



# **Position Statement for Head of School Taipei American School**

**Taipei, Taiwan  
July 1, 2024**





## OVERVIEW OF THE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Taipei American School stands at the very top of the world's leading international schools. The breadth of its program, the quality of its facilities, the dedication of its faculty, and the support of its community make TAS one of the brightest stars in the educational cosmos.

With a student body of 2400 and a faculty of 300 with appropriate numbers of administrators and support staff, TAS is a major operation, one that requires significant management skills and strong executive leadership. Because of the school's prominence in Taipei (and throughout Taiwan), the Head of School is naturally a high-profile leader in the community of the school and beyond.

TAS seeks a Head of proven leadership, preferably in an international educational community. Intercultural competence may be at the top of the list of desired qualities for the next Head because being able to understand and navigate the parent community of the school is critical. Not surprisingly, other requisites for the Head include exceptional administrative skill and the evident capacity to lead in a position of high visibility.



## THE PLACE

Taipei is Taiwan's capital city and has a population of 2.5 million, while the greater Taipei area numbers about 7 million, roughly one-third of the country's population. Taipei is a bustling city of bright lights, skyscrapers, restaurants, and commercial life. From the many museums to the famous Night Market, it is a city teeming with life and excitement. Home to world-leading hi-tech enterprises and headquarters to at least five Fortune 500 companies, Taipei is at the cutting edge of modern capitalism, attracting businesses, capital, and investors and executives from all over the world.

Surveys of expats around the world place Taipei in the Top Three of desirable places to relocate, for reasons of family, business, or lifestyle. Not surprisingly, many such people find TAS to be the school for their children, where a foreign passport is a requisite for entrance. The school site is impressive, its 15-acre campus setting it apart from the surroundings as its buildings. With more than 250 classrooms, multiple gyms and playing fields, a four-story library-media-IT center, three theaters, a magnificent health and fitness center, and the six-story "Tech Cube" for advanced research, innovation, engineering and design, it is a campus that is second to none in its ability to nourish the insatiable intellectual appetites of the students who go there.





## THE PEOPLE

### Faculty

The 300+ teachers at TAS are uniformly well-educated and very positive about their environment, so much so that the average tenure is greater than that at any other major international school, with many teachers approaching, a few exceeding 20 years at TAS. In its hiring practices, the school seeks “exemplary teachers who are excited by the TAS mission, have expertise in their teaching areas, and have a passion and enthusiasm for students and their success.”

Once at TAS, those teachers are well cared for, mentored, evaluated, promoted, rewarded, and given every opportunity to flourish. Professional development is a major priority for the faculty and opportunities abound from the 10 P.D. days in each school year, to the annual East Asia Regional Council of Schools conference, to visits to the College Entrance Examination Board or the headquarters of the International Baccalaureate.

TAS faculty members are expected to be experts, whether that expertise is in early childhood education, advanced robotics, English language development, student wellness, camping, or coaching. The aim of is to “provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum without sacrificing teacher flexibility and creativity.”

The result is a blend of teaching styles and approaches that bring variety to a student’s day and stimulate curiosity and initiative. Faculty are hard-working, dedicated, and make it a point to be available to their students. Open this link to read what attracts and retains faculty and staff to Taipei and to TAS.

[https://issuu.com/taipeiamericanschool/docs/recruitment\\_booklet\\_2022](https://issuu.com/taipeiamericanschool/docs/recruitment_booklet_2022)

### Administration

The TAS Head of School has the Lower School Principal, Middle School Principal, and Upper School Principal reporting directly to her. Other direct reports include the Chief Operating Officer (overseeing Finance,





Facilities, Human Resources), an Assistant Head for Advancement, and a Deputy Head of School (overseeing Admissions, Technology, Inclusion & Well-being, Teaching & Learning).

The current senior administrative leadership team is in transition. The Upper School Principal and the Assistant Head for Advancement are both leaving this year. The Deputy Head of School is in her first year. The next Head of School will have an opportunity to strengthen, create, and support their own cohesive leadership team to execute the school's strategic vision. This is best achieved with an alignment of the leadership team around clearly agreed upon objectives flowing from mission and a vision

of greater curricular and program coherence from one division to the next.

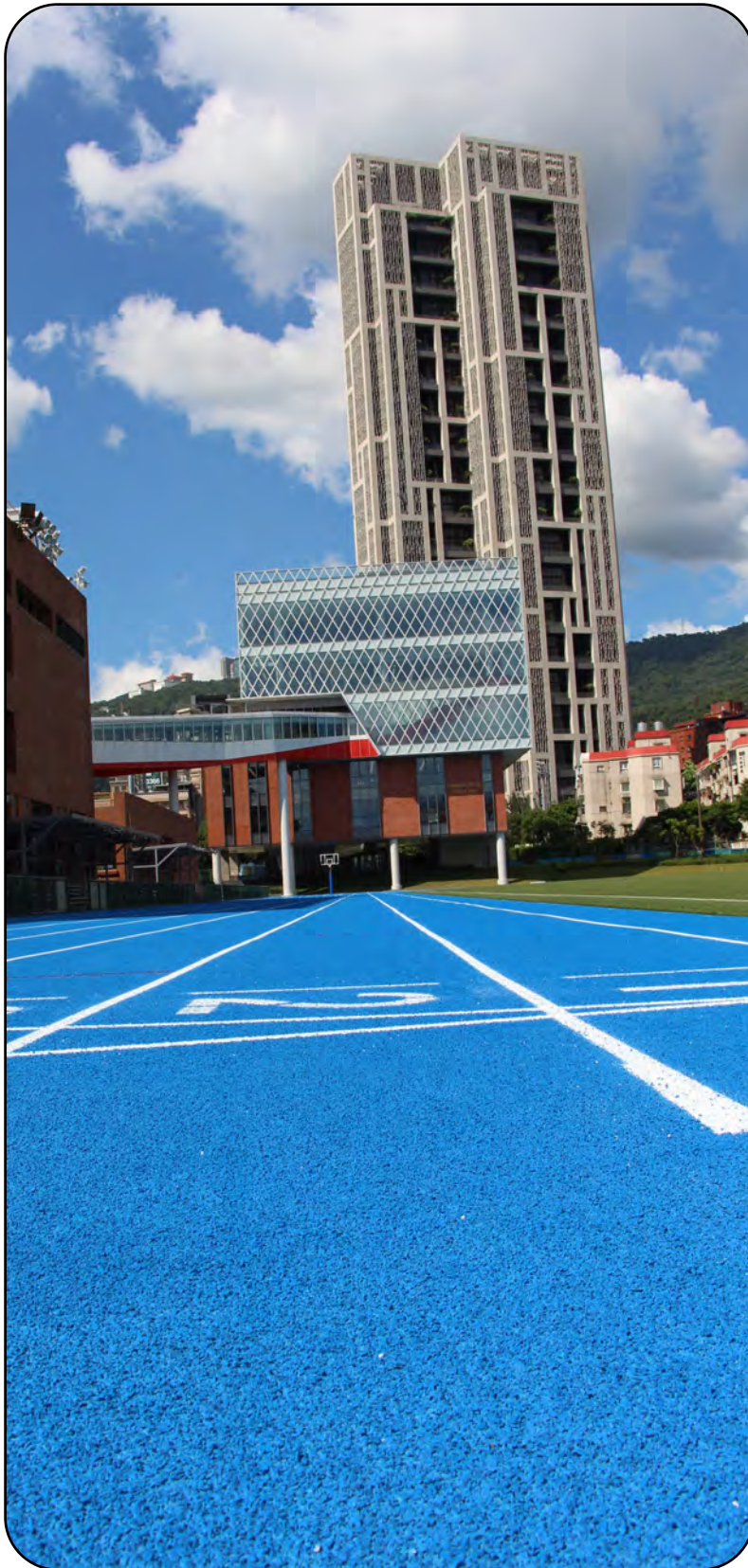
### **Students and Families**

The 2,400+ TAS students and their families are multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic and represent 37 different nationalities among them 70% are US citizens and have a strong representation from Canada, Australia, Korea, Japan and Singapore.

As a community and cultural event there is much to be learned by how schools conduct commencement and certainly this is true at TAS. All values of the school are evidenced in its 2022 graduation. Graduation Ceremony (2022): <https://vimeo.com/720546541/6b5c3dc6c3?ts=742000>







## THE PROGRAM: BREADTH OF OPPORTUNITY AND CHOICE

The published curriculum at TAS could easily be confused with the course catalogue at a major university. There are eight overarching goals that are complemented and augmented at each division. These are outlined in the following link to the school website: <https://www.tas.edu.tw/about-us/welcome-to-tas/school-mission>

As a recent WASC report commented, “Student achievement has been the highest priority at TAS and all systems have been aligned to focus on students and enable each to achieve to their highest potential.” Such alignment begins in the Lower School where the American standards-based course of study leans heavily on English language literacy and fluency that will be essential to the students as they advance. Whether in English, math, science, or social studies, Lower School teachers employ both RULER and Responsive Classroom among other instructional techniques. Given the multilingual and multicultural composition of the student body, Mandarin is taught nine days out of ten in the Lower School.

Given its size and the spread of the campus and the range of ages, the school’s three divisions are distinctive and address the ages and stages of the Tiny Tigers in Kindergarten A, a program for 4-year-olds to the graduating seniors headed for colleges across the globe. Admission to TAS is determined by priorities of citizenship and not necessarily top academic talent.





The Lower School curriculum is age and developmentally appropriate and fosters a learn through play mindset. In a balanced and rich program students in the lower school benefit from a talented and dedicated faculty and a curriculum that includes the study of Mandarin, exploration of visual and performing arts, and physical education <https://www.tas.edu.tw/academics/lower-school/about-the-lower-school>

<https://www.tas.edu.tw/academics/lower-school/grade-level-overview>

The TAS Middle School serves over 600 students from diverse nationalities in grades 6-8 who

benefit from a broad range of exploratory courses in addition to a rigorous academic core. The Middle School seeks to balance the social-emotional well-being of the students with academic vigor through small group instruction focused on the core areas of English, History, Science, Mathematics, and Mandarin, with opportunities to pursue Greek and Latin as well. Interscholastic sports are hugely popular with Middle School students, as are drama, music, and debate. The robust TAS Middle School program and curriculum are described in depth through the following link: <https://www.tas.edu.tw/academics/middle-school>

Whether a student is pursuing the I.B. (about 13% of the student body

each year) or the A.P. curriculum, opportunities to reach for the academic sky are plentiful. Just a sample of courses in the Upper School will suffice to demonstrate both the breadth and depth of the offerings: journalism; international relations; the history of minorities in America; marketing and entrepreneurship; modern topics in math; high performance and distributed computing; quantum mechanics and relativity; nanotechnology; synthetic biology. In sum there are unparalleled opportunities for students in all divisions in a program that is willing to innovate and is grounded in tradition. <https://www.tas.edu.tw/academics/upper-school/courses-texts>



## SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

### Health and Wellness

An early leader in the area of wellness the school has a demonstrated commitment to health and character education. The Lower School's Responsive Classroom approach and its faculty training in RULER begin the program that extends across the divisions. In the Middle School's homeroom periods provide a special focus on student wellness. Middle school students take the VIA Character Strength survey annually, the results of which are further explored during homeroom and small groups of students meet on a bi-weekly basis as part of Student Wellness Action Teams to identify areas of need and initiate wellness.

### Robotics, Computer Science and Innovation

TAS excels in the Science, Technology and Engineering areas. The Computer Science and Robotics department offers three levels of Robotics courses, an Introduction

and Advanced Courses in AI, programming for web design, courses in web design and engineering. These are the courses that often fuel the work in the Tech Cube, a six-story, 5,000sqm building in the center of campus dedicated to the robotics, technology, and science programs.

Every KA-5 student has one extended 60-to-90-minute period in the Tech Cube every ten days. The school believes that as a result of extended STEAM time students are displaying more advanced skills, and the curricular challenges are becoming more complex. The Lower School science curriculum was recently revised to include STEAM projects.

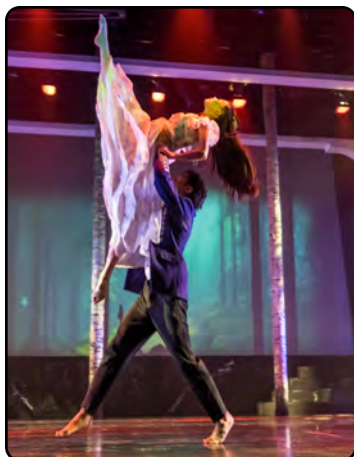
The Middle School Tech Cube Program provides students with a strong foundation in Design Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Science and Physical Computing. This program is taught by art teachers, robotics teachers and science teachers.

The Upper School Tech Cube Program focuses on innovation and creativity. Required introductory level courses and in successive Tech Cube courses are team and project oriented. Several co-curricular clubs and teams provide further opportunities for students to explore tech related interests, take part in international competitions and provide support for local Taiwan schools to start and grow their robotics teams.

<https://www.tas.edu.tw/academics/upperschool/departments/computer-science-robotics>

### Character Development

The school strives to incorporate wellness and character development into the student experience. The school collects and analyzes longitudinal data to guide the programs and activities that support child wellness. Lower School staff have received training in RULER, a systematic approach to SEL that aims to infuse the principles of emotional intelligence throughout the school. The Middle School's culture is based







upon its mantra (“Character is doing the right thing when nobody’s looking”). More than half of all middle school students participate in after school sports teams where coaches model the expectations of the Positive Coaching Alliance.

### **Co-curricular Opportunities**

TAS has strong co-curricular and athletics programs with a and opportunities available to students throughout the school year. The offerings provide students with opportunities to engage in activities that are

### **Arts**

TAS has outstanding programs in the arts and could be mistaken for a school for the performing

arts or an art academy. The offerings in dance, music, and theater are extensive – with programs for the beginning musician, the novice dancer and for the student interested in a career in the performing arts. In the Lower School all students have general music classes, building a foundation for later programs. In grades 3-5 a Music Activity program focuses on the development of skills in the areas of dance, instrumental or vocal skills. In grade 3 and 4 students chose a stringed instrument and in Grade 5 choose Band, Choir/ Dance, Strings.

The middle and upper school performing arts programs are dazzling! A student can take

classes in AP Music Theory or Musical Production or try her hand at composition and song writing. A child can learn to play a brass instrument and perhaps develop the skills that lead to an Honors Symphonic Band. There are choirs for all comers to audition groups and instruction for beginning instrumentalists who need to read music to jazz ensembles and a symphony. The theater and dance productions are extraordinary. Listen and view the y program on one of these links.

<https://www.tas.edu.tw/school-life/the-arts>

<https://www.tas.edu.tw/school-life/the-arts/dance>





### ADMISSIONS

Fully enrolled for the SY2022-2023 as it has been for a decade, TAS has 905 students in the Upper School, 626 in the Middle School and 878 this year in the Lower School. TAS benefits from strong demand and low attrition. Many alumni return to Taiwan and others remain on Island so that their children can benefit from a TAS education. Students are considered for admission to TAS according to a priority system that ranks in order: Parents employed by American Institute in Taiwan; a parent who holds an American passport; a least one parent who does not have a passport from the USA, ROC or PRC. In order for admission, the school requires that students hold a passport other than Taiwanese.

### FINANCES

The finances at the Taipei American School are strong, with solid cash flow, minimal debt, appropriate cash reserves, and excellent oversight by the Chief Operating Officer, the Controller, and the Finance Committee of the Board. Tuition and fees are the primary drivers of TAS finances. Therefore, the school's strong student enrollment allows for certainty and confidence in budgeting and financial management.

New and renovated facilities have been funded from a combination of physical plant reserves, some long-term debt, and successful fundraising. As Taiwan and the Taipei American School community emerge

from Covid 19, the Board of Directors, the next Head of School and next Assistant Head for Advancement will have a renewed focus on fundraising activities. This timing coincides with a renewed and inspiring strategic plan that will guide the fundraising priorities and expectations of the next Head of School.

### GOVERNANCE

The Taipei American School Board of Directors is a hybrid board consisting of up to 14 members: 9 elected board members and 5 appointed board members, including one appointed representative from the American Institute in Taiwan, the de facto United States Embassy in Taiwan. Elected Board members are current TAS parents and serve staggered three-year terms. Appointed Board

members serve for four-year terms.

A nominating committee, comprising a majority TAS parents and minority elected board members, seeks candidates from the parent community to run for the Board election. Elections are held in March and new Board members are announced at the spring Meeting of the General Members in April. The role of the Taipei American School Board of Directors is to establish a clear mission, vision, and strategic goals; to ensure the financial healthy, stability, and stewardship; and to select, support, and evaluate the TAS Head of School. The Board of Directors has actively engaged in board training, led by internationally recognized experts in independent school governance, in their efforts to maintain the NAIS Principles of Good Practice.





The TAS Board of Directors accomplishes its goals through various board committees that include Management & Resources Committee; Governance Committee; Audit Committee; and Ad Hoc task forces. Members of the current Board are talented, dedicated, hardworking, and invested in the success of the school overall and its Head of School. In the transition of leadership to the next Head of School, the Board is resolved to provide effective communication with the TAS community.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

The Head of the Taipei American School is one of the attractive school leadership opportunities in the world for 2024. There is much to attract an experienced and accomplished educator. And there is much to build upon, including:

- Healthy student enrollment and a very strong financial position
- Outstanding facilities
- Motivated and focused students in a school where every child is known and has the potential to shine
- Impressive breadth of opportunity and choice for students
- Excellent and caring teachers with relatively low faculty turnover and a strong commitment to faculty professional development
- A well-resourced instructional program known for its excellence across the school

## THE EXPECTATIONS FOR THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

- Understand and manage the range of parent expectations for the school
- Clarify and articulate the school's mission and identity
- Rebuild and strengthen a sense of school community
- Unify the Board around TAS's mission, vision, and strategic priorities
- Help to shape and execute the strategic plan
- Ensure curricular coherence and a unifying K-12 educational vision
- Develop a comprehensive system of faculty and administration evaluation, feedback, and growth
- Provide continued financial stewardship and fiscal prudence





### THE LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES AND PERSONAL QUALITIES OF THE NEXT HEAD OF SCHOOL

- Successful school leadership experience within a large, complex, multicultural setting
- Strong and decisive leadership style; willing to embrace hard decisions through an inclusive and collaborative leadership style
- Able and skillful communicator; highly relational, visible, warm, welcoming campus presence
- Charismatic, inspiring community builder
- Culturally sensitive and diplomatic; deft at working within a vocal multicultural community
- Successful experience with financial management and fundraising
- Forward-thinking educational thought leader who will inspire, support, and challenge the faculty

### PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Interested candidates should apply for the Head of School position through the portal on the Resource Group 175 website:

<https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

The deadline for applications is **Friday, April 14, 2023**

If you have any questions, please reach out to the consultants from Resource Group 175 who have been assigned to the search:

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