



American International School of Zagreb

Accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
Authorized by the International Baccalaureate

American International School of Zagreb - Lower School Principal Search **Start Date: August 1, 2025**



Our Vision

Experiencing the Future, Today.

Our Mission

We develop skills and character for futures rich with promise.

Introduction

Established in 1966, the American International School of Zagreb (AISZ) stands as a beacon of educational excellence in the region. As an independent, coeducational, non-profit institution, AISZ proudly supports the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IBDP) curriculum, the Honors Diploma, and the American High School Diploma in the final academic years. All our curricula from Early Childhood to Year 12 are standards-based and inquiry-driven, stimulating the minds of over 350 students hailing from diverse backgrounds. With a vibrant community comprising more than 40 nationalities, AISZ offers a nurturing environment for learners aged 3 to 18 years, fostering a truly global perspective.



Recognized as the oldest and largest international school in Zagreb, AISZ holds a special distinction as a U.S. Department of State Assisted School. In 2018, AISZ opened an award-winning, environmentally sustaining campus situated in the picturesque area of Bundek Parkland, just five kilometers away from central Zagreb.



AISZ boasts prestigious accreditation from the Middle States Association Commission on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA), a testament to its unwavering commitment to academic excellence and institutional integrity. In 2023, MSA recognized AISZ as a Program of Distinction for World Languages. In Spring 2024, AISZ undertook IBDP re-authorization, and by December 2024, AISZ successfully completed its most recent mid-term accreditation, reaffirming its adherence to rigorous standards of quality and continuous improvement.

Additionally, AISZ is an active member of the Central & Eastern European Schools Association (CEESA), a dynamic network fostering collaboration and synergy among member schools.

More information is on the school [website](#).

The AISZ Learning Ecosystem and Strategic Plan

The American International School of Zagreb is a mission and vision-driven school. We are a Professional Learning Community where our success is achieved through collaboration and interdependence; we work together as a community to achieve the best results possible for all our students. The AISZ Learning Ecosystem describes the foundational tenets of our educational program and provides a roadmap for our journey to enhanced success, confident in our purpose of nurturing each child's growth and learning. The Strategic Goals rest on the framework of our ecosystem. More information about the AISZ Strategic Plan is on the school [website](#).

Faculty and Staff

Overall, AISZ is led by the School Leadership Team consisting of the Director, Upper and Lower School Principals, Middle School Associate Principal, Business and Operations Manager, Human Resource Manager, Admissions Manager and IT Manager.

Academic Leadership and Strategic Development is led and overseen by the Director, the Principals, the IBDP Coordinator and the Curriculum leads from Lower School and Upper School Curriculum. Middle-Level leadership differs in design in Upper School and Lower School but is based upon distributed leadership models.

Over 60 faculty, and more than 40 support staff support the learning of 350 students from nearly **25** nations. Currently, the faculty consists of personnel from **13** nations.



About the Lower School at AISZ

In the Lower School at AISZ, children begin their journey toward becoming joyful, lifelong learners. Our 28 talented faculty and staff members are passionate about creating authentic learning experiences that are child-centered and personalized for the approximately 120 students in their care. Guided by what research tells us are best practices, we prepare Lower School students through a rich, inquiry-based program from PreKindergarten for three- and four-year-olds through Grade 5. Teachers guide student learning through dynamic, experiential lessons, and they empower students to problem-solve across subject areas.

The Lower School curriculum is standards-based and delivered using best instructional practices with research-based resources. At the foundation of our program are the core academic areas of literacy (reading, writing, and phonics), mathematics, science, and social studies. We believe that art, counseling, music, and physical education are also vital to educating the whole child. We

embrace the well-known benefits of language learning by providing instruction in Croatian and a choice of French or German. We also believe in the power of inculcating in our children a sense of responsibility for the world around them through our service learning program. To support their learning, students have access to an extensive library collection and a range of technology devices.

The early childhood program begins with our PreKindergarten program for children who are three- and four-years-old. Teachers design learning experiences inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, emphasizing children's natural curiosity and their desire to learn. Providing the foundation for the PreK curriculum are the New York State Prekindergarten Early Learning Standards that articulate the expectations of what children can learn and do as a result of instruction that is personalized, differentiated, culturally and linguistically relevant, and context-based.

As the foundation for learning in K to Grade 5, the curriculum is grounded in standards frameworks provided by groups such as American Education Reaches Out (AERO), Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Standards, the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS), and the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) to guide curriculum development. The Lower School curriculum is documented using the Atlas curriculum management system.

We recognize that academic, social, and emotional growth are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Traction in a subject area takes place when children trust their teachers and classmates and when they feel free to take intellectual and social risks. Likewise, the greatest social and emotional growth takes place when children feel intellectually capable and engaged by a rich and challenging curriculum. We follow the Responsive Classroom approach to foster safe, joyful, and engaging classrooms. In addition, our counselor leads weekly lessons in the homerooms using such resources as CharacterStrong, an evidence-based, multi-tiered program that supports whole child success, and the Second Step child protection unit.

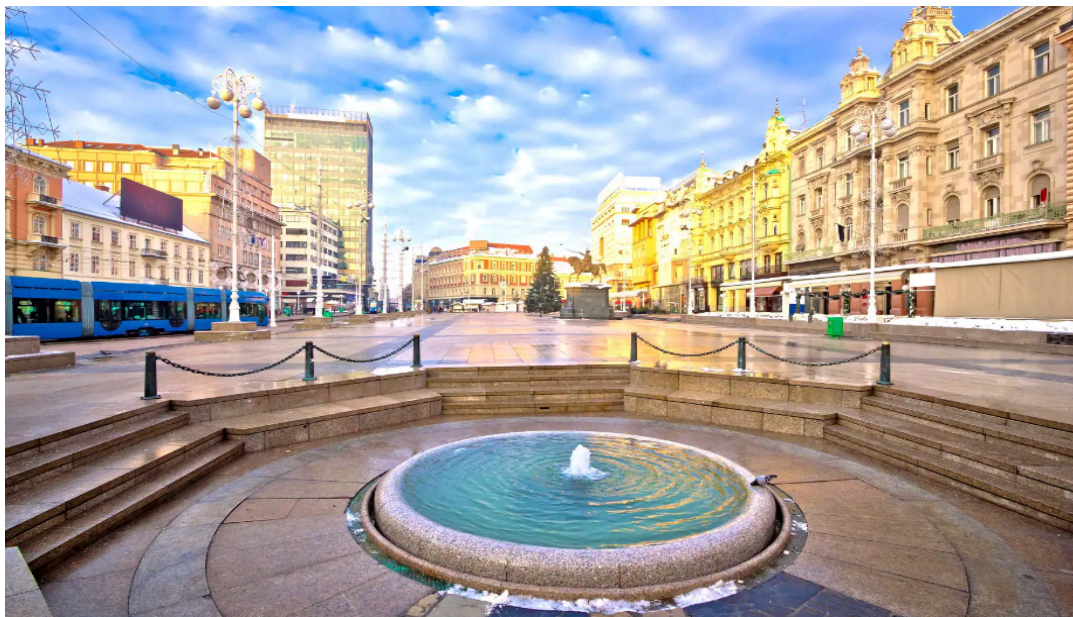
In the AISZ Lower School, we know that caring for the academic, emotional, moral, and physical learning needs of a group of children is complex. For this reason, we are committed to a collaborative and holistic team approach to problem identification and the design of interventions that will enhance student learning. The broad areas of support provided include English as an additional language (EAL), learning support, and counseling. In addition, we utilize a multi-tiered system of support to allow us to identify struggling students early and intervene quickly. In the Lower School, targeted intervention time is called Tip Top Time, and it is built into the schedule every day.



About Croatia

A small country with a rich history, Croatia awes visitors with its wide variety of culture, cuisine, and natural and architectural wonders. Croatia is both a Central European and Mediterranean country, bordering Slovenia in the west, Hungary in the north, Serbia in the east, and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the south. Part of the country lies on the coast, while the other rests in continental Europe, creating a dichotomous path of discovery that engages all the senses. Travelers to Croatia can explore its 1,185 islands (only 48 of which are permanently inhabited), taste the freshness of locally grown organic produce, tour privately owned wineries, marvel at the breathtaking colors of its famous lakes, and succumb to the seductions of the region's converging cultures. Croatia unfolds a unique mix of Italian, Germanic, and Slavic influences, indulging visitors to discover a rare gem in the world of travel.

As the capital of Croatia, Zagreb has many historical sights, museums, and beautiful green oases that would delight any visitor. It is one of the oldest and safest Central European cities and a perfect combination of rich heritage, lively rhythm of street life, and a multitude of attractions that will awaken all your senses. With its extensive public transport network, hop on – hop off, cycling, and segway tours, Zagreb is a city offering a variety of opportunities for exploration.



Position Overview

Position Description

The Lower School Principal is the learning leader of the school from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 5, and a member of the school's Leadership Team, reporting directly to the School Director, Dr. Darin Fahrney. Collaborating with the Lower School Principal and Director on the leadership team are the Upper School Principal, Middle School Associate Principal, Business and Operations Manager, Human Resource Manager, Admissions Manager and IT Manager.

The Lower School Principal is charged with managing the daily operations of the Lower School division, providing leadership in assessment and the development of the AISZ learning ecosystem. The Lower School Principal is responsible for developing a collaborative, innovative, and nurturing environment for staff and students; promoting respect among staff students and parents; assigning, scheduling, supervising, and evaluating school faculty and staff; and representing the school positively within the broader school community. The successful candidate must be energetic, well-versed in innovative educational pedagogy, experienced in teaching, and leading instruction in an accredited international school. Wide experience in leading and coaching inquiry education supported by life-worthy standards is a requirement. The candidate must be able to inspire confidence in his or her faculty, and be fulfilled by working closely with students in their activities and day-to-day life at AISZ.

The successful candidate will personify and model the AISZ Learning Principles and teacher / learner dispositions.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Leadership for Learning

- Champions the implementation of the strategic plan, the development of the AISZ Learning Ecosystem, and other Lower School initiatives
- Leads divisional efforts to establish an MTSS system and create a Professional Learning Community (PLC) at AISZ
- Directs the Lower School curricular objectives and professional learning goals
- Establishes and assesses yearly Lower School goals
- Represents the Lower School on the Leadership Team
- Knows, understands, and coaches life-worthy inquiry learning supported by a standards-based framework and is able to assist in the implementation of the curriculum in collaboration with the Upper School Principal
- Manages change and encourages innovation, communication, and healthy risk-taking
- Embodies our AISZ character values of being respectful, responsible, resilient, and kind

2. Staff Development and Professional Learning

- Collaborates with teachers on individual goals and provides timely and thorough analysis of teacher performance
- Recruits, hires, evaluates, and develops high-quality, committed faculty and staff
- Establishes Lower School professional development needs within the strategic plan and whole-school goals
- Willingness to present at professional conferences to contribute to professional discourse and share the AISZ story

3. Communication

- Communicates effectively with the divisional staff to ensure alignment and collaborative decision-making
- Liaises between the Director, Leadership Team, parents, staff, students, and School Board as appropriate
- Maintains regular written communication with faculty, parents, and students
- Articulates the Lower School program vision and initiatives through various venues across the community
- Understands and effectively articulates the school's values, strategic plan, board policy, and established procedures
- Oversees procedures for reporting student progress to students and parents on a regular basis

4. Management

- Plans and implements a master schedule that ensures that each student receives the full benefit of the program
- Responsible for effective development and management of divisional budgets and procurement
- Plans, organizes, and oversees the development and implementation of elementary school emergency procedures in coordination with the other divisions, the School Director, and the Health and Business and Operations Manager

Skills and Attributes Desired

- Background and conviction in establishing Multi-tiered systems of support and PLC culture in schools
- A collaborative, dynamic, and self-motivated individual with a passion for providing the best possible educational experience to elementary school students
- Proven multicultural awareness and sensitivity in meeting the needs of a diverse student body
- Collegial, open, forward-looking, and proactive, and an advocate for Lower School students, faculty, staff, and families
- An individual who enjoys interacting with students and playing a vital part in their lives
- Communicates effectively in written and oral formats
- Well-versed in technology and its use within the classroom for effective student learning
- A collaborative and supportive approach to problem solving
- Innovative and creative, models the values and direction of the school
- Demonstrates success in people development, team-building, and leadership
- Unquestionable personal integrity and professional ethics
- Sense of humor

Desired Qualifications

- Successful experience as Principal or Associate Principal or academic leadership in an international elementary school setting
- Minimum of MA or MEd or equivalent in Educational Administration / Policy, Educational Leadership, Certificate of International School Leadership (PTC) or similar field
- Demonstrated excellence in leading people, managing processes, and improving learning with high levels of emotional intelligence
- Exceptional knowledge of best practices in contemporary constructivist curriculum design, assessment, pedagogy, and data-driven decision-making (e.g. PYP, AERO/Common Core standards, Reggio Emilia)
- Five or more years of successful teaching at the elementary school level in accredited international school context

Compensation

AISZ offers a highly competitive compensation package for this position in a country with no income tax.

Application Instructions

Candidates should send the information listed below as a single PDF file of 5 MB or less in size attached to an email:

- A letter of application, explaining the strengths as a candidate and why the applicant is interested in the Lower School Principal position at the American International School of Zagreb.
- A one-to-two-page statement of educational philosophy
- A current résumé not to exceed two pages addressing the preferred qualifications.
- A one-page list of at least four references with phone numbers and e-mail addresses. (At least three of the four references must have directly supervised the applicant, and one referee must be a current supervisor. The remaining referee may be a peer or educator that the applicant has supervised.)
- A maximum of three letters of reference (scanned at low resolution) that may already be in your possession is not a requirement but may be included in the application.

Applications should be sent to the email address: employment@aisz.hr.

Please note again that applications must be sent as a single PDF file not to exceed 5 MB.

Candidates wishing to learn more about the American International School of Zagreb should visit the school's website at <https://www.aisz.hr/>

The closing date for applications is **October 20, 2024**. Candidates are encouraged to apply early as interviews will occur on a rolling basis. AISZ reserves the right to end the search when the ideal candidate has been found.