

Position and Candidate Specification

SHANGHAI AMERICAN SCHOOL

Shanghai American School Head of School

PREPARED BY:

Mary Gorman
Hypatia Kingsley
Sherry Ding
Ernest Jiang

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Shanghai American School is an international school with a comprehensive, American standards-based curriculum. Established in 1912 and one of the oldest international schools in the world, Shanghai American School continues a long legacy of educational excellence serving Shanghai's international community with an extraordinary array of educational programs and extracurricular activities. Existing educational opportunities are constantly enhanced in this self-reflective culture. Shanghai American School offers its students a comprehensive educational program from pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 on two state of the art campuses. Educational technology, libraries, laboratories, playing fields, and other learning resources are among the best in the world. Located on both sides of the sprawling city of Shanghai, the two Shanghai American School campuses serve as educational and cultural centers for much of the international community in Shanghai.

The mission of Shanghai American School is to inspire in all students:

- A lifelong passion for learning
- A commitment to act with integrity and compassion
- The courage to live their dreams

Shanghai American School's Core Values:

- Embracing diversity enriches individuals and communities
- Acts of compassion and generosity of spirit create a better world
- When individuals take responsibility for their own decisions, they are empowered to make positive impact
- Each individual has intrinsic value and the potential to contribute to society
- Collaboration is key to overcoming complex challenges and achieving common goals
- Integrity is the foundation of enduring relationships, quality institutions, and well-functioning communities
- As global citizens we have a duty to care for the earth and its inhabitants to ensure the well-being of humankind
- Creativity, critical thinking, and a lifelong passion for learning are essential to personal fulfillment and to meet the challenges of the future

Shanghai American School has a long history in China's largest metropolis. When it first opened its doors, the school boasted 38 students. By the 1920s, Shanghai American School had attracted over 500 students. Students came from expatriate missionary, diplomatic, and business families. Many of them went on to distinguished careers in academia, research, medicine, or diplomatic work. Shanghai American School closed in 1950, following the change of government in China.

The school reopened in 1980 on the grounds of the U.S. Consulate General. A growing foreign community and expanding foreign business activity quickly drew increased enrollment, prompting the school to move several times before landing at its two current locations - one in the western suburbs of Shanghai (the Puxi campus), and the other on the east side of Shanghai (the Pudong campus). The school's growth has been tremendous: from approximately 20 students when it reopened in 1980 to close to 2,700 students at present.

The Pudong and Puxi campuses have evolved into unique academic institutions. Both boast fine new facilities specifically built to support a comprehensive and carefully coordinated curriculum. Classrooms; science labs; facilities for drama, art, and music; and gymnasiums and sports fields are all state of the art, and comparable to the best any international school has to offer. Academic programs have kept pace with enrollment, both in scope and sophistication. In recent years, Shanghai American School has invested heavily in extensive technology resources and enhanced the way these resources are used to support student learning. The school also has expanded the use of digital media resources in all three divisions.

While each campus has unique features, they share the same school mission, core values, philosophy of education, and are led by one Head of School and one Board of Trustees.

In 2011, FORBES magazine recognized the focus on innovation at Shanghai American School and around the rest of the country and declared "Made in China" has become "Invented in China." Across Shanghai alone, over 200,000 start-ups have been launched. This drive towards innovation is apparent in Shanghai American School as well, as seen by tech-forward learning spaces such as maker spaces and design studios, and by Signature Programs such as its Innovation Institute.

108 years after the first school bell rang, Shanghai American School remains a reflection of both its American roots and its Shanghai location.

For more information, please visit the school's website, www.saschina.org.

HEAD OF SCHOOL

The challenge and opportunity for the next Head of School of Shanghai American School will be to provide a unifying vision at a pivotal and exciting moment in the school's history amid landmark changes in China's demographic, commercial, and technological evolution. In the midst of these dynamic macroeconomic shifts, the Head of School of Shanghai American School will provide an unswerving commitment to excellence in an American education and energize the community through a platform of innovation and distinctive pedagogical programming which will guide the school into the future and set the standard among its peers.

Reporting to and working with the Board of Trustees, the Head of School sets the overarching strategy for the school and communicates the school's distinctive vision with passion and rigor to both internal and external audiences. He or she will provide leadership on a broad set of issues and opportunities facing students and educators today.

PRIORITY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Clarifying and communicating a common identity, vision, and direction for a school with an ambitious and diverse agenda
- Ensuring that Shanghai American School maintains a strong commitment to academic excellence and an unswerving loyalty to ensuring student wellbeing, developing the 'whole child,' and ensuring students develop a global perspective in order to fully prepare students for college, career, and citizenship so that they may make positive contributions to a rapidly changing global society
- Assuring the continued competitive positioning of the school and its graduates through attracting, inspiring, and developing high-caliber faculty and staff, and strengthening curriculum and new academic programs
- Maintaining effective communication with all constituencies and managing government and community relations within a shifting regulatory landscape
- Enabling an environment and sense of community that is welcoming and supportive to a diverse community of faculty, students, staff, and parents in an increasingly complex world
- Establishing an effective partnership with a deeply committed and supportive Board of Trustees, and supporting the Board in generative, strategic, and fiduciary governance
- Developing the unique and strategic identities of two geographically distant campuses while balancing and limiting variability of academic and developmental outcomes
- Responding to changing demographics of the student body and aligning community expectations with the school's mission and strategy
- Ensuring transparency and strength of decision-making and establishing strong communication standards
- Strengthening relationships with leading colleges and effective deployment of the school's resources

Shanghai American School seeks a Head of School who will form a working partnership with the Board of Trustees, leadership team, faculty and staff, students, alumni, and parent community to champion the school's strategic goals, core values, and mission. He or she will be able to build trust, be visible and interactive with the life of the school and be accessible. The prospective Head of School should demonstrate the following essential qualities:

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

- Demonstrated fluency with current and forward-looking educational issues and the outlook necessary to lead one of the world's leading schools in the 21st century
- Significant and successful administrative experience in or substantial exposure to complex and international academic environments, with a deep understanding of American education
- Deep concern for and contribution to the intellectual, emotional, and social development of children and adolescents
- Experience and strength in curriculum development
- Creative vision to resolve issues and build trust, community, and unity
- Success in hiring, retaining, and supporting outstanding school leadership, faculty and staff
- An appreciable amount of successful strategic and operational leadership in a large, complex organization with international stakeholders, wide-ranging academic and teaching functions, and rich resources
- Comfort interacting with a widely diverse range of constituencies and cultures with an understanding of Asia/China
- Experience working with a Board to develop strong and effective generative, strategic, and fiduciary governance policies and procedures
- Successful track record in managing relationships with all stakeholders, including students, alumni, faculty/staff/leadership, parents, the Board, local government, and other external relations
- A tangible appreciation for and connection to staff and students
- Some familiarity with regulatory issues relative to academic administration or nonprofit education
- A capacity to navigate successfully and thrive in a multi-site institutional context
- Sophisticated financial acumen and understanding of the business of education
- Chinese language ability beneficial but not a requirement
- Experience with kindergarten to grade 12 education administration/management desirable

CRITICAL CAPABILITIES FOR SUCCESS

Institutional Leadership, Advocacy, and Vision

In a school that has experienced considerable growth and change over the last decade, define and give voice to a shared vision for Shanghai American School's identity and future that is proactively responsive to new challenges, competition, and opportunities, while remaining consistent with its founding mission, values, and traditions. Leverage deep expertise running an institution committed to the highest quality educational outcomes and deliver a sustainable competitive and forward-looking agenda to ensure that Shanghai American School achieves its ambitious agenda for excellence in all areas of endeavor.

Leadership and Organizational Management

In a complex, geographically separated, dual-site organization, partner with the Board to support the stability and competitive positioning of both campuses by:

- Being a strong leader and communicator to reinforce the mission in all aspects of school management and curriculum development
- Inspiring and leading people with clear strategy and prioritization
- Creating and developing empowered academic and administrative leaders who execute efficiently, with a unity of purpose, and with consistent quality through the layers of the organization and across geographies
- Establishing support for a culture in which trust and autonomy are valued, and in which tolerance for experimentation and well-calculated risk is relatively high
- Overseeing the management of both campuses with focus on consolidation of initiatives, and a unity of purpose to ensure that each site runs optimally, fiscally responsibly, and cooperatively while allowing innovation to flourish within each
- Attention to details to ensure quickly be in the loop of operational challenges when it's necessary and be able to provide strategic guidance to the leadership team

Academic Vision

Demonstrate a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of high quality global educational trends and their potential implications for Shanghai American School including diversity, financial dynamics, top-tier college admissions, faculty recruitment and retention, and environmental concerns. Exhibit the highest academic standards and the ability to engage the faculty to think expansively about curriculum, innovative pedagogy, the use of technology, and extracurricular activities. Have the knowledge and foresight required to explore and expand curricular programming that continues to position Shanghai American School and its students for marked success in an ever-changing global landscape.

Community Engagement

Against a backdrop of considerable macroeconomic change which influences the local cultural and commercial landscape, demonstrate a commitment to respecting, actively engaging with, listening to, understanding and responding to the needs and concerns of a wide range of audiences by:

- Establishing forums or practices that reinforce open communication and invite participatory debate on challenging issues across teams, geographic location, and divisions, internally and externally
- Partnering with an engaged Board of Trustees and key stakeholders to respond to community pressures and opportunities that will impact Shanghai American School's ability to deliver a curriculum that anticipates changing socio-economic and geopolitical dynamics

- Becoming an active participant in the life of the school and a visible presence on campus; successfully connecting to a diverse, multi-constituent community characterized by a high level of engagement; building relationships of trust in which all members feel valued
- Demonstrating ability to lead through consensus, persuasion, and effective decision-making

OTHER PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Citizen of the world with a sensitivity to global cultures and concerns
- Willingness to understand and respect the culture of Shanghai and China
- Strong mentor who thrives on leading a team of autonomous leaders
- Decisive leader with a CEO mindset and the courage to take and support well-calculated risks
- An outstanding communicator; a good listener with empathy
- High emotional intelligence and intellectual curiosity
- Strong commitment to and respect for cultural accommodation and diversity, inclusiveness, belonging, and equity
- Personable, warm, and approachable demeanor
- Commitment to champion the school's mission, core values, and long-term vision internally and externally

If you would like to apply for this role or have any questions, please contact us at SAS@spencerstuart.com. We will also appreciate if you have any recommendation of suitable candidates.