

# HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

## MAGELLAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Austin, Texas

[magellanschool.org](http://magellanschool.org)

Start Date: July 2026



**Magellan**  
International School



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES

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

# Mission Statement

To prepare the next generation of innovative, globally minded, culturally curious students who thrive with purpose and will contribute to a better future for us all.

# Vision

To be the preeminent multilingual International Baccalaureate school in the US.

## At a Glance



Established  
2009



Total enrollment  
600



Total faculty  
90



Student/teacher ratio  
7:1



Students of color  
60%



Financial aid awarded  
\$793k;  
\$271k in staff remission



Annual operating budget  
\$12M



Campus size  
14 acres  
(main campus)

**Spanish immersion:** A true immersion school, Magellan students learn in Spanish from native speakers from more than a dozen countries across the globe. Students spend on average 70% of the school day learning in Spanish. Through this immersive experience, our students typically become fully bi-literate. In addition to Spanish, conversational Mandarin is added beginning in third grade.

Preschoolers: 80%  
Grades K-5: 70%  
Middle School: 50%  
Faculty of color: 70%  
Students receiving aid: 12%  
Faculty with advanced degrees: 44 Master's degree, 1 Doctoral Degree





## Overview

Magellan offers a truly unique educational experience. As one of the few independent schools in the U.S. to provide a secular International Baccalaureate® (IB) education in a deeply immersive Spanish environment, the school currently serves students from preschool through 9th grade—and is growing! The High School launched in fall 2024 and is on track to offer the full IB continuum through 12th grade, culminating in the prestigious IB Diploma Program (DP).

Magellan offers a vibrant, diverse community that fosters a love for learning, cultural appreciation, and academic excellence. A school community that is committed to fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging to create a community where all students, parents, staff, and other stakeholders feel respected and valued regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation or identity, disability, education, or any other bias.

### Language Immersion

The goal is for students to become academically bilingual in Spanish and English and to develop basic communication skills in Mandarin. Studying multiple languages nurtures international-mindedness and compliments the skills students are building through the International Baccalaureate programs. The Spanish language immersion program begins with preschool students, a strategic time for language acquisition. Young children are still building their brain architecture and can more easily acquire multilingual skills through their daily classroom interactions. As students progress at Magellan, language skill development is focused on all foundational linguistic skills: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening.

Magellan students spend 50 to 80% of their day immersed in Spanish. Students develop fluency and learn to read, write, speak and understand Spanish. Through intensive English instruction, Magellan students build advanced native language skills. Students explore literary genres and create a variety of texts. Starting at age 3, they make presentations in both English and Spanish. Magellan students begin studying Mandarin Chinese in 3rd grade. Utilizing the Pinyin and Chinese Simplified Characters, students learn to exchange everyday thoughts, ideas and information in Mandarin.

### Fostering Creativity

At Magellan, we believe in the transformative power of design, creativity, and hands-on learning. Grounded in the ideals of agency, empowerment, and belonging, our unique approach to innovation encourages students to become creators, critical thinkers, and agents of purposeful change. Our program is designed to ignite a lifelong love for learning, foster a Maker Mindset, and equip students with the attributes and skills needed to thrive in an interconnected world.



Magellan offers programs which develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills needed to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world. As an IB World School, Magellan: “prepares students to become active, caring, lifelong learners who demonstrate respect for themselves and others and have the capacity to participate in the world around them. Magellan focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both within and beyond the classroom.”

### History

In 2007, founder Erin Defossé was a 30-something aerospace engineer, tech executive, entrepreneur, and ultimate risk-taker who dreamt of a school for his children that was different from any other in Austin. In just two years, he developed the concept for Magellan - based partially on his experience at [The American Foundation School in Mexico City](#) - conducted market research, bootstrapped funding from friends and family, secured a location, hired a highly experienced Head of School, and began facilitating the day-to-day logistics of establishing a new school. Magellan’s doors opened in 2009 and they quickly scaled from 47 students to nearly 600 across two campuses. Today, Magellan is on its way to becoming the only school in Texas, and 1 of 4 in the country, that is secular, independent, and offers the full International Baccalaureate continuum - they are currently in the authorization process to offer the Diploma Program (DP) - in a Spanish immersion setting.

## Opportunities and Challenges

**The next head of school at Magellan will be inheriting a special community where everyone is invested in continuing to support the tight knit connections that exist amongst the faculty/staff and families.** Magellan has grown significantly in its 15 years and anticipates growing even larger as its high school continues to expand. This will require an expert in change management, someone who can guide the development of systems and structures that promote equitable practices. **Magellan’s third head of school will have the opportunity to:**

- Leverage the expertise of the faculty and the administrative team to continue to build on the foundation of excellence in academics.
- Promote the new high school program that will culminate in students earning an IB diploma (DP) in a competitive local high school market.
- Demonstrate an entrepreneurial mindset able to identify and develop unique opportunities to capitalize on the distinctive strengths and capacities of the school.
- Lead with a deep understanding of the direction and opportunities of primary and secondary schools of the future, and embrace the tools and technology that will support continued academic excellence for both faculty and students.
- Thoughtfully guide budgetary decisions and manage growth.





## Qualifications and Personal Attributes

Magellan International School is seeking an innovative, entrepreneurial, caring, and inspiring educational leader. The next Head of School will offer the following qualifications and qualities:

- An earned Master's degree from an accredited institution;
- A demonstrated commitment to embracing Magellan's compelling mission embracing the ethos of the [IB Learner Profile](#);
- Experience with and deep knowledge of language acquisition in children;
- A strong preference for a multilingual educational leader who is bilingual in Spanish and English;
- High level of intercultural competence and empathy; a global mindset;
- Enhance and continue to grow a high performing leadership team manifesting accountability and setting boundaries;
- Fundraising and friendraising acumen;
- DP expert, preferably with experience leading an IB Continuum school at another international independent school;
- A collaborative, relational yet decisive leadership style built on approachability, authenticity, trust, and transparency;
- Highly skilled at recruiting, hiring, retaining, developing and supporting faculty and staff;
- Eagerness to enthusiastically enter the life of the school community; eagerness to serve as an active presence and a role model for students in demonstrating innovation, creativity, tenacious curiosity, balance and an infectious passion for learning;
- Emotional intelligence, forward thinking, open minded, creative, fearless, joyful;
- Strong communication and listening skills;
- Personal and professional commitment to equity and the requisite skills to support critical conversations in the design of ever more inclusive communities.

# Learn More

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

[School Website](#)

[DEIB at Magellan](#)

[International Baccalaureate](#)

[About Austin, Texas](#)

[Global Community](#)



## To Apply

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- 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:

**Karen Neitzel, Ed.D.**

Senior Consultant

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**Cathy Shelburne**

Consultant and Executive Coach

cathy.shelburne@carneysandoe.com