



International Community School of Addis Ababa

Elementary School Profile 2009–2010

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The School Mission

The International Community School of Addis Ababa, accredited in the United States, develops the talents and intellects of a multicultural student body using learner-centered, holistic instructional methods, empowering each student to contribute in an evolving world.

The School

The International Community School of Addis Ababa is an independent, coeducational American-based curriculum school with an international character. ICS offers an educational program from pre-kindergarten (ages 3 and 4) through grade 12. The school, located on a 15-acre campus, was founded in 1966 and currently serves 599 students representing 56 nationalities: 342 in the elementary and 257 in the middle/high school. The school is located in the south section of Addis Ababa and serves children whose parents are employed in international business, embassies, NGOs and multinational organizations.

Country Diversity by Passport in 2009–10

Austria	1	Fiji	3	Kazakhstan	1	Philippines	3	Trinidad	1
Bangladesh	6	Finland	14	Kenya	13	Romania	1	Turkey	1
Belgium	8	France	2	Kuwait	6	Rwanda	4	Uganda	14
Bosnia Herz.	1	Gambia	2	Lesotho	7	Somalia	2	Ukraine	2
Botswana	7	Georgia	1	Malaysia	7	South Africa	12	UK	26
Burkina Faso	2	Germany	21	Mali	1	South Korea	2	USA	223
Canada	28	Ghana	2	Moldova	2	Spain	3	Zambia	7
China	1	India	21	Mozambique	4	Sri Lanka	2	Zimbabwe	6
Denmark	2	Israel	9	Netherlands	24	Sudan	5		
Egypt	1	Italy	3	Nigeria	4	Sweden	12		<i>Total 599</i>
Equat. Guinea	1	Jamaica	2	Norway	4	Switzerland	2		
Ethiopia	51	Japan	4	Pakistan	1	Tanzania	2		

ICS Faculty

The faculty consists of 60 professionally certified teachers from eleven countries: 35 from the US, seven from Canada, four from Ethiopia, and fourteen third country nationals. Forty-two members of our faculty have advanced degrees at the Master's or Doctoral levels.

ICS is an IB World School and is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools





The ICS Way

ICS believes that diversity enriches and strives to teach students how to honor and respect multicultural diversity. One important set of standards for the elementary school is The ICS Way.

I can make a difference by:
Taking care of myself
Taking care of others
Taking care of this place



Admissions

The International Community School of Addis Ababa accepts students who can be successful in the regular academic program. ICS does not discriminate on the basis of religion, ethnic or national origin or gender in its admissions and educational policies. Admission is based on the following criteria:

- the potential of the applicant to benefit from the educational services available
- the capacity of the school to meet the educational needs of the applicant, including English as an Additional Language and learning support needs
- the ability of the school to meet the behavioral or emotional needs of the applicant.

Grade Placement:

ICS intends to group children according to their developmental levels. Initially chronological age is used for placement of students, however, based upon other circumstances a different class placement could be made. Grade placement is determined by ICS, based on factors including age, previous educational system and calendar, academic success within the previous system and any additional assessments required by ICS. ICS will not enroll students who are more than one year older or younger than the expected age for the grade in which they should be placed academically.

School Calendar & Daily Schedule

The ICS Elementary School employs a three trimester system. The first trimester ends around the end of November, second trimester ends in late March, and third trimester ends in mid-June. Classes run from mid-August to mid-June and include 182 student days.

School Day:

The school campus opens and students begin to arrive at 7:30 AM. Class begins for all students at 8 AM. Pre-kindergarten students attend school from 8 AM to noon. Students in kindergarten to grade 5 finish the day at 3:15, with early dismissal every Wednesday at 2 PM.

Pre-kindergarten students in the 4-year-old program have the option to extend the school day to 3:15 PM three days a week.

All elementary students (kindergarten to grade 5) must be collected by 3:30 PM unless they are in a supervised after-school activity. Students in supervised after-school activities must be collected by 4:30 PM. After 4:30 PM the campus is closed to elementary students, unless they are accompanied by a parent.

Responsible Students:

Developing responsible student behaviours begins as soon as a child enters school whether he/she is 3 years old or 10 years old. One of the important behaviors for being successful in school is respecting time schedules and expectations. Tardiness and extended absences may teach your child that respecting expectations set by school is not that important. Please support your child in coming to school on a regular basis and on arriving at the expected time. Plan your holiday departure times respecting the school calendar. Assessments and celebrations are often scheduled before a holiday break. Students who leave early miss these important events.



Pre-kindergarten Program Ages 3 - 4

ICS offers two separate half-day programs for children who have turned 3 on or before August 31 and students who have turned 4 on or before August 31. There is an optional extended day program for children in the 4-year-old class who have the necessary stamina and who express an interest.

The pre-kindergarten program is based on standards reflecting international best practices. Program implementation is inspired by the High Scope program. The implementation of the standards is designed to develop socialization skills, problem solving skills, a positive self-image, large and small muscle coordination and cognitive/academic creativity. The atmosphere is friendly and warm in classrooms that are large, appealing, and equipped with materials appropriate for young children, including sinks and self-contained toilets. The outdoor play area is shared with other early childhood classes.



Assessments & Progress Reports

Parents receive a written report card assessing the child's progress toward curricular standards at the end of each trimester, from kindergarten through grade 5. Assessments are standards-based and not based upon averages or class rankings. If a student is meeting expectations, he/she receives a 3. Students who are developing skills and progressing as expected toward achieving the standard receive a 2. If a student receives a 1 in a given area, this indicates an area of concern.

Students must attend twenty school days in a trimester before they will be assessed on the report cards. If students are absent for extended periods of time, teachers may not be able to assess their performance, especially if they miss essential classroom assessments or activities.

Externally evaluated achievement tests are administered annually for students in grades 3 through 5. The International School Assessments (ISA) is used to compare ICS students' achievement in reading, mathematics and writing with students around the world. In addition, a student's performance in reading, mathematics and writing is formally assessed at least twice a year using internally developed assessments.



Elementary School Program Ages 5-10

ICS offers a full day instructional program for students in kindergarten through grade 5. Classes are small and taught in English. Non-English-speaking children will find the environment accommodating.

The elementary curriculum uses an standards-based approach and is based upon internationally accepted best educational practices. The elementary core curriculum includes reading, writing, math, social studies and science. In addition to the core curriculum, students from kindergarten through grade 5 receive instruction from specialists in the areas of computer, art, library, physical education and music. The use of technology is integrated throughout the curriculum. Students in grades 2-5 begin instruction for oral expression in French.

Reading and Writing Curriculum

ICS elementary students develop their literacy skills through the Reading/Writing Workshop approach from Teachers College, which focuses on explicit instruction in reading and writing strategies as well as individual conferences. This approach integrates the best educational practices as determined from a 20-year study of the results of educational research.

Mathematics Curriculum

The ICS mathematics curriculum follows the Everyday Mathematics program developed by the University of Chicago, which integrates the most effective international instructional approaches as identified in the International Math and Science Study.

Our curriculum strives to integrate the host country, Ethiopia, into a variety of activities and curricular areas. Field experiences, basic Amharic, class presentations and host country programs are integrated into the curriculum.



Specials

Each week, elementary students attend the following specialist classes, called specials. Pre-kindergarten students have specials in their regular classrooms.

Art KG-Grade 5

Computer KG-Grade 5

Library KG-Grade 5

Music KG-Grade 5

Physical Education KG-Grade 5

French Grades 2-5

Grade 5 students can participate in Beginning Band as an optional extended day program. Grades 2-5 also participate in Choir.



Activities

Lunchtime intramural activities are scheduled for students in grades 3 through 5. Other activities in which elementary students may participate include elementary assemblies, art exhibitions, after school arts and crafts, drama productions, track and field day, International Day, music programs and various events and athletics activities.

Children in kindergarten through grade 5 are eligible to sign up for after-school activities (from 3:30–4:30 PM) during each of the three seasons. Activities may include sports, art, music, dance and homework clubs. Parent permission forms are required of all students participating in after-school activities. A limited number of activities are available to children in kindergarten and grade 1, since many children in this age group are tired at the end of the school day and need less structured time.



Communication

Communication between home and school is essential. Teachers send home regular newsletters explaining classroom activities and notifying parents about ways they can support the children at home. The school provides “homework pouches” for students in grades pre-K to 2 and “daily agendas” for students in grades 2 to 5. Parents are encouraged to check the homework pouch and/or agenda of their child daily for valuable communication from the teacher. Also, in the younger grades, teachers often use a communication book for teachers and parents to write questions, observations and comments.

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in early October. Student-led conferences are held in December and April. Parents may request an appointment with the teacher at any time they wish.

Field Experiences

Throughout the year, teachers plan field experiences for students to apply their learning outside the classroom. Some of these field experiences may be walking trips close to or on the ICS campus to apply the science process skills of observing recording and analyzing data. Some of the trips may be related to the social studies curriculum focus on Ethiopia, economics and basic needs, or cultural elements. Parents will be provided with a permission form explaining the trip, date and time. The permission form must be signed before any child will be permitted to participate. Transportation is usually provided by school vehicles equipped with seat belts. Supervision of the school-sponsored field experiences is organized by the teachers.

Optimal Match Philosophy

At ICS, we subscribe to an Optimal Match philosophy. Since each student is a unique individual, we strive to match the level of skills instructed with the student’s needs. To facilitate this optimal match, teachers and administration work together to observe, assess and analyze a student’s performance. From this analysis and teamwork, we determine the best approach for meeting the student’s needs within the parameters of what ICS can offer.

The Optimal Match (OM) philosophy is implemented in a variety of ways. The OM Team meets regularly throughout the school year to assess and monitor the progress of a child. Members of the OM Team also consult with classroom teachers to monitor student learning. Once every trimester, all teachers working in the elementary school meet to discuss each child’s development. From this meeting, previous plans to meet the child’s needs are evaluated and new strategies are developed if necessary. The child’s progress and any strategies implemented are documented and included as a part of the child’s report card if the instructional approach differs significantly from the regular classroom instruction. The OM Team also attempts to meet the needs of students that need enrichment by providing support in classroom differentiation.



Most students’ needs can be met within the regular classroom. Sometimes members of the OM Team work in the classroom to support a student until he/she can apply the skills independently. Another student’s needs may be better addressed when the child works individually or in a small group with a member of the OM Team in a different setting from the classroom.

Flexibility in matching instruction to a student’s needs is a hallmark of the OM philosophy. One way of implementing the OM philosophy is through offering additional English support to students who are learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) in grades 2–5. The regular classroom curriculum for pre-kindergarten through grade 1 is designed to develop literacy skills, so no additional EAL support is required. An EAL teacher assists children in acquiring developmentally appropriate literacy skills in English in order to perform successfully according to grade level expectations. Children receive EAL instruction instead of French until they are meeting (or nearly meeting) grade level

expectations in reading, writing, listening and speaking. For children who enter ICS speaking no English, more intensive support is required. The EAL teacher may provide specific instruction and support to a child during the time his/her classmates are studying English at grade level expectations.