

Instituto Alberto Merani

Bogotá, Colombia



Born to nurture gifted minds, this Bogota school engineered a homegrown pedagogy later exported to reshape Ecuador's curriculum reform.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	59/100
Academic outcomes	72/100
University placement	56/100
Prestige & heritage	64/100
Alumni network	42/100
Facilities	54/100
Transparency	48/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Instituto Alberto Merani occupies a rare position in Bogotá: a school with its own intellectual tradition, not a local copy of an imported model. Founded in **1988**, it runs a Colombian curriculum for ages **3–18**, in Spanish and English, and stakes its reputation on “Pedagogía Dialogante”, critical reading, argument, research and socio-emotional education. The school’s strongest point is not polish or prestige signalling; it is pedagogical authorship. Merani built a homegrown approach over four decades, then turned that work into publications, teacher formation and wider influence in Colombia and Latin America. That gives it weight. Parents who want a school with a clear educational thesis, rather than a generic promise of “excellence”, will find *serious intent* here.

What marks Merani out is the blend of cognitive ambition and emotional infrastructure. The school talks in concrete terms about project of life, resilience, autonomy, family support and care through programmes such as PAF and CÜIDARIUM. It also gives students visible outlets for independent work: final-year thesis defences, student media through Ícaro, inter-school seminars, and “Aulas de Excelencia” where students choose areas such as arts, cooking, music, mathematics and philosophy. The result is a school that values *intellectual independence* and *earned confidence*, not passive compliance. English matters too, with Berlitz support, but this is not an English-first international school. It is a Colombian school with a strong internal philosophy and a bilingual dimension.

It belongs on a shortlist for families who want more than exam preparation and more than pastoral slogans. Merani has substance, a long educational memory, and a public record of research, publication and outreach. Its mention for CÜIDARIUM in the El Espectador education awards in **2022** adds external validation, and the school also points to strong Saber 11 balances during the pandemic. Still, parents need to choose it for the right reason. This is not the school for families chasing a conventional, highly standardised academic machine or an Anglo-brand international pathway. It is for families drawn to *deliberate thinking*, *emotional seriousness* and a school culture that treats ideas, debate and personal formation as central rather than decorative.

The best fit is a student who likes asking why, not just memorising what; a student who will use freedom well; a student willing to read, argue, present and sustain long-term projects. Creative students with academic depth, reflective children who need adults to take their inner life seriously, and adolescents who thrive when school connects knowledge with society will do well here. Children who need relentless structure, heavy-handed competition or a narrow performance script will find the model less comfortable. Merani suits families looking for *a school with a mind of its own* and students ready for *work with purpose*.

STRENGTHS

- Founded in 1988 in Bogota by a group of researchers and teachers, the school has run its own pedagogical model, Pedagogia Dialogante, for over three decades.
- In 2000 the institution took the decision to open its doors to children of all intellectual capacities, moving beyond its original remit as a program for exceptional learners.
- Founder and director Julian de Zubiria Samper created, around 1985 with his brother Miguel and other educators, the model known as Pedagogia Conceptual and later Pedagogia Dialogante, both recognized in Latin America.
- Secondary students receive intensified English instruction through a partnership with the well-known language school Berlitz.
- Campus facilities include academic and sports spaces, computer labs, art rooms, a canteen and laboratories.

TRADE-OFFS

- Formal admission is aimed at children from about 4 years and six months up to 9 years of age, which narrows the realistic entry window for families arriving with older children.
- The school operates on Colombia's Calendar A academic year using its own home-grown curriculum rather than an internationally benchmarked programme such as the IB.
- Independent school-comparison sites estimate monthly tuition (pension) at approximately COP 2 million, a recurring cost on top of enrolment and registration fees that families must budget for.
- The school is not an institution with an emphasis on giftedness, having abandoned that model more than 25 years ago, so families assuming a gifted-and-talented focus based on its founding history should verify current practice.

ADMISSIONS

Admissions are concentrated in early childhood: the process targets children roughly 4 years 6 months to 9 years old, so most openings are in nursery through early primary rather than secondary. Families attend an information session (Conversatorio de Admisiones), submit an application form, and undergo an interview and evaluation run by the school's own psychology team rather than standardized testing. Fees vary by grade; independent surveys put monthly pension at roughly COP 2 million, a mid-range figure for Bogota's private day-school market, though families should confirm current figures directly with the school.

WTS RATING 

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