SILICON VALLEY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
Palo Alto and Menlo Park, California

HEAD OF SCHOOL
Start Date: July 2022
siliconvalleyinternational.org
Mission

We educate students through a rigorous and dynamic bilingual program, inspiring them to develop an inquisitive and responsible international mindset.

OVERVIEW

Combine dynamic bilingual language and cultural immersion, an inquiry-based approach to education, and social-emotional learning, and you get the one-of-a-kind international education offered by Silicon Valley International School (INTL). INTL is an independent, co-educational, non-sectarian bilingual day school with Chinese, French, and German programs spanning preschool through grade 12.

At INTL, bilingualism means so much more than speaking another language. By being immersed every day in an international, multicultural community, students develop cross-cultural understanding, grasp diverse perspectives, and become world citizens. With two campuses, the school embraces its location in Silicon Valley and aspires to develop an innovative mindset in all students through a computer science curriculum, tech integration, design thinking, and maker-education initiatives.

In January 2021, Alto International School merged with Silicon Valley International School, making INTL the premier Preschool through 12th grade IB World School on the West Coast. INTL offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme, Middle Years Programme, and Diploma Programme, as well as an English track with a world language component for High School. This unique environment cultivates international leadership where young world citizens discover how to lead lives worthy of their boundless futures. Students at INTL learn more than just an additional language; they learn how to become agile, responsive, global thinkers.

With an exciting future ahead, INTL seeks a Head of School to lead a forward-thinking community with an unwavering commitment to language immersion and an international mindset. Currently, former longtime Head of School Philippe Dietz is serving as Interim Head of School for the 2021-2022 academic year.
THE SCHOOL AND ITS HISTORY

INTL represents the merger of two schools, each with distinctive histories and cultures.

In 1979, the Peninsula French American School was founded by Charlotte de Géry as a French immersion school. Madame de Géry brought an unwavering vision for a language immersion school that educates bilingual and bicultural individuals and is still embodied in the school today.

In 1996, a bilingual Chinese program and an international middle school were added, and the school changed its name to the International School of the Peninsula. In 2020, the school became Silicon Valley International School (INTL), better reflecting its location and growth into an international school with a global reputation and reach.

In 1988, German-American International School in Menlo Park was founded as the first German school on the West Coast. Long affiliated with the International Baccalaureate, German-American International School received the Primary Years Programme accreditation in 2007, Middle Years Programme in 2014, and Diploma Programme in 2018. As a result, the teachers at German-American have developed deep expertise in delivering German language immersion in the preschool and elementary years and the IB program across all grades. German-American changed its name to Alto International School in 2016.

In January 2021, Alto International School merged with Silicon Valley International School, creating one school on two campuses and continuing a tradition of adapting and innovating to educate global citizens.

Fast Facts
- Founded: 1979
- Founding year of High School: 2016
- Merged with Alto International School: 2021
- Total students: 687
- Total faculty: 120
- Faculty with advanced degrees: 76%
- Total nationalities represented: 30+
- Average class size: 17
- Financial aid awarded annually: $1.3 million
- Students receiving financial aid: 14%
- Value of endowment: $8.6 million
Students at INTL very much reflect what is needed in today’s world: individuals with an international mindset who are compassionate, independent, knowledgeable, balanced, and open-minded. INTL strives to empower students, alumni, faculty, staff, and parents to understand and value differences and celebrate diversity. Through an environment of respect, the INTL community is committed to inclusion, acceptance, and belonging, so all may live in a better and peaceful world.

The Early Years Center (Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten), Middle School, and High School are located on the Willows Campus in Menlo Park. Kindergarten through grade 5 are housed at the Cohn Campus (main campus) in Palo Alto.

INTL is authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) and is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS), and the Ministère de l’Éducation Nationale.

**ACADEMICS**

Language immersion is the emphasis at INTL. The rigor of language immersion, combined with content acquisition has enormous cognitive benefits and can raise achievement in other subjects. Learning multiple languages increases a child’s intelligence, the ability to understand and relate to other cultures, as well as the ability for a child to understand the world through a global perspective. Empowered with a second language and appreciation for cultural diversity, students at INTL are ready to embrace the multicultural world they will be running one day.
An INTL education cultivates students’ creativity, critical thinking, physical health, emotional well-being, and cultural literacy through a rich and multi-layered curriculum coupled with dynamic activities and experiences. Faculty embrace design thinking and the Maker Education movement as a new way of thinking about teaching and learning. On both campuses, students are presented with real-world problems and given a safe space where they use an array of tools and materials to collaboratively develop and build concrete solutions. They learn to communicate and collaborate as a group and to respect each other’s ideas as they work towards a common goal, while also developing concrete skills.

INTL’s educational technology initiatives provide students with leading-edge tools while teaching skills essential in our increasingly interconnected world. Preschool and 1st grade students use shared classroom iPads. Students in 2nd through 5th grades have a 1:1 iPad program and the Middle and High Schools utilize a 1:1 laptop program. In addition to technology integration across the curriculum, INTL has a fully developed computer science curriculum for students in grades 1-8. Tailored to meet the learning needs of each grade, the curriculum is driven by a digital literacy and citizenship thread which teaches complex problem-solving skills that are easily transferrable to other disciplines.

Early Years Center (Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten)
The Early Year Center sets a strong foundation for bilingual immersion, discovery, and innovation. It is the ideal start for young students to thrive in an international environment and build academic success through the elementary school years and beyond. Preschool students spend approximately 80% of their time in their target language. Using the Primary Years Programme, the Early Years Center cultivates foundational academic skills through an inquiry-based framework that promotes discovery and creativity. Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten are centered around learning how to be a member of a school community and express one’s thoughts and feelings.
Elementary (Kindergarten-Grade 5)
INTL’s exceptional international and bilingual Elementary program lays the foundation for students to become self-directed and independent lifelong learners, engaged global citizens, and inquirers with the capacity to see issues and ideas from multiple perspectives. Students in Elementary learn to explore, discover, and create through a series of rich and varied learning experiences built around engaging bilingual curricula. Inquiry-based learning experiences delivered through the Primary Years Programme’s framework of Units of Inquiry are based on global themes that provide conceptual connections across subject areas.

Middle School (Grades 6-8)
The Middle School program at INTL is founded on a student-centered approach to teaching and learning. It provides a rigorous bilingual academic curriculum that blends the best practices of the U.S education system with the high standards of the French national curriculum and curricula influenced by China, France, Taiwan, and Germany. The International Baccalaureate provides the framework for the Middle Years and Diploma Programme and is the underpinning of the scope and sequences of every course offered in Middle School. Courses are divided into two to three units within a semester, allowing students to explore a topic in depth.
High School (Grades 8-12)
High School students at INTL engage in meaningful learning and design thinking that goes beyond traditional core curricula. They are provided with the unique opportunity to grow their self-awareness and understanding of the world around them. Using a flexible learning schedule, INTL's high school offers opportunities for students who are already fluent in a second language as well as for those who would like to learn a new language. While most high school classes are instructed in English, students who are fluent in Chinese, French, or German can continue their language studies and graduate with a bilingual IB Diploma. Students who are new to the high school program have the possibility to take entry-level language acquisition classes in Chinese, French, German, or Spanish. An intern- and mentorship program is available for juniors and seniors.

College counseling is an important part of INTL's high school program. Students in grade 10 and up and their parents/guardians meet with their college counselor, who provides guidance and advice on course selection, extracurricular, testing, college visits, and much more. The INTL diploma, in combination with the IB Diploma, allows INTL students to attend their top choice universities anywhere in the world.

College Acceptances
Members of the class of 2021 were accepted into the following colleges and universities:

Austin College
Beloit College
Bucknell College
Centre College
Chapman University
De Anza College*
Earlham College
Emory And Henry College
Guilford College
Kalamazoo College
Knox College*
Lawrence College
Merrimack College
New College of Florida
Northeastern University
Northwestern University*
Ohio Wesleyan College
Purdue University
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Rochester Institute of Technology
SBS – Swiss Business School
Seattle University
The College of Wooster
University Of California Davis
University Of California Riverside
University Of California Santa Cruz
University Of Colorado Boulder
University Of Lynchburg
WHU – Otto Beisheim School of Management*

* indicates matriculation by an INTL student
THE ARTS

At INTL, artistic expression is considered another “language,” another way for students to communicate. INTL takes great pride in its arts program, including visual arts, music, and performing arts. Beginning in first grade, the arts are taught almost exclusively by a specialist teacher. Arts teachers collaborate with the classroom teachers to incorporate the arts into the curriculum wherever possible, as well as take an inquiry-based approach to the arts overall. Students collaborate, create, and perform throughout the year, and their work is often highlighted in community events.

The visual arts program in Elementary and Middle School, students experiment with and develop artistic dexterity through the use of a variety of techniques and materials while growing in confidence as an artist. All High School students take visual art classes in grades 9 and 10. In the IB Diploma Programme in grades 11 and 12, INTL offers high level and standard level visual art. Students are encouraged to challenge their own creative and cultural expectations and boundaries as they learn skills in problem-solving and divergent thinking.

Music and drama are designed to provide students with an understanding of theory, history, exposure to genres, as well as opportunities to perform. In Elementary and Middle School, in addition to classes taught by a specialist, dramatic and dance activities are incorporated into language instruction to reinforce language skills and knowledge of historical periods and cultures. Middle and High School students can participate in the after-school drama club, which allows them a chance to be part of a large-scale production. Music is taught by a specialist, beginning in first grade. Students in grades 4 and up have the opportunity to participate in the all-school band program that offers beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels.
PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ATHLETICS

Physical education is an essential part of a child’s education. Engaging in physical activity both individually and in a team setting helps students to build a healthy lifestyle, develop character, improve communication skills, and do better in class. INTL has dedicated physical education specialist teachers who provide an integrated program for students. For High School students, INTL offers a physical education program that meets both the IB and the California requirements. Students are required to participate in sports either in or out of school for at least a portion of each school year.

The school offers a growing competitive sports program. Currently, Middle and High School students participate in girls’ volleyball, basketball, cross country running, soccer, and tennis. INTL has a competitive soccer/futsal (indoor soccer) team for students in grades 4-8, and a competitive basketball team for students in grades 1-8.
STUDENT LIFE

Silicon Valley International School strives to create a nurturing environment in which students are encouraged to reach their full potential. Guided by the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile, social-emotional learning is woven into the fabric of the curriculum as well as taught explicitly. From a shared period of “Harmonization” in the lower grades where teachers teach social-emotional tools, to Advisory groups in Middle School and advisors in High School, INTL is committed to helping students become resilient and emotionally intelligent. As an added resource, INTL’s Learning Support and Diversity Specialists provide support to faculty and staff and ensures thoughtful social-emotional learning integration into the program.

While paused due to the pandemic, INTL’s experiential education and language exchange program emphasizes collaboration, community involvement, and a sense of adventure. Upper Elementary and Middle School students have the opportunity to participate in unique experiences that are thoughtfully aligned with their curriculum and help to solidify their language skills as well as expand their cultural understanding. Among many opportunities, 4th grade students might travel to China to live with host families and attend a local school, or Middle School students might do the same while visiting a suburb of Paris. In High School, service and language trips are often part of a student’s Community, Action, and Service (CAS) goals, an experiential learning component of the IB Diploma Programme in grades 11 and 12. Students are also able to spend a semester abroad through Round Square, an internationally diverse network of 200 like-minded schools in 50 countries on six continents that connect and collaborate to offer world-class programs and experiences to further develop their language skills.

High School students are also actively involved in the Student Council, the school newspaper, Model United Nations, and the Duke of Edinburgh International Award. They have a wide range of interests that they pursue outside of school, from competitive sports teams and horseback riding to musical instruments, youth sports coaching, and community service.
Palo Alto and Menlo Park, located just over 30 miles south of San Francisco, are vibrant neighborhoods in the San Francisco Bay Area in Northern California. Both are in the heart of the San Francisco Bay Area and Silicon Valley, whose major employers include Apple, Facebook, Genentech, Google, Oracle America, SLAC (Stanford Linear Accelerator), SRI International (Stanford Research Institute), and many more giants in tech, biotech, and research.

Not surprisingly, residents of both Palo Alto and Menlo Park tend to be highly educated, politically engaged, and culturally sophisticated. Proximity to Stanford University, located in Palo Alto, contributes to the cities’ cultural and educational offerings. University Avenue runs through Palo Alto’s downtown area and features a number of casual and upscale dining options as well as popular chain retail shops and independent boutiques. The Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford features a mix of classic and contemporary art, as well as an outdoor sculpture garden home to Rodin bronzes. Similarly, Menlo Park’s downtown is set in a pleasant, pedestrian-friendly atmosphere with unique shops and restaurants.
Spending time outside is easy. There are over a dozen parks throughout Menlo Park offering picnic areas, off-leash areas for dogs, walking paths, playgrounds, tennis courts, skateboard zones, and more. In Palo Alto, one third of its total area is protected open space. The Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve offers 24 miles of trails as well as an education center and working farm. Castle Rock State Park features 32 miles of hiking and horseback riding trails and is popular for its redwoods and other regional trees. To the east are the Marshland Trails of Baylands Nature Preserve, home to an additional 15 miles of trails and a unique mix of tidal and freshwater habitats. The Shoreline Amphitheater is a different sort of outdoor attraction; this large, 22,000-seat music venue hosts outdoor festivals each year and is a popular site for big-name acts. And the Bay Area is only a few hours away from Big Sur, Lake Tahoe, and Yosemite.

Both cities’ positioning in the Bay Area is highly advantageous to residents, with easy access to major interstates and highways that take you into the heart of San Francisco as well as San Jose, just 14 miles to the south. Its world-class reputation as a hub for the world’s tech giants; expansive nature preserves; and a vast array of cultural and community offerings make Palo Alto and Menlo Park ideal places for young people, working professionals, and families alike.
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The challenges and opportunities for the Next Head of School include:

**Unify two school cultures into one.** The International School of the Peninsula recently merged with the Alto School to form a new school: Silicon Valley International School. The merger creates the opportunity for Silicon Valley International School to establish itself as the premier preschool through 12th grade IB World School on the West Coast. The next Head of School will remain sensitive to the process of change experienced by all constituents as students, parents, faculty, and staff become one community sharing two campuses and four languages.

**Strengthen community.** The next Head of School will promote a cohesive and welcoming community by being present and engaged with all stakeholders, and by sharing stories and celebrating accomplishments across divisions. At the same time, the next leader will create opportunities to reconcile differences in program and processes and address assumptions that have come to light during the merger to create agreed-upon norms and a shared sense of purpose. The Head of School will support the community in negotiating change management through careful listening, relationship building, and respectful acknowledgement of institutional histories.

**Shape and articulate a cohesive vision.** INTL constituents value language immersion, an international mindset, respect for cultural differences, and a rigorous, inquiry-based academic program. An IB school as of 2018, INTL has incorporated language and cultural immersion into the IB framework. Academic excellence is a norm, including strong math and STEM curricula, and continuous curriculum improvements in all subject areas. The merger has revealed the need for consensus around a definition of bilingualism and immersion to clarify the importance of cultural fluency as distinct from language acquisition. The next Head of School will clarify and communicate a shared vision, including the role of language acquisition and language and cultural immersion at different stages of a child’s development and education.
An integral part of this vision will be building the High School program, in its nascence with 31 students currently enrolled. Recognizing the great potential in building the profile and programs of the only preschool through 12th grade IB World School on the West Coast, the next Head of School will lead the work of developing the vision, curriculum, and culture of the grades 9-12 division as well as marketing the new program. Points of entry and support for language acquisition for new students will need to be addressed, as will the college outcome expectations of Silicon Valley parents.

Formalize communications, policies, and procedures. With a merger, the pandemic, a leadership transition, the INTL community desires clear, accurate, relevant, and timely communications from the school. The school needs to enhance existing systems and processes, documenting institutional memory and turning assumed norms into policies and procedures.

Recruit, develop, and retain mission-aligned faculty. Many of INTL’s faculty and staff have been with the school for years and love the cultural diversity and global perspectives of their colleagues and INTL families. At the same time, a new cohort has joined the school as a result of the merger, retirements, and other transitions. The next Head of School will need a strategic framework to recruit and retain faculty, address the high cost of living in the Bay Area, and provide opportunities for professional growth over the full arc of a teacher’s career. In addition, many members of the administrative team are new to their positions and will benefit from mentoring, support, and clearly articulated roles and responsibilities. The next Head of School will encourage and support teamwork across the school, emphasizing collaboration in pursuit of a shared institutional vision. Through word and deed, the Head of School will inspire a strong work ethic, trust, and a sense of agency.
Ensure financial sustainability. Historically, INTL has managed its finances prudently. In collaboration with the Board, the next Head of School will strategically align fiscal resources to support the mission and vision. Seeking avenues for raising additional resources to create opportunities for students and staff and managing facilities to provide for an optimal learning environment will be priorities, as will developing program and growing enrollment in the High School. Ideas to be explored include moving to a new site to enable the preschool through 12th grade community to be in one location or enhancing the facilities at the current sites.

**DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS**

INTL is a culturally diverse, globally minded, aspirational community. As such, it seeks an experienced, culturally competent, bilingual, and visionary leader; a flexible and strategic thinker; a collaborative community and team builder; and a skillful manager who can mobilize and direct the passion and commitment of the school community. Successful candidates will have a background and skills that include most or all of the following:

- An open, culturally competent, and collaborative leadership style that genuinely invites and respects the perspectives and views of others and builds a culture of trust.
- A bilingual and bicultural learner who has experienced the cognitive benefits of learning languages and can advance the development of intercultural competencies in the school.
- Prior experience leading diverse communities, skill in building inclusive communities, and the ability to respectfully navigate diverse cultural and social situations.
- An ability to calmly make difficult decisions when necessary, communicating decisions with transparency and sharing the logic behind decisions as appropriate.
- An ability to listen and connect authentically and effectively with faculty members, administrators, parents, students, community members, alumni, and the Board of Directors so that these groups are appropriately involved and informed of school events, potential issues, key decisions, and needs.
- Experience in recruiting, retaining, supporting, and developing the growth and evolution of talented faculty, staff, and administration.
- Deep pedagogical knowledge and experience and the ability to lead with a mission and vision that focuses on the desired results for student learning.
- Ability to manage financial resources thoughtfully and intentionally with a commitment to serving as a responsible steward of financial and human resources alike.
- Facility for building relationships and inspiring financial support and a commitment to fostering a culture of philanthropy.
- A palpable enjoyment at being an active and visible presence in the life of the school as a foundation for strong, supportive relationships with all community members.

**Personal Characteristics**

The next Head will be a person with a passion for language and cultural immersion, academic excellence, cross-cultural collaboration, and inquiry. Strong candidates will embody optimism and a growth mindset while being empathetic, energetic, and confident, with strong emotional intelligence, integrity, and excellent listening and communication skills. He/she/they will prioritize a sense of belonging among a community of diverse individuals to sustain a vibrant learning community.
TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will 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, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without candidate’s permission) to:

Deb Welch
Senior Consultant
deb.welch@carneysandoe.com

Karen Whitaker
Senior Consultant
karen.whitaker@carneysandoe.com

Estimated Search Timeline
Sept.-Oct. Candidate recruitment and engagement
End of Oct. Candidate application materials due
Early Nov. Search Update
Nov./Dec. Semifinalist Interviews
Dec./Jan. Finalist Interviews
Jan./Feb. Appointment