

Leadership Search



Head of School
Del Mar Academy
Nosara, Guanacaste, Costa Rica

Application Deadline: January 31, 2022
Start Date: July 1, 2022

ISS is pleased to conduct this full search.
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Position

Professional Activities

- Work with the Board, Administration, school staff and wider Nosara community to communicate and implement the Strategic Plan for the school's future
- Oversee enrollment strategies, including growth and financial management
- Create, promote, and uphold a shared vision within the school community
- Implement an organizational structure for the school that engages teachers and administration
- Monitor and improve programs for faculty and staff professional development to help, lead, and direct the teachers to continuously improve their performance and achieve academic excellence
- Work with teachers and Cycle Coordinators to constantly drive instruction strategies and curriculum development, incorporating new methods into teaching and learning
- Lead curriculum development and assessment practice, ensuring high standards for teaching excellence

Duties & Responsibilities

- Oversee and ensure effectiveness of all aspects of the school's operation
- Model and promote DMA's mission and values, philosophy, and ethos in daily interactions with students, teachers, parents, and staff
- Be a strong and inspirational strategic and collaborative leader, delivering the School's Strategic Plan Objectives
- Monitor and address all matters of school climate and culture
- Ensure the financial sustainability and soundness of the school
- Facilitate the overall achievement, welfare, and good conduct of students
- Work with Fundraising personnel to ensure the continued growth of the Scholarship Program with the goal of giving all students opportunities for college admission
- Create a high profile for the school externally and with parents
- Promote and maintain strong parental and community involvement
- Oversee teachers: plan and allocate clear individual accountabilities, communicate, support and evaluate the work
- Oversee curriculum standards
- Act as Head of Student Life: take an active role in the daily life of all students, ensuring discipline and high standards of behavior and attendance, and motivating them to achieve their potential for personal and academic growth
- Maintain and support extensive co-curricular programs

Skills, Experience, & Attributes Sought

- Dynamic, collaborative leader with a proven record of effective leadership and management
- Have international experience at this senior level including substantial experience with the International Baccalaureate and Montessori philosophy, and knowledge/experience of national and international programs and educational standards
- A good communicator and listener; able to speak and write in English and Spanish

- Promotes excellence through valuing and developing others
- Commitment to balancing academic rigor with students' social-emotional needs and growth
- An awareness of emotional intelligence that transfers into respecting self and others
- Experience living in a multi-cultural environment and working with a diverse community
- Able to lead, motivate, support, challenge and develop faculty and staff to secure improvement and further student agency
- The head of school will be expected to create opportunities for students and teachers to realize their greatest potential as leaders, learners, community members, and caretakers of the environment.
- Experience with hands on learning and using nature as a classroom
- Ability to adapt to tropical climate and rural circumstances

Academic & Professional Qualifications

- Master's degree or higher in educational leadership, education, curriculum and instruction or related field
- Proven leadership experience in a senior educational leadership role of 5-15 years
- **Written and verbal fluency in Spanish and English**

Salary & Benefits

The salary and benefits package is competitive and will be commensurate with the qualifications and experience of the successful candidate.

Application instructions found on the final page of this announcement.

The School

Del Mar Academy is an independent, non-sectarian, bilingual, and co-educational day school with a culturally and economically diverse student population, enrolling children from 18 months through 12th grade. At the youngest ages, the school's programs are based on the philosophy and methods of Dr. Maria Montessori. For 11th and 12th grade students, DMA offers the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, and in the middle years, it offers a bridge between these two philosophically compatible programs based on a constructivist understanding of teaching and learning.

The DMA Foundation is the umbrella of the Del Mar Academy school and the Guardians of Nature initiative. The Foundation's goal is to better the world through education, specifically through sustainable development goals. Their dream is that the local community continues to inspire both regional and national public and private schools to be agents of change. By empowering teachers and students and giving them the necessary tools to succeed, they will be the future stewards of our planet.

Mission, Vision, Principles & Values

Mission

The mission of Del Mar Academy is to provide our community of local and international students an academically excellent bilingual (Spanish and English) education that fosters a love of life and learning, caring for the environment and the community, global consciousness, and belief in each student's power to make positive changes, and to share our knowledge and experience with others.

Vision

Del Mar Academy envisions becoming a leader and model of 21st century education. By tailoring a unique program to youngsters growing up in rapidly changing times, we aim for our students to graduate with the confidence to seize exciting new opportunities, and the preparation to face emerging challenges.

knowledge *
ethics * creativity *
ecology & leadership *

Aims & Leading Principles:

At DMA our goal is to bequeath to each student a legacy of limitless possibilities:

- Love of life, learning, and laughter
- Environments that engage, excite, and embrace everyone
- Acquisition of skills necessary for a balanced, successful life
- Respect for self, others, and the planet
- Nourishing self-awareness and peace within
- Inspiring innovative thinkers
- Nurturing relationships & fostering inherent worth
- Global awareness & citizenship

Our Values

1. Enrichment:

Our challenging, multidisciplinary curriculum is tailored to the individual needs, strengths, and interests of the children and our methodology is based on the best practices of enrichment teaching and learning. Creative problem-solving, decision making, and logical reasoning are infused into the program.

2. Empowerment:

As active learners, our students are encouraged to develop their individual skills, strengths and talents and pursue investigations independently. Students develop a sense of empowerment through opportunities to become decision makers, creative producers, and active researchers.

3. Nurturing Environment:

Our school offers a warm environment shaped by the values of respect, compromise, integrity, cooperation, tolerance, and love. Our teacher to student ratio is optimal for effective individualized and small group instruction.

4. Citizenship:

Del Mar Academy is dedicated to the development of the child as an active joyous learner, a collaborator, a citizen of his/her community and the world community.

5. Parental Participation:

Parent involvement is vital to the well-being of the students and our school. Parents are true partners in education. We survey interests, professions, and hobbies and request that willing parents join us and share their knowledge, (and) expertise, and experiences with our students.

6. Diversity:

Ethnic, racial, religious, and lifestyle differences among students and their families enrich the diversity of our school. Cultural diversity is valued, and a rich variety of cultural perspectives and experiences are explored through the curriculum. Individual differences are celebrated at Del Mar Academy as a source of learning and joy.

7. Joy:

We believe in celebrating life and learning with a sense of joy, appreciation, and wonder.

Overview

History

Del Mar Academy was the vision of a group of friends who saw a need for a school that would positively impact Nosara and be a center for change. Education can elevate a child, a family, and eventually an entire community. The magic of Nosara draws people from all over the world, and for those with school age children, living here was a challenge without a school with internationally high standards. The demand was there, and ideas became plans in 2006.

Before long, they found a beautiful 11-acre property at the end of a quiet road. With large “cenízaros” trees and surrounded by pastures, this was the perfect spot for a school. It had ample space for the campus to grow while maintaining vast green areas, seclusion from high transit, yet positioned in the center of the community with access to various neighborhoods.

In January 2007, the first information session was held for the Nosara community and approximately 15 families were in attendance. With a big leap of faith, the accreditation process with the Costa Rican Ministry of Education commenced and construction began. One interesting fact: during the first few weeks of the project, backhoes and dump trucks brought in 450 truckloads of dirt to raise the property level to a solid base on which to build.

Soon after, teachers were hired, books were ordered, and Del Mar Academy went from a vision to a reality. Del Mar Academy opened its doors in September 2007 with 6 classrooms and only 19 students, who were local expats and Nosara residents, and completed the first year with 37 students.

The rapid growth of the academy was unexpected, but a testament to what the founders already knew: Nosara is a great place to live and raise a family. With the sudden influx of new families and the continued expansion of new grades the schools’ offerings eventually grew from toddler through high school. The physical campus needed to grow too, and quickly! New buildings were constructed to meet their growing needs. A milestone goal was realized in 2016 when DMA became an IB Accredited school. The school’s first IB graduate received her diploma in June of 2018. Another major goal of the founders was achieved in September of 2018 when DMA officially became a nonprofit foundation.



The vision of a world-renowned school and continuing growth has surpassed expectations. Del Mar Academy has proven to be a life-changing project. Unlike many other coastal towns in Costa Rica, their community has become family oriented, with families representing over 25 countries across the globe sharing the dream of raising their families in Nosara and empowering their children to be agents of change.

Curriculum

The academic program spans from the primary level where it is founded in Dr. Maria Montessori's philosophy to the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program in the 11th and 12th grades. The whole program is unified throughout by a student-centered, Constructivist approach; an innovative bilingual program in English and Spanish, and a strong environmental education program with access to the tremendous natural resources surrounding the campus and beyond.

Altogether, this shapes the school's unique identity in the Costa Rican and international independent school world. DMA believes that its well-rounded, integrated approach provides a liberating and extraordinary foundation for children as they prepare for successive grades, higher education, and life. Each program at DMA, from the Toddler through the 12th grade, builds upon the preceding program and lays the groundwork for the next. By graduation from 12th grade, students at DMA have experienced the numerous advantages of a comprehensive and sequential education of the highest quality. DMA is accredited by the Costa Rican Ministry of Education and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program. The school plans to pursue additional accreditations in the future.

Technology

Del Mar Academy is one of a handful of schools in Mesoamerica with a 4th through 10th grade S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) program running in parallel with a full-fledged Science sequence, effectively providing students with a uniquely varied science learning experience.

The STEAM program includes Google Office Suite apps and typing, civil engineering, coding, robotics, agro-ecology, digital film and photography, and green design courses, that provide a rich project-based learning experience in which students design, cycle, compete and build real world products from concrete benches and bridges to wooden dams, to bamboo furniture, to video games and movies.



Accreditation

Del Mar Academy is accredited by the Costa Rican Ministry of Education. This accreditation entails compliance of academic, sanitary, and administrative standards, as well as following strict building codes. The Costa Rican Ministry of Education also requires accredited schools to cover, as a minimum, all Costa Rican Curriculum Program Standards and have a fully certified teaching staff.

Del Mar Academy is an authorized IB World School that offers the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program to students in grades 11 and 12. IB World schools share a common philosophy and commitment to high quality international education.

Academic Calendar

The school year for Del Mar Academy students begins in early September and ends in late June. There are extended vacations in December and April as well as long-weekends for a mid-trimester break each trimester. Costa Rican national holidays are observed.

Arts, Athletics, & After School Activities

A diverse After School Program runs from 3:00-4:30 pm (there is also an early morning surfing program).

After school Programs run for 10 weeks (one full trimester) – and change somewhat from trimester to trimester. After school programs meet once a week for 60-80 minutes, so any given student may participate in as many as 5 different programs per week. Programs may be artistic, athletic, or academic. Virtually all programs are open to parents and to any students in the Nosaran community. Limited scholarships are available. Some of recent activities include Soccer, Climbing, Surfing, Surf team, Aerial gymnastics, Dancing, Skateboarding, Creative arts, Theater, Ukulele, Globe, Rock Band, Academic Support, Cooking, Outdoor Survival, Horseback riding and Pastry cooking.



Students

Del Mar students stem from over 25 countries of origin, speak many languages, and aspire to be everything imaginable under the sun. The student body is truly diverse with an international feel. Approximately 50% come from North America, 25% from Europe and the Middle East, and 25% from Costa Rica. Close to three quarters are long term or permanent residents and 23% of the student body currently receive some type of scholarship.

Faculty

An outstanding international faculty, including professionals from 11 different countries including Costa Rica, Chile, England, France, Puerto Rico, New Zealand, Spain, USA, and Venezuela. All faculty are certified in Montessori or IB and have an average of 7 years of teaching experience. Five faculty members possess either PhD or double master's degrees, 60% possess a master's degree, and 90% of the faculty are bilingual. The faculty to student ratio is 1:8, and the average classroom size is 20.

Administration

The faculty are supported by two senior administrators (Head of School and Associate Head of School), an IB Coordinator, Program Coordinators (Upper Primary, Middle School), a School Counselor, a Business Manager, an Executive Secretary, office and maintenance staff of six.

Professional Development

The school supports certification costs for Montessori and IB for about 12-16 faculty per year. Del Mar Academy also supports BA degree completion for their assistants and now master's degree completion for their teachers. The school's goal is to have all senior faculty with master's degrees.

Governance

Del Mar Academy is run by a Costa Rican Foundation with 3 Founding Directors and a 10 person [Advisory Board](#).

Grade Level Overviews

Elementary School Overview

Toddler (1.5 to 3 years old)

The purpose of the Toddler program is to create a safe environment, with the opportunity to develop independence, concentration, and self-esteem. The natural ability of the child to learn is cultivated with a consistent routine within a secure and orderly setting.

Toddler's exercises recognize that children learn by doing. Materials are always accessible, safe and geared for a child's success. Del Mar Academy's Toddler Curriculum includes Practical Life, Motor Skills, Language Skills, Math Skills, Sensorial Skills, Environmental Educational, Dramatic Play and Art.



CASA Montessori (3–6-year-olds)

The Casa Montessori program (pk3-Kindergarten) serves 3- to 6-year-olds. At Del Mar Academy, each child is allowed the freedom to safely experience the excitement of learning at his/her own pace, by his/her own choice, and in an environment that appeals to his/her inner needs. “Our educational aim must be to aid the spontaneous development of the mental, spiritual and physical personality, and not to make of the child a cultured individual in the commonly accepted use of the term.”

Lower Primary Montessori (Grades 1-3)

The Lower Primary Montessori (Grades 1-3) offers a continuum that is built on the Casa Montessori experience. The integrated studies of the arts, geography, history, and the sciences become the core of the curriculum with the intention of engaging the imagination of the child in developing a global perspective.

The materials for language, grammar and math further expand and deepen the child’s understanding of the concepts in their movement towards abstraction. There is an emphasis on the six traits of writing, research with primary sources, grammar, and sentence analysis, spelling and oral expression/speech. In math, the materials work to help the child discover the correlation between arithmetic, geometry, and algebra.

Current research emphasizes the importance of not just feeding children countless amounts of information (which is easily accessible at the touch of a button), but instead, giving them the life skills needed to help prepare them for, and aid in, their success in the ever-changing future. Children today need to be knowledgeable in research, good citizenship, values, adaptability, compassion, time management, tolerance of differences and interpersonal relationships. Maria Montessori was ahead of her time. Almost 100 years ago, she believed that these skills should be a basis for every child’s learning and that every child should have the opportunity to learn these pertinent skills.

The Elementary Program provides a full expression of the Montessori principles of self-directed, individualized learning in a truly integrated curriculum. By building on the basic skills acquired in the Casa Program, the elementary child now transitions from concrete to abstract reasoning. The academic curriculum of Del Mar Academy’s Lower Elementary Program is highly enriched and challenging, focusing on three key elements: 1. mastery of the fundamental skills and basic core knowledge, 2. the ‘Great Lessons’, and 3. individually chosen research.



Upper Primary (4th-6th grade)

The Upper Primary (4th-6th grade) IB aligned Program builds on the Lower Primary Montessori experience. The interdisciplinary program includes Spanish and English Humanities (incorporating social studies, geography, civics, and language arts), Visual Arts, Music, STEAM, Outdoor-Physical Education, Oxford IB math, and a science sequence of Agroecology, Environmental Science and Earth Science. Project based and hands-on learning in both labs and field settings predominate the science and STEAM courses. The use of technology (Kindles for reading and research in 4th grade, and Laptops in 6th grade) and digital media are introduced, but still mixed in with effective paper-based multimedia and visual arts materials.

CREW advisory program begins in 4th grade with each grade level divided into small CREWS with a faculty CREW leader. CREW emphasizes team building, a sense of common purpose and shared ordeal, and social emotional, moral, and civic development.

The resources in the classroom further expand and deepen the child's understanding of abstract concepts. There is a continued emphasis on the six traits of writing, research with primary and secondary sources, grammar, and sentence analysis, spelling and oral expression/speech. The Oxford IB Math helps students discover the relationship between arithmetic, geometry and algebra concepts and apply them in everyday world contexts. In both Science and STEAM students perform experiments, gather data, interact with natural phenomena, and learn by doing and building things, the scientific process.

These constructivist teaching approaches, are supported by educational research that show the importance of not just feeding children countless amounts of information (which is easily accessible at the touch of a button), but instead, giving them experiences with which to construct knowledge, develop thinking skills and life skills, for success, good citizenship, and a moral life, in an ever-changing future.

The Upper Primary combines Montessori principles of self-direction and individualized learning are integrated in International Baccalaureate's (IB) Primary Years Program framework. By building on the basic skills acquired in the Lower Primary Programs and using the framework set forth by the IB, the Upper Primary child now transitions to a deeper level of abstract reasoning.

Middle School Overview

The 7th to 9th grade, Lower Secondary program is equivalent to middle school. Aligned to the IB MYP program, it serves as preparation for the pre-diploma 10th grade and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program in 11th and 12th grades. In the Lower Secondary, students enroll in five core courses: Science, Math, Steam, English and Spanish Humanities (or alternatively for novice learner, the second-language acquisition – ESL or SSL versions of these courses).



The core program is complemented by a diverse set of minor community service, creative arts and movement courses that currently include CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service projects) and CREW advisory, as well as art, music, and physical education.

The unique field-based field trip and EXPEDITIONS program goes full scale in Lower Secondary, providing opportunities for students to learn from Costa Rica's incredible geographic, geological, biological, and ecological diversity, and its rich historical and cultural heritage.

DMA's Secondary programs are fully accredited by the Costa Rican Ministry of Education.



High School Overview

The Upper Secondary program includes 10th grade, which is a Pre-Diploma curriculum, and the IB Diploma Program for grades 11th and 12th, with the possibility of completing a Bilingual Diploma.

The IB Diploma Program (IBDP) is a rigorous course of study for 11th and 12th graders, offered by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) and recognized by leading universities across the globe. The IBDP aims to provide a balanced and broad education by developing students who: have excellent breadth and depth of knowledge flourish physically, intellectually, emotionally, and ethically; study at least two languages; excel in traditional academic subjects; explore the nature of knowledge through the program's unique theory of knowledge course

Campus

Del Mar Academy is a green Montessori and International Baccalaureate school, nestled on 11 acres, surrounded by a bio-diverse tropical dry forest and minutes from some of the most beautiful beaches in Latin America. DMA is a school between the jungle and the sea!

"Nature is our classroom"

Taking advantage of Costa Rica's amazingly diverse ecosystems, Del Mar Academy offers Field Trips and overnight Expeditions to locations as close as the campus jungle, local mangrove, rocky intertidal and sandy beaches to as far off as San Jose, the Nicoya peninsula, the National Parks in the Central Volcano region, and the Caribbean coast.

As students grow older, the Field trips take them to distances farther away with overnight stays and challenging educational



components – Earth University, Osa Peninsula and Cerro Chirripó are some of the more challenging field learning trips the older children have in their future.

Right on their own campus the students can enjoy observing a colony of ants, tracking territorial iguanas, collecting species of aquatic organisms in streams and puddles, or observing the feeding and social behaviors of the resident packs of howler monkeys, and can even observe over three dozen species of birds that cohabit the campus.

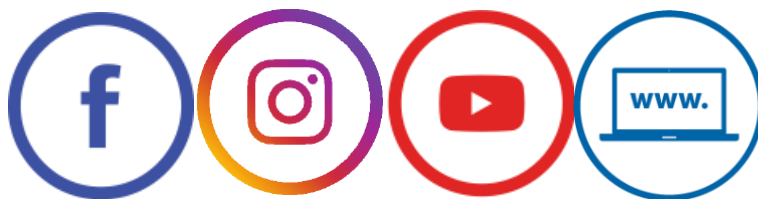
Del Mar Academy is surrounded by nature's classroom.

Location

Located in the Nicoya Peninsula, considered one of the 5 Blue Zones of the world, Nosara is a popular destination among surfers, yogis, families, and nature lovers. A place of tranquility and natural beauty, Nosara is an open multicultural community where concern for environmental sustainability is part of daily life.



Follow Del Mar Academy to Learn More



Fast Facts

Year Established	2007
Accreditation Agency	Ministry of Education of Costa Rica & IB School (11th & 12th grade)
School type	Independent, non-sectarian, co-educational day school
Language of Instruction	Spanish and English
Total Enrollment	260
Elementary School Enrollment	164
Middle School Enrollment	65
High School Enrollment	31
Average Class Size	Toddler: 12 students w/ one lead teacher & one assistant teacher. Casa & Lower Primary: 30 students w/ one lead teacher & one assistant teacher. Upper Primary (4th-6th grade): up to 24 students w/ one lead teacher. Secondary (7th-12th grade): up to 24 students w/ one lead teacher.
Student Age Range	18 months to 18 years old
Average % Home Country Nationals	30%
Student Nationalities	25+
Percentage of Annual Student Turnover	15-20%
Faculty to Student Ratio	1:8
Number of Faculty	40
Faculty Nationalities	5
Percentage of Annual Faculty Turnover	1%
Number of Board Trustees	10
Tuition (2022 - 2023)	USD\$7,952 - \$14,251
Annual Operating Budget	Roughly \$2,000,000

Application Instructions

Effective Date: July 1, 2022

Application Deadline: January 31, 2022

Dr. Beth Pfannl, ISS Vice President, Global Recruitment, will serve as the lead consultant for the Del Mar Academy Head of School search. She will be assisted by members of the ISS Administrative Search Team.

Instructions for Former Candidates

If you have a previous account with ISS-Schrole Advantage or the ISS Admin Search Team and have not yet logged into ISS EDUrecruit here is the [link](#) to get started! You will need to use the email address associated with your ISS-Schrole Advantage account or your ISS Administrative Search account to access your new ISS EDUrecruit account. You will be prompted to update your password and accept the Terms and Conditions.

Once you are logged in, please select the following link to apply to this position:

[Del Mar Academy Head of School](#)

Instructions for New Candidates

If you are a new candidate to ISS, here is the [link](#) to register for an account so you can apply to this search. You are not required to pay for your profile in order to apply for this position. However, if you are interested in the \$75 candidate membership option, you can upgrade to a full membership at any time.

Once you are logged in, please select the following link to apply to this position:

[Del Mar Academy Head of School](#)

Instructions for ISS EDUrecruit Candidates

If you already have an ISS EDUrecruit account, [here](#) is the link to login.

Once you are logged in, please select the following link to apply to this position:

[Del Mar Academy Head of School](#)

ISS has had a longstanding commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. One step in our ongoing journey toward more antiracist behavior and outcomes is the removal of photos from candidate profiles. As such, we request the resume and cover letter you upload to your candidate profile not include your photo. *

Our considerations:

- International Schools Services (ISS) is strongly committed to all aspects of child protection and safeguarding. Applications will be thoroughly and rigorously screened.
- International Schools Services (ISS) reserves the right to withdraw an applicant's candidacy if

supervisory referees are not provided.

- International Schools Services (ISS) reserves the right to withdraw an applicant's candidacy at any time should information be forthcoming that may suggest the candidate is not suitable to progress in the process.
- Hiring is contingent upon a successful background check.

Applicants are asked to apply as early as possible, as International Schools Services (ISS) and Del Mar Academy reserve the right to close the selection process at any time.

Be sure to use our new contact details if you require any assistance via this handy [form](#) – and remember, we are here to help you with any questions.

* ISS is committed to “Making a World of Difference” in the international education community. We are experiencing a catalytic moment in history and ISS has committed to addressing the systemic prejudices and biases in ourselves, in schools, and in organizations around the world. You can read more about our commitments [here](#).