

David O'Connell

David O'Connell has been a global educator for 25 years. Originally from the Midwest, he earned his degree in teaching at Wayne State University and spent his first two years after graduation serving inner city schools in Detroit. In 1992 David was offered his first overseas teaching position at the Carol Morgan School in Santo Domingo and was taken by the diversity and challenges of teaching internationally. As is typical of international teachers, David continued to broaden his horizons by accepting teaching positions at schools around the world. Throughout his career, David has taught in or led schools in Latin America, Europe, Asia and the United States.

As a teacher and educational leader, David has always drawn on his experience as a young student. As a student, he performed best for teachers who took the time to develop a relationship and made learning real and meaningful. David worked hardest for the teachers who knew him and cared about who he was. The teachers who slowed down and worked with him as an individual with individual needs. These experiences have shaped David's approach to teaching and leading.

As a teacher, David has taught at both the middle and high school level in schools with diverse student bodies. His focus as a social studies teacher was always to guide students to understand the power they have to make a difference. That their education should transcend college and career readiness and develop themselves as global citizens, who will contribute to society. David's latest work as head of school in Jerusalem focused on doing just that. He worked with Jewish, Palestinian and international students bringing them together to develop their capacities in empathy, leadership and conflict resolution.

David's path to educational leadership started as the Social Studies Department Chair at the Singapore American School. It was there that he learned that as a leader, one of the most valuable skills one can possess is how to listen and be an effective collaborator. From Singapore, David moved to the position as a Head of Middle School at ASF Mexico City and eventually worked his way to being the Head of School at the Jerusalem American International School. In each school, David has benefited from working with teachers that put students at the center of their educational approach.

Throughout his career, David has continued to be a learner. He earned a Masters in Education in 1995 and then went on to receive a Masters in Educational Leadership from Michigan State University. David is currently working on a Non-Profit Management Certificate through Harvard University.

David met his wife Alexandra, a journalist, 15 years ago in Singapore and they are currently residing in Detroit, helping to take care of his mother and working with local non-profits. Currently, their only other family member is Sundance, a friendly labrador who enjoys hiking with David. This December, David, Alex, and Sundance look forward to welcoming with joy and love the birth of a young baby girl.