Design and Robotics labs, science labs and a student cooking lab; a Performing Arts wing with theaters, dance studios, recording studios, rehearsal spaces; a Visual Arts wing; 2 Library-Media Centers; an Aquatics Center; 4 gymnasiums, climbing wall, 2 pressurized domes that house tennis courts and golf simulators; sports fields and stadium, cafeterias, a Chinese Cultural Center and a multi-faith prayer room. An outdoor rooftop garden, solar panels and a pharmaceutical-grade air filtration system top off the extensive facilities that make this campus a community hub.

### **Governance, Accreditation, and Parent Involvement**

ISB is a non-profit international school governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees. The all-volunteer Board of Trustees has 12 members, 9 of which are elected and 3 who are appointed. The Board oversees the operation of ISB according to the Association's Bylaws. All parents with children enrolled at ISB automatically belong to the Association and are entitled to vote for the elected members of the Board. Earning full accreditation from three external organizations – NEASC, CIS AND IBO – the International School of Beijing is recognized globally for alignment with publicly stated standards. In addition, there is an active Parent Teacher Association and a Booster Club that generously contribute their time and talent to school events and activities.

### **Strategic Focus Areas**

ISB has established their current Strategic Focus Areas as a roadmap for the future: challenging and joyful learning; empowering students to purpose and compassion; strong lifelong peer relationships; belonging and inclusion; and sustainability. Each of these areas has an intricate set of goals and actions leading the school forward with a high level of community engagement and dedicated leadership. One concrete example is ISB's sustainability roadmap that has led to a commitment to renewable energy sources (such as generating electricity using solar panels), environmental consciousness (such as moving towards 100% fleet of electric buses by 2030) and other sustainable practices.



## Teaching and Learning

With high expectations and high support as their educational philosophy, ISB is known for its holistic approach, helping students learn and grow into well-rounded individuals who can set and meet any goal they choose. Evidence-based practices are prioritized, and student learning data is used to analyze growth. A satisfied parent was quoted saying “whatever students are passionate about can be embraced and amplified by the caring teachers here.” ISB’s popular dual-language program in the Elementary School is an immersion model that promotes 50 percent of instruction in English and 50 percent of instruction in Chinese. It has developed a positive reputation in the region with several other schools seeking to learn from ISB. The Middle School program emphasizes incredible experiential learning and leadership opportunities in addition to an academic program. In grades 11 and 12, many students choose to undertake the rigorous International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme. They may also choose a selection of IB courses as well as Advanced Placement (AP) and High School courses. ISB provides extensive support for students through guidance counseling programs and emphasis on social emotional skills across all divisions, as well as university and career counseling programs. In addition, ISB welcomes students with diverse learning needs and provides them with differentiated systems of support. Another notable component of the school is their “Life Centered Education Program for students with intellectual disabilities or those with concurrent diagnoses such as Down Syndrome, or cerebral palsy or who are on the Autism Spectrum. Finally, the co-curricular program is a large-scale extensive program, very comprehensive in its scope of offerings and fully utilizing the magnificent facilities on site. Students described ISB as “having lots of opportunities to increase our ability in what we are good at as well as what we can improve” and “ISB is a place where friends help you to become your better self.” Through ISB’s social emotional learning curriculum during the school day, ISB is committed to supporting students’ cultural responsiveness and their awareness and understanding in interacting with their peers across differences.





## Operations

Running the daily operations behind the scenes to make this enterprise work smoothly requires the coordinated efforts of several staff. Admissions, Advancement, Communications/Marketing, Human Resources, Government Affairs, Facilities, Security, Finance, and Data and Analytics are all part of the Operations side of the enterprise.

## Safeguarding

ISB takes child safeguarding seriously and has invested in several efforts to maintain a high level of safety and security. Policies, guidelines and daily practices are in place to prevent incidents as well as to handle situations that arise. With a Safeguarding Lead and ongoing staff training, ISB is prepared.

## DEI Commitment

ISB has done extensive work as a school community on their Belonging and Inclusion strategic focus. This includes, addressing implicit bias in recruitment, supporting student and staff voice through clubs and employee committees, gathering consistent data on identity-based harm, and dedicated professional learning for families, staff, and students to share a collective responsibility in promoting belonging and inclusion in the school community. Their anti-Bias Anti-Racism (ABAR) committee is active in various efforts to build understanding, working in collaboration with other areas of the school. ISB seeks employees that will commit to fostering belonging at ISB, where each person feels safe, valued, appreciated, and treated fairly. The DEI Commitment Statement says: *“ISB is committed to being a diverse, equitable, and inclusive school whereby all individuals belong and are seen, valued, and heard. In line with our strategic focus areas, we build strong peer relationships by fostering a safe and inclusive school community. Diversity is our strength, and we are enriched through our differences. We stand for equitable treatment regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, color, cultural background, identity, orientation, expression, age, level of ability, or status. We build a community empowered to address racism and inequities.”*



## Opportunities and Challenges

Enjoying exceptional physical as well as human resources, ISB is able to offer its students an amazing variety of compellingly engaging and mission-driven educational opportunities. With careful stewardship of these precious resources, coupled with the innovative spirit that has driven the ISB community since its founding, the next head of school will have an unparalleled opportunity to build on an international educational experience that can show the world what the best in international education can be. While ISB has grown significantly in size and complexity during its history, it enjoys a marvelously intimate and warm sense of community that the school community cherishes. “Dragon Spirit” is strong. In recent years, the school experienced significant operational disruptions due to COVID-19, resulting in considerable turnover among faculty, staff, and administration. Additionally, there have been changes in the profiles of families seeking admissions and increased attrition among selected students in an increasingly competitive international school market. With COVID disruptions now in the past it is essential for the school to focus on achieving stability and addressing the new and different challenges that lie ahead. The next Head of School will usher in a new period in the school’s history and work closely with the Board to strengthen its governance to ensure long-lasting service by trustees and senior leadership and build stability and legacy for the International School of Beijing.

ISB’s next head of school will need to engage the board, staff, students and parents in robust discussion about how best to shape and articulate the school’s distinctive identity and desired future direction, learning from successful past efforts such as the creation of the school’s strategic foci as well as processes and innovative ideas yet to be conceived. In these discussions, the head of school will need to balance respect for the school’s past and traditions with innovative attentiveness to new challenges and strategic opportunities. ISB’s next head of school will have an unparalleled opportunity to co-create an international educational experience that best serves ISB’s students, families, and staff to find their place in the world and serve others through challenging and joyful learning.

As ISB has grown in size and complexity, continuity and coherence in program, curriculum, and pedagogy from EY2-Grade 12 becomes more challenging. The next head of school will need to work with faculty, staff, and the senior leadership team to foster greater connectivity between and among the schools’ three divisions.





In summary, the next Head of School will focus on the following challenges:

1. To strategically and clearly lead innovation and continuous improvement across the organization, while collaborating with, supporting, and empowering others to re-establish ISB's strong identity and sense of purpose and to strengthen ISB as a leading academic and cultural institution in China and the region.
2. To cultivate an effective Board-Head partnership leading to excellence in governance and sustainable, long-lasting leadership for the future.
3. To build long-term financial sustainability and operational efficiency within an ever-changing local and global landscape, maintaining both flexibility and conviction.
4. To unify diverse members of the ISB community around a deeper understanding of its larger purpose, building trust, modeling and enhancing cultural responsiveness, inviting community engagement and investment in ISB's mission driven future.
5. To establish a more cohesive school environment of high challenge and high support to advance student learning with targeted professional development, transparent practices around decision-making, feedback, input and celebration.

## Desired Experiences, Qualifications and Personal Attributes

Successful candidates will demonstrate most of the following qualifications and attributes:

- Proven leadership experience as a Head of School or senior administrator, preferably in a large international K-12 institution
- An advanced degree in Education, Educational Administration, or a related field





- Demonstrated success in sustaining strategic initiatives, operational management, and financial stewardship in alignment with school’s mission and vision within a large, complex non-profit or international education settings
- Understanding of good governance and can work well with the Board
- Sophisticated emotional intelligence, cross-cultural experience, and demonstrated skills in cultural responsiveness to adapt and to respectfully navigate diverse cultural and social situations and to foster understanding and appreciation of diversity, equity and belonging in the school community
- Personal commitment to establishing school climates that foster understanding, respect and safety for diverse identities within the school community
- Demonstrated ability to deliver educational excellence with effective teaching and learning practices offering high challenge and high support for a diverse student population with keen parent focus on wholistic education, academic rigor and college admissions results
- Proven success in cultivating effective teams and supporting the professional growth and development of faculty, staff, and administration to achieve the strategic goals of the school
- An engaging and sincere communicator, writer and public speaker with the ability to listen and connect authentically and effectively with multiple stakeholders in a large, complex community setting
- An open, approachable, empathetic, responsive, and transparent leadership style that genuinely invites and respects the perspectives and views of others and builds a culture of trust and inclusion
- Eagerness to serve as an active, enthusiastic presence in the life of the school and as a role model in demonstrating creativity, curiosity, and an infectious passion for learning
- A growth mindset, a good sense of humor, and a genuine passion for students and education.
- Candidates open for long term subsequent commitment preferred

# Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about the International School of Beijing.

[School Website](#)

[School Profile](#)

[Virtual Campus Tour](#)

[About Beijing, China](#)



## To Apply

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to submit their applications to the consultants and all applications will be confidential. Candidates need to submit the materials listed below, as separate PDF documents. We encourage candidates not to delay in submitting applications as interviews will begin soon.

- A cover letter detailing their interest in this particular position and alignment with the needs of the school;
- A current résumé;
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission) to:

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