

School Profile

2023 Centro Educativo Costa Ballena

CECB Code: N/A

Main office: +506 8703 5396

Counseling Office: N/A

Website: <https://www.centroeducativocostaballena.org>

MEP Academic Director: Elberth Rodriguez

School Administrative Director: Naomi Geer

School Counselors: N/A

Community

Spanning approximately 45 km along the Pacific Coast, Centro Educativo Costa Ballena serves the educational needs of students living roughly from Matapalo to Puerto Cortes, in the canton of Osa, Puntarenas province and including the canton of Aguirre in San Jose province of Costa Rica. This is a rural and yet rapidly developing region of Costa Rica known as the Southern Zone, in which many native Costa Ricans and expats from around the world reside. There are several public schools in this region, all managed by Costa Rica's Ministerio de Educacion (MEP), as well as three other small private schools which are not accredited by the MEP. One of the private schools currently services students through grade 4, another through grade 6, while the other private school includes grade levels through grade 12. The student body of Centro Educativo Costa Ballena is extremely culturally diverse, including native Costa Ricans (roughly 55%) and students from around the world (including Italy, France, Belgium, Germany, U.S.A., Canada, Russia, Israel, Chile, Switzerland, the UK, and Argentina).

School

Centro Educativo Costa Ballena (CECB) is a private bilingual (English and Spanish) school that includes three components: a pre-school/kindergarten (the Preescolar Costa Ballena), an elementary school (the Escuela Costa Ballena) and a secondary school (the Colegio Costa Ballena). CECB opened in 2007 and graduated its first senior class in December 2020. The Escuela Costa Ballena has been MEP certified for eleven years; the secondary school's MEP accreditation was granted in 2021. The secondary school does not currently hold membership in the College Board or the National Association for College Admission Counseling.

Curriculum of the Secondary School

Centro Educativo Costa Ballena's secondary school is a growing bilingual/bi-literate secondary school, currently offering classes from the 7th through the 12th grade. CECB began offering secondary school classes through the 12th grade during the 2020 school year. CECB offers a bi-literate program focused on providing our students with a solid foundation in Science, Mathematics, English and Spanish Language Arts to fully prepare them for work, university and/or technical schools. At CECB, Spanish Language Arts, Social Studies, Civics and Physical Education and Music are taught in Spanish. All other courses are taught in English.

CECB allows students to study in one track of a two-track academic Spanish Language program. Non-native level Spanish speakers take classes in Spanish in our Spanish as a Second Language Program, while native Spanish speakers take classes that follow the Ministry of Education of Costa Rica guidelines. With this two track Spanish language program and our excellent student teacher ratio, we can accommodate the learning needs of a wide range of students from across the globe.

For all courses other than Mathematics and Spanish, students are currently blended in two grade groups as they move through their four years of high school in CECB: Grades 9 and 10, and Grades 11 and 12. This strategy is intentional on our part. It allows the CECB staff to offer a wider range of courses, including both core courses as well as elective courses. This strategy also allows our students to work and interact with a new subset of CECB students each year in meaningful ways, both socially and academically. Moreover, it promotes and nurtures many of our pedagogical approaches to teaching, including peer teaching and collaboration, varied classrooms and project-based learning.

In all grade levels at the school, but particularly in the CECB, we emphasize independent learning. Our teachers approach teaching as facilitators of learning, and our students are expected to develop as independent, active learners who take responsibility for their own learning. Additionally, in an effort to prepare our students for a successful and productive life our teachers emphasize self-discipline, independent work, the development of problem-solving skills and the application of knowledge. Rote memorization and prescribed thought are minimized throughout our curriculum.

The CECB school year follows the calendar set by the Ministerio de Educacion of Costa Rica: classes begin in late January and end in mid-December. There are two semesters in each school year, each approximately 15 weeks long. Each class period is 40 minutes long, with many courses spanning two blocks within a given day. Students are in class for 6 hours each day, and they take the following set of courses throughout the school year: English Language Arts (2 credits) follows the California State Standards and uses the Great Minds curriculum guidelines. Mathematics (2 credits) follows the New York State Standards, using the Eureka Math/EngageNY Curriculum. Non-native level Spanish speakers take classes in Spanish in our Spanish as a Second Language Program, while native Spanish speakers take classes that follow the Ministry of Education of Costa Rica guidelines (2 credits). Social Studies (2 credits) is taught in Spanish under the guidelines of the Ministry of Education of Costa Rica; emphasis is placed on Costa Rican and Latin American history. French (1 credit) is taught in French/Spanish under the guidelines of the Ministry of Education. Civics (1 credit) is taught in Spanish under the guidelines of the Ministry of Education of Costa Rica. Science courses (2 credits) are structured following the California State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards, and they emphasize a hands-on experiential approach to learning science. Multimedia Arts and Design (1 credit) encourages students' artistic voices while they acquire professional media arts skills. Physical Education (1 credit) is taught twice a week, in Spanish. There are currently no AP or Honors courses offered in the CECB.

Requirements for High School Diploma

Centro Educativo Costa Ballena has established fundamental guidelines that are essential for a well-educated CECB graduate. To graduate from CECB, a student must complete grades 9 through 11 with a minimum of 36 credits as well as complete 30 hours of community service to be completed in the 11th grade. A full year's work in a course that meets 4 times per week (for 80 minutes) is worth 2 credits. A full year's work in a class that meets only once per week is worth 0.5 credit. The minimum graduation requirements are as follows:

11th Grade Graduation Pathway

English.....	6 credits
Math.....	6 credits
Social Sciences.....	4.5 credits
Science.....	4.5 credits
Spanish.....	6 credits
French.....	2.25 credits
Multimedia Arts and Design...	2.25 credits
Physical Education.....	2.25 credits
Fine Art/Music.....	2.25 credits

Students also have the option of continuing on to the 12th year of study at CECB if they wish, however, many choose to proceed onto higher education immediately following the 11th year when the Costa Rican National exams are held. Currently, the Costa Rican National exams, Pruebas Nacionales Estandarizadas (PNE), are weighted at 30% of their final grades in math, science, spanish, social studies and civics, while the respective class grades are weighted at 70%. A language exam in English and/or French is also administered but only as Pass/Fail and hence not averaged into the overall final score. The Costa Rican Ministry of Education secondary school diploma requires a final score of 70% and above across all subjects previously mentioned. This final score, in addition to university admission exams, determine which Costa Rican university a student will be eligible to attend.

12th Grade Graduation Pathway

To graduate from CECB via the 12th grade pathway, a student must complete grades 9 through 12 with a minimum of 48 credits as well as complete 30 hours of community service to be completed in the 11th grade.

English.....	8 credits
Math.....	8 credits
Social Sciences.....	6 credits
Science.....	8 credits
Spanish.....	8 credits
French.....	3 credits
Multimedia Arts and Design...	3 credits
Physical Education.....	3 credits
Fine Art/Music.....	1 credit

Grading and Ranking in the Secondary School

Teachers in Centro Educativo Costa Ballena assign grades using percentages out of 100%. For student transcripts, each student's class average is converted to a GPA scale (0 – 4.00 scale) using the following scheme:

Letter grade	Percentage	GPA
A+	97–100%	4.33/4.00 or 4.00/4.00
A	93–96%	4.00/4.00
A–	90–92%	3.67/4.00
B+	87–89%	3.33/4.00
B	83–86%	3.00/4.00
B–	80–82%	2.67/4.00
C+	77–79%	2.33/4.00
C	73–76%	2.00/4.00
C–	70–72%	1.67/4.00
D+	67–69%	1.33/4.00
D	63–66%	1.00/4.00
D–	60–62%	0.67/4.00
F	0–59%	0.00/4.00

CECB does not rank students within any grade level.

Calculation of Grade Point Average:

GPA is computed using a weighted average of the above quality points. Weighted GPA is calculated by multiplying the 0 – 4.00 grade score for each subject with its corresponding number of credits (the number of 40-minute periods that the subject is taught during each week). These weighted scores are then added together and divided by the total number of credits.

Beginning with grade nine, all subjects, whether passed or failed, are included in the computation. A minimum of 36 credits is required for graduation along the 11th grade pathway. A minimum of 48 credits is required for graduation along the 12th grade pathway.

Graduates

Centro Educativo Costa Ballena graduated its first group of 12th grade students in December 2020. There were two graduates in this graduating class. In 2019, three additional students graduated from 11th grade with their Costa Rican Bachillerato (high school diploma) but did not complete the 12th grade.

- 0 earned a 4.0+
- 2 earned 3.5–3.99
- 0 earned 3.0–3.49
- 0 earned 2.50–2.99
- 0 earned 2.0–2.49
- 0 earned less than a 2.0

December 2023 CECB will see its fourth graduating class of students. To date our graduates have gone on to fulfill their educational dreams at universities in the US and within Costa Rica at the University of California at Berkeley, Western Washington University, University of California at Santa Cruz, Universidad de Costa Rica, Escuela Veterinaria San Francisco de Asis, Universidad Fidélitas and Universidad Ciencias Médicas (UCIMED).

Contact Information

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