

The Structure of the Educational System in Costa Rica

Written by Roger Petersen

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1. Pre-School Education. The pre-school education in Costa Rica accepts children between the ages of 5 years 6 months up to 6 years and 6 months.

2. General Basic Education. The General Basic Education is mandatory and free for all children without restrictions. To begin the student must be at least 6 years and 6 months old. Costa Rica divides this education into Cycles, from I to IV. Cycle I encompasses grades 1-4. Cycle II are grades 5 and 6. Cycle III are grades 7-9 and Cycle IV is grades 10-12. At the end of cycles, I and II the child will receive a diploma for the conclusion of Elementary Education. The children then move to the Cycle III, which is the equivalent of High School, where they must complete Cycles III and IV in order to receive their Secondary Education diploma.

3. Mandatory Testing. The Costa Rica Ministry of Education requires testing of all students (private and public schools) at the 6th, 9th and during the the final year of high school. The students must pass these exams in order to get their high school graduation diploma. The 6th Grade Exam, referred to locally as "Pruebas Nacionales de Sexto", tests the students in Math, Social Studies, Spanish and Science. The 9th Grade Exam tests them in Math, Social Studies, Spanish, English, French, Science, Civics. The Final Exams, to earn the High School diploma (Bachillerato) centers on Math, Social Studies, Spanish, English, French, Biology and Civics.

4. University Education. In order to be admitted to a Costa Rican University, the applicant must have a high school degree (Bachillerato) recognized by the Ministry of Education. Costa Rica has four public universities: [The University of Costa Rica](#) (Universidad de Costa Rica), located in the capital city of San José, was established in 1941.

[The National University \(Universidad Nacional\)](#) located in the city of Heredia was established in 1973.

[Costa Rica Technological Institute](#) (Tecnológico de Costa Rica). The main campus is located in the city of Cartago and was established in 1971.

[UNED](#) (Universidad Estatal a Distancia). The main campus is located in the city of San José and was established in 1977. In addition to the public universities, Costa Rica has more than 65 private universities. There are also the following specialized Universities: A. [The University for Peace](#) (Universidad de La Paz). This university was established in 1980 by a mandate of the United Nations. The Foundation Charter indicates that it was founded to contribute to the great universal task of educating for peace by engaging in teaching, research, post-graduate training and dissemination of knowledge fundamental to the full development of the human person and societies through the interdisciplinary study of all matters related to peace.

B. [EARTH](#) (Escuela de Agricultura de la Region Tropical Humeda) , located in Guácimo, Limón, Costa Rica is a private, international, non-profit university dedicated to education in the agricultural sciences and natural resources in order to contribute to sustainable development in the tropics by seeking a balance between agricultural production and environmental preservation.

C. [INCAE Business School](#) INCAE describes itself as a "a private, non-profit, multinational, higher-education organization devoted to teaching and research endeavors in the fields of business and economics aimed at training and instructing, from a worldwide perspective, individuals capable of successfully holding top management positions in Latin America."

American International School Pre-K – 12

located in Cariari, Heredia. Classes are taught in English and the school follows the United States calendar and a United States curriculum. English as a second language (ESL) and Spanish as a second language (SSL) are both offered at no additional fee. What distinguishes AIS from other international schools is its family-oriented environment, student to teacher ratio of 12:1, and acceptance of all siblings including those with special needs. Two diplomas are offered at AIS, the National Baccalaureate and the United States Diploma.

Director: Larue Goldfinch Email: goldfinch@costarica.net ; Principal: Neli Santiago Email: neli@aiscr.com www.aiscr.com Telephone 506-2-293-2567 Fax 506-2-293-0964

Anglo American School - Kindergarten through grade 6. Apdo. 3188-1000, San José, Costa Rica. **Tel:**

506-2-225-1723

Atenas Preschool y Escuela Colina Azul - Preschool ages 2-5, Elementary grades 1-6 (506) 2-446-4027

Blue Valley School Pre-K – 12

located in Escazu. Classes taught in English, and Spanish is offered at an additional fee with private tutors. they run on both the Costa Rican and the United States calendar. offers the IB (International Baccalaureate) and the MEP (National Baccalaureate) but does not offer the United States Diploma. Telephone 506-2-215-2203 Fax 506-2-215-2205 www.bluevalley.ed.cr Primary-Susana Cisneros; Secondary-Ana Cristina Marti bvschool@racsa.co.cr

British School Pre-K –12

located in Rohrmoser and operates on the Costa Rican calendar. Classes are taught in English, however, ESL and SSL are offered only at the primary level. Eighty-five percent of the student body is native Costa Ricans while the remaining 15% consists of 21 different nationalities that includes British, Canadian, US and other European nationals. Kindergarten through grade 11, classes half in English, half in Spanish. \$150 per month. What distinguishes the British School, is the International Primary Curriculum, the International Certificate of Education, and the (IB) International Baccalaureate.

Telephone 506-2-220-0131 Fax 506-2-232- Primary-Susan Bird; Secondary-Trevor Davis
Email: britsch@racsa.co.cr www.bscr.ed.cr

Butler Academy – Heredia Christian Larsen, Academic Director ESL@ButlerAcad.com.

506 2 237-9736 / 8375-3102 (mobile) info@ButlerAcad.com

Canadian International School - Pre-k thru grade 2. San José, Costa Rica.

Tel: 506-2-272-7097 Fax: 506-2-272-6634.

Cloud Forest School, Monteverde, Costa Rica, K-11

The Cloud Forest School, locally known as the Centro de Educación Creativa, is a bilingual school located in the tropical cloud forest of Monteverde. Telephone: +506-2-645-5161 FAX: +506-2-645-5480 Web Site:

<http://www.cloudforestschool.org/> Email: info@cloudforestschool.org

Colegio Bilingue San Ramon - Bilingual School (K-12) located in San Pedro, the village immediately west of San Ramon: 506-2-445-6454.

Colegio Bilingue Nueva Esperanza - (PreK-12) Located in Santa Barbara Heredia. Teaches in Spanish and English.

2265-8630 • 2265-6038 • 2265-7934 <http://www.nuevaesperanza.co.cr/>

Colegio Bilingue Santa Cecilia - Preschool-grade 11, Tel: 506-2-237-7733 Fax: 506-2-237-4557 Heredia- Across from Hipermas colsuper@racsa.co

Colegio Internacional - Grades 7 thru 10. Apdo. 963, 2050 San Pedro Tel: 506- 224-3136 Fax: 506- 253-9762

Colegio Internacional SEK- Cipreses de Curridabat Tel: (506) 2-272-5464 Fax:(506) 2-272-5410 sekerdir@racsa.co.cr; <http://www.sek.net>

Colegio Metodista: Kindergarten through grade 12. Classes in English and Spanish. Apdo. 931-1000, San José, Costa Rica. Tel: 506- 2-225-0655 Fax: 506-2-225-0621.

Colegio Santa Margarita - La Ribera de Belén, A bilingual institution that started in 1986 with preschool and has grown ever since. Phone #: 2239-04-57, 2293-46-81, 2239-62-86

E-mail: stmargar@ice.co.cr Website: www.santamargarita.ed.cr

Country Day School Pre-K – 12

located in the hills of Escazu, which operates on the United States calendar with a United States curriculum. Telephone 506-2-289-8406 Fax 506-2-228-2076 www.cds.ed.cr
Director-Robert Trent; Primary- William Large Email: trent@cds.ed.cr website: www.cds.ed.cr
Country Day School Guanacaste

A branch of the Country Day School in Escazú, this campus offers a similar curriculum. All subjects are taught in English.

Telephone: 506 2-654-5042 Fax: 506 2-654-5044, Website: <http://www.cdsgte.com/>

Guanacaste Operations Director: Patrick Brown patrick_brown@cds.ed.cr E-mail: info_cdsg@cds.ed.cr

Earth Education International - A multicultural experiential learning organization based in San Ramon offering short courses and semester-long study abroad programs in sustainable global stewardship emphasizing field study, volunteer service-learning work and cultural immersion: EarthEdIntl.org

European School Pre-K – 12

located in San Pablo de Heredia follows its own calendar from late July to late June, breaking every nine to ten weeks for short vacations. Classes are taught in English only, and if you are not fluent in English you will not be accepted in this school. Students that do not speak Spanish require additional tutoring supplements (\$\$) to the regular curriculum. In other words, students should be bilingual when entering this school or be prepared to pay additional fees for tutoring. Both the IB (International Baccalaureate) and the National Baccalaureate are offered.

Director/Owner- Anne Arronson Principal- Anne Arronson Email: info@europeanschool.com

website: www.europeanschool.com

Falcon International School: located on Herradura road near Jaco. follows the North American school calendar where children attend from September through to the end of June. This private, bilingual elementary school opened a brand new facility in August 2006. Currently there are approx 60 elementary and pre-kinder aged children attending the school however the facility will also have buildings for high school aged children. The teacher to student ratio is also very low, approx 1:6. All subjects are conducted in English with the exception of Spanish, Art, Music class and Costa Rican social studies. This is one of the most progressive and open private schools, open to parents' input and concerns. Cost per month is \$400 plus enrollment fees.

Telephone 506-2-637-7400 email: falconicr@earthlink.net

Golden Valley School – Heredia Telfax 506-2268-6248

anabernini@yahoo.com valledorado3@yahoo.com

Green Mountain Academy – Learning Across Borders Language School offers private and group lessons in English Spanish, French, German, and Mandarin 506-2447-9119/ 8845-2028

Humboldt School Pre-K - 12

Located in Rohrmoser with approximately 750 students. Classes are taught in German, English and Spanish. If you are not of German decent, you will not be accepted into this school.

Telephone 506-2-232-1455 Fax 506-2-232-0093 website <http://www.humboldt.ed.cr/>

International Christian School Pre-K – 12

Located in San Miguel, Santo Domingo de Heredia. Operates on the United States calendar year with a United States curriculum. Director/Owner: William Tabor Principals: Mike & David Tabor

Tele: 506-2-241-1445 Fax 506-2-241-4944 website: www.icscr.net Email: intchris@racsaco.cr

Las Nubes, located on the Costanera between Herradura and Jaco is a bilingual elementary school. follows the Costa Rican school calendar, beginning in January and ending in December. All subjects are conducted in English with the exception of Spanish class and Costa Rican Social Studies. The school has an olympic size outdoor pool with diving towers and scuba diving equipment. Also available is the meal program, whereby lunch and two snacks are provided daily from their airconditioned cafeteria. There are approx 50 children in the school and the students enjoy a 1:4 teacher/student ratio. Cost per month is \$300 per child. Principal Larisa Aguilar larisaquiros@hotmail.com Telephone: 506-2-643-2440.

Liceo Franco-Costarricense: Classes in French, English and Spanish. Concepción de Tres Ríos. Tel: 506-2-279-6616; Fax: 506-2-279-6615; lyfrancos@racsa.co.cr www.lefranco.ac.cr

Lincoln School Pre-K – 12

Largest private school in Costa Rica with 1100 children enrolled, located in Barrio Socorro, San Miguel, Santo Domingo, Heredia. Classes are taught in English following the United States curriculum and United States calendar. ESL & SSL are offered in addition to the regular schedule. What distinguishes Lincoln from other schools is that it offers all three diplomas, the International Baccalaureate, National Baccalaureate, and the United States Diploma.

Tel. (506)2-247-6600 / Fax (506) 2-247-6700 / Apdo. 1919-1000 website: www.lincoln.ed.cr
Director-Jack Bimrose High School Principal - Charles Prince Email: director@lincoln.ed.cr

Marian Baker

located in San Ramon de Trios, between San Jose and Cartago. This school offers a United States and Costa Rican based curriculum following the United States schedule. Classes are taught in English however ESL and SSL are taught for those that are not at the same level of the other children. Marian Baker offers both the National Baccalaureate and the United States Diploma. Director-Linda Niehaus Principals-Sylvia Soto & Sandra Krause Email: Director@marianbakerschool.com website: www.marianbakerschool.com Telephone 506-2-273-3426 Fax 506-2-234-4609

Monteverde Friends School, Monteverde, Costa Rica K-12

Nestled in the cloud forest community of Monteverde, Costa Rica, the Monteverde Friends School was founded over 50 years

Telephone +506-2-645-5302 website: <http://www.mfschool.org> Email: mfschool@racsa.co.cr

Pan American School Pre-K – 11

located in San Antonio de Belen, and operates on a Costa Rica calendar with a Costa Rica Curriculum. Classes taught in English and Spanish. Classes go to the 11th grade finishing with National Baccalaureate. Director-Alegria Lores Principals- Janet Odio & Carmel Chimienti

Email: cpcrsa@racsa.co.cr website: <http://www.panam.ed.cr/>

Telephone 506-2-298-5700 Fax 506-2-293-7392

Saint Anthony School: Pre-school through grade 6. Classes half in English, half in Spanish. Apdo. 29-2150, Moravia, Costa Rica. Tel: 2-235-1017; Fax: 506-2-235-2325; santhony@racsa.co.cr

Saint Claire: Grades 7 - 10, classes in English and in Spanish. Tuition \$125 per month. Apdo. 53-2150, Moravia, Costa Rica, Tel: 506- 235-7244.

Saint Francis: Kindergarten through grade 11, classes in English and Spanish. Inquire about rates. Apdo. 4405-1000, San José Costa Rica. Tel: 506-2-297-1704 Fax: 2-240-9672 E-mail: sfrancis@racsa.co.cr

Saint Joseph's Primary School: Pre-school through grade 6, classes half in Spanish, half in English, \$70 per month. Apdo. 132-2150, Moravia, Costa Rica. Tel: 506- 2-235-7214.

San Diego High School – (K-12) Alajuela, 443-5050 / 430-7331 / 442-5257 (ext. 113)

Saint Mary's: Pre- kindergarten through Grade 6, around \$100 monthly. Classes in English, and Spanish. Apdo. 229-1250, Escazu, Costa Rica. Tel: 506- 2-228-2003.

Santa Monica Primary School: Pre-kindergarten to grade 6. Classes in English and Spanish for around \$80 a month. Apdo. 53-2150, Moravia, Costa Rica. Tel: 506- 2-228-0349

Saint Paul College- San Rafael de Alajuela, Teléfono: (506) 438- 0824 Fax: (506) 438-2125 Fax: (506) 438-2122

Saint Peter's Primary School: Pre-kindergarten to grade 6. Classes in English and Spanish for about \$75

monthly. Apdo. 302-2100, Curridabat, Costa Rica. Tel/Fax: 506- 2-272-2045;
E-mail: spetershigh@yahoo.com

Sistema Educativo San Lorenzo: From Day Care & Kindergarten through XII grade . About \$100 monthly.
Tel: 2-253-2900, ext 1. Fax: 2-234-6224 E-mail: info@sanlorenzocr.com Web: www.sanlorenzocr.com

Summerhill Latinoamericano: Pre-school, elementary school and weekend camp programs. Tel:
506-2-280-1933, Fax: 506-2-283-0146.

United World College Costa Rica - Santa Ana, Phone: (506) 282 15609 ext 135