



HEAD OF HIGH SCHOOL

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

The International School of Brussels ("ISB") seeks a new Head of High School.

Following the appointment of the previous Head, Felim Bolster, to a senior role in Madrid, there is currently an interim Head and it is anticipated that the new Head of High School will take up the role in August 2021. ISB has a preeminent reputation for providing an inclusive, internationally-focused and nurturing educational experience in one of the world's most multinational cities.

The next Head of High School will be a member of the Executive leadership team (Learning Leadership team) led by James MacDonald, the new Director who will build on this successful legacy, taking the School forward in line with its mission.

This candidate briefing should be read in conjunction with the extensive information available on our [website](#).



BACKGROUND

ISB was founded in 1951 as the American School of Brussels (Belgium) with four teachers on hand to welcome 27 students between the ages of 5 and 11. In the spring of 1953, with a population of more than 100 students, the School moved to its current leased location in Watermael-Boitsfort, on the outskirts of Brussels. The School is adjacent to the Forêt de Soignes and became known as the International School of Brussels.

In the early years, the whole School was housed in the Château: today it is the base for the School's administrative support services including an attractive area to welcome prospective families and other visitors. Meanwhile, in a beautiful and secure 15-hectare campus, each of the four School Divisions has its own well-resourced, purpose-built school together with excellent facilities for athletics, health and fitness, for the performing arts, for professional development and a café where parents can meet. A state-of-the-art High School was completed in 2013 and currently accommodates 450-500 students.

ISB is a well-managed and highly respected school. It has a distinguished reputation within the international school community for pedagogical innovation and for sharing best practice. This reputation combined with its excellent working conditions allows it to attract high calibre staff at all levels and in all roles. Entry to ISB is non-selective and it is widely regarded as a beacon school for inclusivity: it is committed to building a balanced community of learners with a diverse range of talents and abilities, including those of exceptionally high academic ability and a carefully managed number of students with diagnosed learning disabilities.

The School's mission is:

To develop independent learners and international citizens in an environment where all students are included, challenged, and successful.

The community engages in an ongoing, critical conversation about how to interpret that mission at the start of the third decade of the 21st Century.

The School is constituted as an 'Association Sans But Lucratif' (a not-for-profit organisation) under Belgian legislation and it has no religious or national affiliations. ISB does not receive any state subsidies but is recognised by the Belgian authorities and therefore parents who send their children to ISB are compliant with the education law. Since 1980, ISB has been accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools ("MSA") and by the Council of International Schools ("CIS"). These accreditations were renewed in December 2019.



LOCATION

Watermael-Boitsfort is an attractive residential area in the south-east quadrant of the city with easy access by public transport and car to the centre. A fleet of buses transports students daily from across the city and beyond.

Brussels is a bilingual city (French/Dutch) and the capital of Belgium, with a metropolitan area population of 2.5 million. For more than half a century, Brussels has been a centre for international politics, serving as headquarters of the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and of the European Union. It is a green, well-organized and safe city in which to live. In terms of the arts, gastronomy and architecture, it makes an extremely attractive home, and within easy reach of a host of major European cities. Travel, both locally and internationally, is easy and affordable.

SCHOOL STRUCTURE

ISB has four School Divisions, each with its own teaching staff:

- Early Childhood Centre (ECC) Ages 3 to 8 (Preschool to Grade 2)
- Elementary School Ages 8 to 12 (Grades 3-6)
- Middle School Ages 12 to 15 (Grades 7-9)
- High School Ages 15 to 18 (Grades 10-12)

Working alongside these horizontal divisions are the whole-school teams including the Student Support Services, in ICT and libraries; in the Athletics and Arts programmes, plus other co-curricular provision.

THE HIGH SCHOOL

The High School offers four pathways to graduation: the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP), the IB Career-related Programme (IBCP), the US High School Diploma or the ISB Individualised Diploma (for students in the Intensive Learning Programme).

ISB has offered the IBDP for more than 40 years and today has the most comprehensive programme in Belgium, whereas the IBCP was introduced in 2019. Throughout High School, students receive extensive support from the College and Careers Counselling team as they prepare for their futures beyond ISB. More information about the High School is available [here](#).



A HOLISTIC EDUCATION

Learning, Learning Support & Student Wellbeing

Today, the ISB learning experience is designed as a continuous journey of self-development from Preschool to High School graduation. The ISB curriculum is based on the School's mission and students engage with a programme of learning that is developmentally appropriate, tailored to each child's individual learning needs and informed by ISB's five interrelated, research-based **principles of learning**.

The ISB learning experience values three types of learning within the ISB curricular framework:

- Conceptual Learning
- Competency Learning
- Character Learning

ISB offers a range of learning and language support programmes for those students who need additional support to be independent learners. These programmes are available to all students across all divisions and currently about 20% of students are receiving some form of support.

ISB adopted 1:1 technology a decade ago. The use of technology in support of learning and communication is now embedded in practice throughout the School and this allowed the School to move successfully to online learning during the Covid-19 closures. A focus on the development of digital citizenship is a feature of the School's approach.

Intensive Learning Support Programmes for children with cognitive or developmental disabilities are a distinctive feature of ISB. Students work with a team of specialised professionals with highly customised opportunities both in the small group and in the grade level setting with their age peers. The curriculum has an emphasis on functional academics and life skills and has Speech Language and Occupational Therapies built into the programme. There are additional unique opportunities in therapeutic horseback-riding, adaptive physical education, and students participate in the National Special Olympics Games each year. As their graduation approaches, there is an emphasis on promoting independent life skills and pre-vocational studies to prepare for life after ISB.

The School offers opportunities for intercultural learning, not only through the rich diversity of cultures within the community, but also through genuine and regular examples of intercultural learning embedded in the curriculum and visible in the extensive co-curricular programme.

ISB is strongly committed to student wellbeing and to upholding the rights of its learners as defined in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. There are policies in place to ensure that the community knows about these rights and is able to offer support to all members of the community in caring for children. The recent CIS accreditation report referred to overwhelming evidence that the rights of students were a high priority for all staff and commended the School for this.



Co-curricular Programme

ISB is justifiably recognised for offering a high quality and varied co-curricular programme that offers diverse opportunities for all students to experience challenge, inclusion, and success beyond the formal curriculum. Investment in facilities reflects the School's commitment to breadth and opportunity. In Music, a number of students sit for ABRSM (Associated Board of Royal School of Music) exams in instrumental, vocal and theory and have the opportunity to perform at school. They also participate in international ensemble groups such as AMIS and Honor Band, Orchestra, Choir that are selected through audition. Students regularly exhibit their artwork and are able to perform in theatrical and musical productions on campus and within the broader Brussels community. Participation levels in the comprehensive Athletics programme are high and teams competing in the International Schools' Sports Tournaments enjoy notable success across a range of sports.

There is a strong commitment to Service Learning and an emphasis on engaging students with a range of social, economic and global issues, taking full advantage of being in a city which is de facto the capital of the European Union. Set in an area of natural beauty and a European protected zone, ISB is visibly committed to a Green agenda and students are very informed about and engaged with environmental issues. There are opportunities to take part in Debating and Model United Nations and to complete the International Award. Across the past three years an average of 42 students achieved the Bronze award, 27 achieved the Silver award and 12 achieved the Gold award each year.



THE ISB COMMUNITY

One of the most striking features of ISB is the extraordinary sense of community and the welcome it offers to families from dozens of countries around the globe. The School is inclusive, with a strong sense of international-mindedness; children are happy here.

Students

There are currently 1,350 students attending the School between the ages of 3 and 18 with 450 students in the High School.

One of the most exciting elements of the School is the international diversity of the student community with 75 countries represented. American children represent about 20% of the student population with other significant nationalities being Belgian, French, British, Dutch, Japanese, Italian, Israeli, Spanish and Canadian. In fact, there are many children with dual nationality and, correspondingly, a good number who speak one or more languages other than English, the medium of instruction at School. 95 students are children of faculty and staff.

Alumni Community

The alumni community of ISB graduates, former students and parents, as well as former faculty and staff, is truly global and ISB seeks to stay in touch via communications and events with as many of its alumni as possible working closely with active alumni and Class Representatives to support alumni gatherings in many locations in Europe, Asia and North America.

Parents

There is a very supportive parent community and this includes an active Family Association run by a team of volunteers and to which all parents belong. 80% of families at ISB are expatriate families on assignment, often staying between three and five years. Typical turnover of students is 22% a year and almost all who leave do so because of relocation. This 80% is almost equally divided between families where parents are employed by multinational corporations such as ExxonMobile, GlaxoSmithKline, Proctor and Gamble and Toyota and those working at embassies, diplomatic missions, with Nato and UN organisations. In the case of these families, the school fees will be partially or wholly paid by the employer. The remaining 20% of families are local Belgian or expatriates who have settled in Brussels on a more permanent basis.



Staff

There are 62 Faculty members in the High School and there are currently 347 staff employed at ISB as a whole. This includes 226 teachers, 68 support staff; 11 Directors and Heads of School and 42 members of the campus support team. 18 nationalities are represented within the ISB Faculty and many teachers come to ISB having taught in other international schools around the world. Staff are committed and retention is good. In keeping with Belgian legislation there is a Works Council that interacts constructively with leadership and the Board in support of the staff and the School.

ISB has introduced a peer-to-peer Teaching and Learning Coaching Programme which offers ISB Faculty the opportunity to collaborate with another faculty member and reflect on professional practice. Coaches and faculty work together to look beyond their own specialist areas and consider underlying pedagogies and teaching strategies linked to the School's agreed teaching principles. More generally, there is a strong commitment to professional development illustrated by the establishment of specific Learning Institutes that support teachers in understanding and mastering pedagogical theories and classroom strategies related to aspects such as inquiry, language across the curriculum, collaborative learning, and differentiation.

Each year, ISB welcomes graduates of education, as well as other relevant fields of study, for a one-year internship programme. ISB internships offer young college graduates the unique opportunity to work collaboratively with experienced teams across the School. These interns gain valuable experience that helps prepare them for a career in teaching, while also enriching the learning community with a host of new ideas and fresh perspectives.

Learning Leadership Team

The Head of High School is a member of the Learning Leadership Team and reports directly to the Director. The Team comprises the Heads of the four School Divisions and their deputies and the Directors, each with strategic responsibility for different areas of school life (Advancement; Athletics and Activities; Curriculum; Development; Finance and Operations; Student Support Services; Technology).

Trustees

ISB's long history of success is underpinned by committed and effective governance. Currently, the Board consists of 17 Trustees and the Chair is George Nazi. There are five committees (Governance; Finance; Advancement; Facilities, Executive; Continuous Improvement) and the full Board meets about six times a year. The great majority of the current Trustees are current parents. The Board understands its strategic role as guardian of the School's mission and is committed to developing best practice in all areas of governance and in particular, to providing critical support to the Director and the Learning Leadership Team.



FINANCES

The School's financial policy and procedures are well designed, with the proper checks and balances in place. ISB is a mature international school that has developed robust and well-implemented systems over the years. The School's financial position is strong overall, with a solid balance sheet and positive operating cash flow. The School maintains an operating reserve which exceeds the value of a long term loan. Interest income

from investments also more than covers interest expense, which is another illustration of the overall financial health of the organisation. Tuition fees are paid in full in June for the upcoming school year so the School has good liquidity by the time it enters the summer which makes financial planning simpler. Further financial information is available in the Annual Report published on the ISB website.

SAFEGUARDING AND HEALTH & SAFETY

Health and Safety are heavily regulated in Belgium. Any organisation employing more than 50 employees must have a Health and Safety Committee (Comité de Prévention et de Protection au Travail - CPPT). The Committee meets at least monthly. Since 2017 the School has had a full-time Safety and Security Coordinator.

A Child Protection Policy was introduced in 2017. The Director of Student Services maintains and oversees the application of the policy.



PRIORITIES

As mentioned, ISB has been recently reaccredited by the MSA and CIS. Through this reaccreditation process, many of the strengths of ISB were acknowledged and commended such as the programmes for inclusion; the commitment to student wellbeing and child protection; the respectful relations between staff and students throughout the School and the funding of technology resources to support learning.

A number of important recommendations were made which are shaping the work and priorities of the new Director and his team. These include: clarifying, in collaboration with the Board of Trustees, the vision for the School for the next period and developing this in a detailed long-term strategic plan; having a clearer matrix for decision-making; training in governance for the Board; developing a school-wide process for the use of data to measure learning, inform practice and revise curriculum;

embedding the use of MAP and other data tools to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and assessment strategies; ensuring that the curriculum provides appropriate challenge to all students in line with the mission of the School, and developing a standardised approach to working with highly able students that goes beyond the current model of differentiation. A particular focus for the next Head of High School will be to strengthen curriculum alignment and pedagogical approaches in collaboration with the Middle School.

In summary, this is an exciting opportunity to lead a highly respected and successful High School working alongside a dynamic and forward-looking leadership team, committed staff, faculty and trustees, supportive parents and engaged students.



JOB DESCRIPTION

Note: The following is an outline job description. A complete description will accompany the contract.

The Head of High School will lead the High School of ISB, building on its existing strengths and taking it to the next stage in its development. The Head of High School is accountable to the Director for the daily management of the High School, and for the delivery of an excellent, holistic and inclusive education and outstanding support for student welfare.

More specifically, the key responsibilities of the Head of High School of ISB can be outlined as follows:

Leadership with Integrity and Transparency

The Head of High School shall:

- Provide moral leadership, acting with the highest standards of integrity
- Act as an inspiring role model by demonstrating transparency, openness, inclusion, commitment, enthusiasm, and consideration for others
- Unite the High School community in the purpose of forming globally-minded, socially responsible young adults. Put the welfare and the intellectual, social, ethical and personal development of students first at all times.

Leadership in Vision and Strategy

The Head of High School shall:

- Champion the mission of ISB to offer a high quality learning experience for all students within an inclusive environment; understand its international and local context as well as the values and aspirations of ISB's stakeholders and ensure the High School operates cohesively with the other Divisions in all respects
- Contribute to the development of a coherent vision for the High School as part of ISB, and work with the colleagues to translate this into an ambitious, comprehensive, affordable and achievable strategy which builds on the School's considerable existing strengths and sets clear direction for the future. Ensure that all strategic proposals are well researched, assessed for risk and supported by detailed financial business plans. Report periodically on progress with implementation of plans

- Ensure that the High School has a well-researched, coherent and effective strategy for optimising enrolment within the context of ISB's marketing strategy and practice
- Ensure the upkeep and enhancement of the High School's learning spaces in line with the evolving needs of students and teachers through a fully-costed rolling programme of development and maintenance of the School's campus.

Instructional Leadership, Enabling Excellence and Assuring Quality

The Head of High School shall:

- Provide instructional educational leadership to the High School to champion academic endeavour and successful outcomes
- Evaluate the High School's mapped curriculum to ensure that it is at all times stimulating and appropriate as regards content, pedagogy and assessment to the needs of all students, giving due regard to their potential, and enabling them to transition smoothly and successfully on to tertiary education. Sustain momentum in the recent implementation of the IBCP to complement the School's long history of providing the IBDP. Work collaboratively with the Middle School to ensure that the two Divisions' respective pedagogical approaches and curriculum are aligned
- Establish and maintain, in the promotion of excellence, an enlightened and data-supported framework for developing and monitoring the quality of all aspects of teaching, learning, student tracking, assessment, reporting, guidance and care across the High School, in line with whole-school policy, thereby helping pinpoint areas for focus and encouraging the exchange of best practice
- Promote ISB's commitment to a broad, highly inclusive, all-round international education, encouraging the High School's outstanding co-curricular programme in the Arts and Sport
- Be visible to High School staff, students and parents; be in a position to testify to the quality of all that is on offer by visiting classes, attending events and generally supporting and celebrating the busy and varied life of the School community
- Ensure, via the Director, that the Board of Trustees is appropriately informed on student progress and attainment.

Operational Leadership, Enabling Excellence and Assuring Quality

The Head of High School shall:

- Work closely with the Finance Director to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the budgetary framework so that strategic and operational decisions for the High School are made with due regard for their impact on the School's financial position
- Work collaboratively with the central departments of ISB in order to be well supported and advised in terms of all areas of financial management, in ICT, in communications, maintenance and development of the facilities, in HR and in marketing
- Contribute to whole-school policy review and ensure that the High School is fully compliant with all statutory requirements for example with regard to safeguarding and child protection, health and safety
- Contribute to strong, productive relationships with all parts of the wider School community including alumni, the Family Association, and any other local groups.

People Management and Development

The Head of High School shall:

- Create an environment founded on mutual trust where staff and faculty feel valued, clear about the importance and the expectations of their role, held to account and part of the ISB community with shared aims and values, respectful of the local and international context
- Recruit, induct, lead and support High School staff so that each member can deliver the highest possible standards of education, care and performance
- Recognising that outstanding teaching and support staff are central to the High School's success, collaborate with the ISB HR function to support successful recruitment and retention and to ensure that High School approaches to appraisal, training and performance management are enlightened and productive
- Promote a culture of reflective practice, leadership coaching and continuing professional development, leveraging the benefit of being part of a large International School in the heart of Europe to attract excellent visiting specialists.

Each year the Head of High School will be appraised by the Director. As with all senior school leaders at the International School of Brussels, the new Head of High School will be expected to continue to develop as a school leader in the following domains, reflecting the professional growth framework used at ISB: Accountability for Learning, Human Resources Leadership, Programme Leadership, Organizational Leadership, Culture and Climate Leadership, Professional Accountability.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

The Director seeks someone who has the judgment to assess, preserve and celebrate the High School's many strengths and the courage and resolve to work collaboratively to address those areas where attention is required. The next Head of High School will have the vision and skill to ensure that the High School fulfils its mission for today's and tomorrow's students in a profound and measurable way. In particular, a leader is needed who is unequivocally aspirational for all members of the student body in terms of the education that they will be offered: one who can provide clarity of direction and cohesion particularly with respect to teaching, learning and assessment so that, by the time they graduate, all students have developed the concepts, knowledge base, competencies and attitudes to learning commensurate with their potential and are thus able to embrace the future with confidence.

The next Head of High School will:

- have a track record as a successful teacher and leader in the Secondary / High School sector
- have a positive perspective on working closely and productively with an executive team and with Trustees in a reciprocal relationship of trust, accountability and transparency
- be committed to the mission, values and culture of the School and demonstrate an understanding of the context in which it operates and the market it serves; have a proven track record in contributing to and executing a detailed and suitably resourced strategic plan, and a demonstrable ability to advocate for the High School's needs within the context of the school-wide vision and to manage change successfully
- have strong academic and intellectual credentials to command the respect of staff, students, parents and the wider School community
- be proficient in building a sense of community within the High School through impeccable ethical standards and personal integrity, self-awareness, hard work, transparency and humility
- be an excellent listener who can lead, unify and motivate colleagues, providing clarity of direction, expectations and accountabilities; demonstrate wisdom, authenticity, warmth, open-mindedness and empathy in their dealings with other people; have the maturity to take personal responsibility for difficult decisions and the generosity of spirit to empower others
- be an informed and natural communicator and visible leader, who engages enthusiastically with colleagues, parents and students but with the gravitas and calm authority to create a climate within which staff and students alike can work to their full potential
- have a demonstrable commitment to inclusive, international education, to the IB philosophy and to student voice; have empathy and understanding for the needs of students and an unshakeable commitment to their wellbeing; demonstrate a discerning understanding of trends in 21st century curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in the high school years; be committed to the provision of a challenging and relevant holistic education that prepares young people to be globally minded and responsible citizens
- be a reflective practitioner, with a growth mindset and thirst for knowledge; comfortable with complexity; committed to the use of relevant data to assess student learning and improve professional practice; able to challenge productively in a solution-focused manner
- have demonstrable expertise in building, leading and coaching a dynamic, high-performing and cohesive High School team: be accustomed to defining individual roles and to impactful delegation but also to creating a team ethos underpinned by honesty, loyalty, integrity and shared purpose that is palpable for the community
- understand the characteristics of effective schools and the strategies and systems to promote efficiency and improve performance; possess strong administrative and organisational skills; be financially literate and have a track record of using data effectively to provide evidence of success against objectives and to inform decision-making
- have proven experience in recruiting and inducting talented people and supporting them in their professional development; be committed to providing fair and favourable conditions as well as intelligent systems, policies and procedures in order that staff are able to do their best work.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A remuneration package commensurate with the importance of the role and the experience of the successful candidate will be offered. This will include:

- Accommodation allowance for the Head of High School and family
- Free tuition at ISB for the Head of High School's children
- Complementary health insurance for the Head of High School
- Employer contribution to private pension scheme

- Annual home leave for the Head of High School and family
- Relocation expenses at the start and completion of contract
- Allowance for professional development.

ISB is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The successful candidate must be willing to undergo background checks to confirm suitability to work with children and the appointment is conditional upon the receipt and validation of three confidential references.



APPOINTMENT PROCESS

RSAcademics has been appointed to manage the search and recruitment process.

Interested candidates are asked to arrange a confidential discussion with:

Jean Sullivan jeansullivan@rsacademics.com

Vicky Tuck vickytuck@rsacademics.com

The deadline for applications is **Friday 4th September at 10.00am BST**. However, please note that candidates may be invited for an initial interview via Zoom from mid-August and we reserve the right to convene final interviews in Brussels as soon as we consider that we have an excellent field of candidates.

Candidates should complete their application form electronically and email it to RSAcademics, together with a covering letter, addressed to the Director, James Macdonald, which explains their reasons for applying. There is no need to submit a separate CV. Open testimonials are disregarded.

Please email your completed application form and covering letter (both as PDF files please) to RSAcademics's Operations Manager (Leadership Appointments), Jonathan Barnes, at applications@rsacademics.com. Jonathan can also be reached by calling RSAcademics' Head Office on +44 (0)1858 383163. The need for confidentiality is understood and all discussions and applications will be handled with careful regard to this.

The process is as follows:

- All applications will be acknowledged by email. If you have not received acknowledgement that your application has been received within two working days of sending it, please contact RSAcademics's Head Office by telephone
- Selected candidates will be invited to a preliminary discussion with Vicky Tuck by video conference from mid-August 2020. These discussions will be followed by online longlist interviews with James Macdonald, Director of ISB accompanied by Vicky Tuck
- Final interviews will be held at ISB when candidates will have the opportunity to tour the School and meet representatives from the community as well as members of the Learning Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees. As noted, the schedule for these is to be determined and is dependent on there being no travel restrictions, but the firm intention is to conclude the process by 15th October.



Founded in 2002 by Russell Speirs, RSAcademics specialises in schools, in the UK and internationally. The company advises on business strategy and strategic marketing, development and fundraising, leadership consultancy and the search and selection of Heads, Chairs of Boards, Bursars and other senior staff. Comprising a team of exceptional talent and experience, RSAcademics provides a high quality service to schools with rigour, expertise and warmth. Please visit www.rsacademics.com for more information.

