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the future, today.



American
International
School of Zagreb

Annual Report 2023-2024



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Welcome from the Director

As we look back on the academic year that has passed, it is with immense pleasure that I present the annual report of the American International School of Zagreb (AISZ).

Education is a journey, one that extends far beyond the confines of classrooms and textbooks. It is a journey of discovery, growth, and transformation. At AISZ, we are dedicated to creating an environment where students from diverse backgrounds come together to learn, explore, and thrive. Our commitment to mutual respect, reciprocity, and inclusion forms the cornerstone of our international school. We aim to empower our students to understand themselves as individuals, develop expertise, and become active participants in their own learning journey. Within our community, every student is advocated for, supported, and given the opportunity to personalize their learning experience and pursue their dreams.

This annual report chronicles the multitude of accomplishments, challenges, and milestones that have shaped our school community over the past year. From academic achievements to extracurricular successes, from cultural celebrations to community outreach initiatives, each page of this report tells a story of dedication, perseverance, and excellence.

Our dedication to fostering a holistic approach to education is evident in the diverse range of experiences offered at AISZ. Through a rigorous academic curriculum, enriched by innovative teaching methodologies and supported by state-of-the-art facilities, we empower our students to think critically, communicate effectively, and

embrace lifelong learning. Notably, our recent International Baccalaureate Reauthorization process, culminating in March, underscored the strength, accuracy, and integrity of our academic program. The positive feedback received highlighted our alignment with IB Programme standards and practices, with several areas exceeding requirements.

Furthermore, our emphasis on global citizenship equips students to navigate an increasingly interconnected world with empathy, respect, and cultural understanding. By promoting international-mindedness, we instill in our students the values of tolerance, collaboration, and stewardship, preparing them to become responsible leaders and catalysts for positive change.

None of our achievements would be possible without the unwavering dedication of our educators, staff, parents, students and Board of Trustees. Their collective efforts, enthusiasm, and passion for learning form the foundation of

our school community, fostering an environment where every individual can flourish. Special commendation is due to our newly reconfigured School Community Organization for hosting a series of standout events, including AISZ International Day, the StrollInStudel, the Parent and Staff Party, and Teacher Appreciation Day.

As we embark on a new chapter filled with possibilities and opportunities, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to nurturing the next generation of global citizens. Together, let us uphold the values of excellence, diversity, and inclusivity that define AISZ.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the success of our school, and I eagerly anticipate the continued growth and achievements that lie ahead.

Warm regards,

Paul Buckley, Director
American International School of Zagreb





Letter from the AISZ Board of Trustees

Dear Members of the School Community,

As the Chair of the School Board of Trustees and on behalf of the Board, I am honored to present our annual report for the academic year 2023-2024. This has been a great year for the entire AISZ community, and we are happy to share all the achievements with you. I also cannot believe how fast this school year went. It seems like only yesterday that we had the community BBQ.

I want to thank my fellow Board members for their dedication and commitment to furthering the development of AISZ. I also want to thank Director Buckley for his excellent leadership and management of AISZ and all the staff and faculty who make it the premier international school in Croatia.

Community feedback is important and last year's Leading School's Survey is an example of that. Following up on it, we instituted the following:

The Lower School Learning Coordinator and Pedagogical Coach position was created as an expanded role from the Lower School Literacy Specialist. This role is primarily responsible for coordinating the collaborative work of Lower School educators, with a focus on analyzing data and student work to ensure student success.

In Upper School, Grade-Level Leads, Homeroom Collaborative Groups, Homeroom Team Leads, and Subject-Level Leads have been instituted to enhance clarity of purpose. The Subject-Level Leads are focused on the PLC structure, specifically effective formative assessments and feedback. This also extends to implementing the newly designed Consultancy Block for intervention and extension.

Policies and Procedures were developed to uniformly clarify performance expectations and enforce consistent disciplinary consequences for both students and staff are in place.



Acting Deputy Chief of Mission
Christian J. Lynch
Chairperson



Danielle Harms
US Ambassador Appointee



Martin Walder
Parent Representative



Evgeniya Herrera
US Ambassador Appointee

Enhancing Outdoor Education curriculum.

Operationalize Culture by creating actionable, accountable deliverables around AISZ's Four Core Values of providing extraordinary care, developing expert learners, offering personalized learning, and supporting the dreams of our students.

Enhancing Student life and Communication

that is dispersed in a cohesive, cogent manner via a system that is universally accessed and utilized.

The Board made several strategic decisions that will help make AISZ even stronger going forward.

The AISZ Honors Diploma program was created to allow our students to learn deeply within areas of their interest and passion. In our school, we have musicians, athletes, scientists, innovators, and entrepreneurs. This program allows a structured way for our students to pursue areas that are meaningful to them at the highest academic level for high school students whilst satisfying our graduation requirements.

Enhancement of Outdoor Education and Environmental Learning

- Outdoor Education is an essential component of our mission-based educational program. Through the active participation in outdoor education, AISZ students and staff enhance their personal and social development, learn, respond to environmental issues through first hand experience and action, and develop a set of organized outdoor skills that build resilience and leadership qualities.

Transformation of Learning Support Program

- The AISZ learning support review looked deeply into the current support we provide to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

A program that has highly trained professionals working with a group of up to eight students in the upper school level. The program would include these students in our regular education program where mutual benefit is likely. It would also include smaller developmental disability specific courses and activities aligned to the needs of our developmentally disabled students. The decision is one that ensures that whichever path we choose, develop or phase out, we serve our students in a way that aligns to the excellence that AISZ is known for.

The Finance Committee has helped to keep costs and expenses within reason. With interest rates at historical highs, they took advantage by negotiating better interest rates on our deposits and utilized other low-risk, short-term investments to help offset future expenses.

It will also be a year of transition as board member John Gašparac will be finishing his mandate after 7 years on the board. We thank John for all his efforts, especially as a member of the Finance Committee during a period of unprecedented inflation. We will miss John and hope to see him again in the future. At the same time, we are excited that Ivan Jandrić will be joining the board to replace him this August.

Finally, I hope that you and your family have an enjoyable summer whether staying in Croatia or going back to your home country. The next academic year is shaping up to be very busy and we look forward to seeing old and new faces on campus in August.

Christian J. Lynch
Chair of AISZ Board of Trustees



Graciela Arroyo Nava
Board Appointee



John Gašparac
Board Appointee - Treasurer



Tomislav Matić
Parent Representative



Paul Buckley
AISZ Director

AISZ Leadership Team

This group oversees all functions of AISZ beyond the schoolwide curriculum.

Paul Buckley
Director



William Coman
Upper School
Associate Principal



Tamara Black
Lower School
Principal



Stephen Dexter
Upper School
Principal



Tatjana Turza
Business &
Operations Manager



Neven Sorić
ICT Manager



Iva Vego
HR Manager



Martina Ožir
Admissions & Alumni
Transition Manager





AISZ Academic Leadership Team

This team oversees the planning coordination and implementation of all things associated with schoolwide teaching and learning.

Paul Buckley
Director



William Coman
Upper School
Associate Principal



Tamara Black
Lower School
Principal



Stephen Dexter
Upper School
Principal



Erin Henkels
IB Coordinator



Dawn Melarvie
US Curriculum
Coordinator



Darin Fahrney
Coordinator of
Strategic Initiatives



Sara Kirby
LS Learning
Coordinator



Key facts

EMPLOYEES

58

Years in Existence
opened in 1966

23958m²

Campus area

Nationalities

8

Bilingual/Multiple
Languages spoken

32

Teachers with
Med degrees

45

Teachers with more than
10 years of experience

47

86
Total Employees



61
Faculty
Members



5.6
Student Teacher
Ratio



STUDENTS



355

Students
(for the whole year)



343

Students
(end of the year)

119

Elementary
School

Upper
School

224

247

Families

40

Nationalities

32

Class of 2024

6

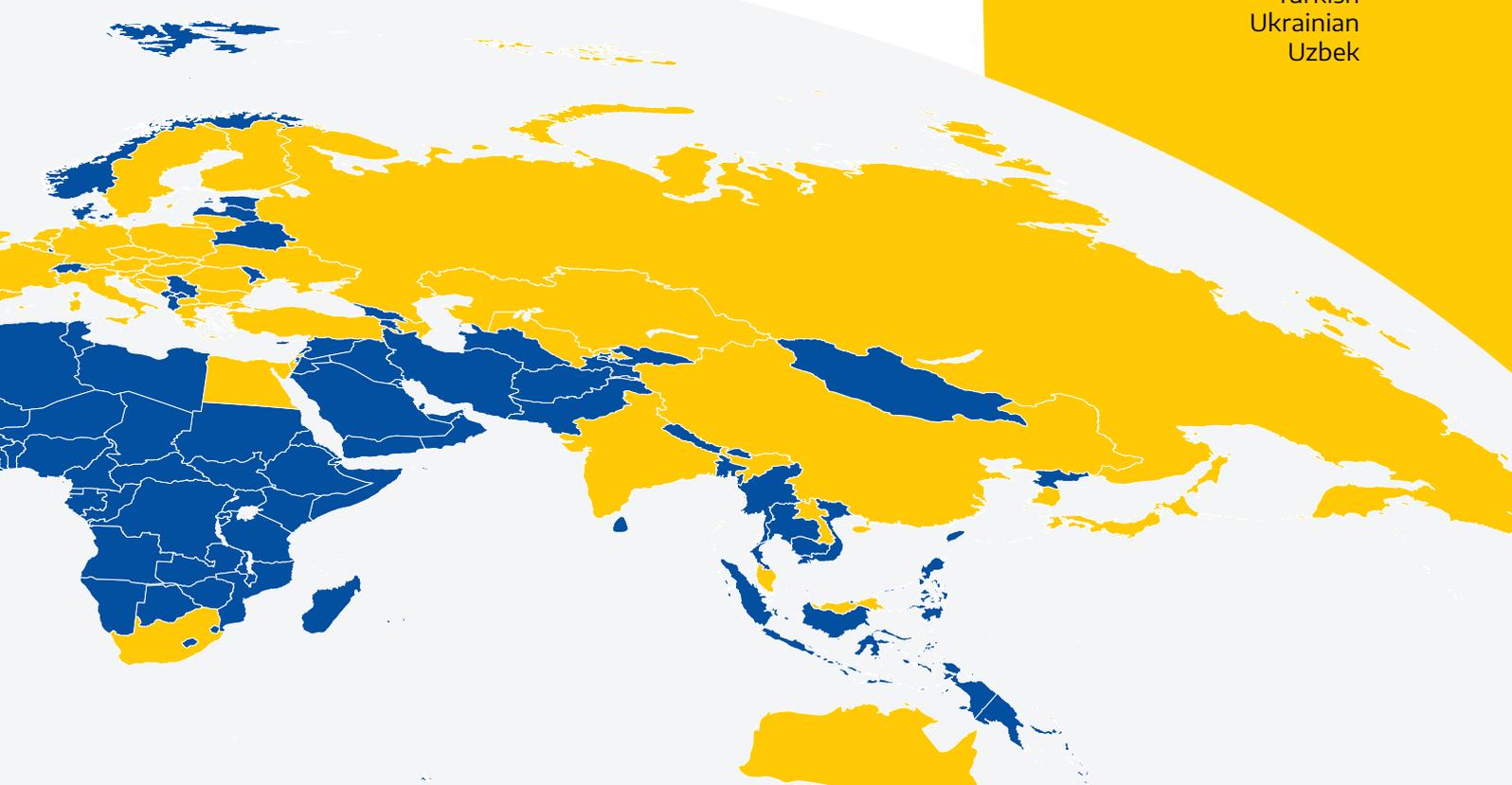
Croatian Young
Leaders Scholarship

15

Class of 2024
College Acceptance

NATIONALITIES IN 23-24

- American
- Australian
- Austrian
- Azerbaijani
- Belgian
- Bosnian or Herzegovinian
- British, UK
- Bulgarian
- Canadian
- Chinese
- Croatian
- Czech
- Dutch, Netherlandic
- Egyptian
- Finnish
- French
- German
- Greek, Hellenic
- Hungarian, Magyar
- Indian
- Irish
- Israeli
- Italian
- Japanese
- Lao, Laotian
- Lithuanian
- Macedonian
- Malaysian
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Slovak
- Slovenian
- South African
- South Korean
- Spanish
- Swedish
- Turkish
- Ukrainian
- Uzbek



Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles

With a fifty-eight-years connection to beautiful and culturally rich Croatia, The American International School of Zagreb provides an excellent internationally focused education.

OUR LEARNING PRINCIPLES

At AISZ
we believe:

We can all learn and have the right to do so.

Learning is a personal and social, as well as emotional and cognitive activity.

Learning environments have a significant impact on our learning.

Transfer of learning happens best in rich and relevant contexts.

Common learning cultures need to construct common meaning through a common learning language.



KEY STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

01



A school community united around our Mission and Vision and more connected to the local and global community.

02



Create learning opportunities indicative of a concept school for the future.

03



Facilitate each student's growth through personal, self-directed, authentic learning.

04



Become a place that provides opportunities for emotional, physical and psychological balance.

We believe in all our students. We believe that the future our students have before them is filled with remarkable opportunities. We believe that the attributes of a successful international citizen are empathy, the making of ethical choices, a service-minded attitude to others, a concern for our environment and resources, a commitment to integrity, and the personal resilience to learn from disappointments and failures.

mission

[ˈmɪʃn] noun

1. a task or journey that is very difficult and takes a long time to complete
2. particular work that you feel it is your duty to do

We develop skills and character for futures rich with promise

vision

[ˈvɪʒn] noun

1. an idea or a picture in your imagination
2. a dream or similar experience
3. the ability to see, think about or plan the future with great imagination and intelligence

Experiencing the Future, Today

The American International School of Zagreb offers an academically rigorous international curriculum from Early Childhood to Grade 12. Our learning engagements are future-oriented, focused on acquiring the interdisciplinary skills and character dispositions necessary for a successful future in the age of innovation. We look to what is to come and ground our actions on the belief that learning is for now as well as the future. We also believe that balance and fun should always be present.

Strategic Plan

STRATEGIC STUDENT IMPACT GOALS

Expertise

Every student becomes an expert in his or her learning.

Students who achieve this impact will:

- Understand how they learn best and identify the personal influencers that enhance or inhibit their own high-level learning.
- Use this insight to set high-quality goals for themselves and strive for personal achievement towards rigorous standards.
- Build a character that supports high-level learning and preserve through intellectual challenges.
- Grapple with and accommodate multiple perspectives.
- Gather and use a range of data and data types.

Extraordinary Care

Every student is known, advocated for and supported.

Students who achieve this impact will:

- Have at least one significant adult mentor at school that contributes in positive and meaningful ways to successful development.
- Be recognized within our community as an individual who matters.
- Develop, maintain and improve healthy habits related to eating, exercise, hygiene and sleeping.
- Independently recognize and promote healthy lifestyle traits and choices.
- Be valued and listened to as a worthy member of our community.
- Feel valued within our community and have positive self-esteem.
- Contribute to the wellness of others.

The Imagined

Every student personalizes learning and pursues dreams.

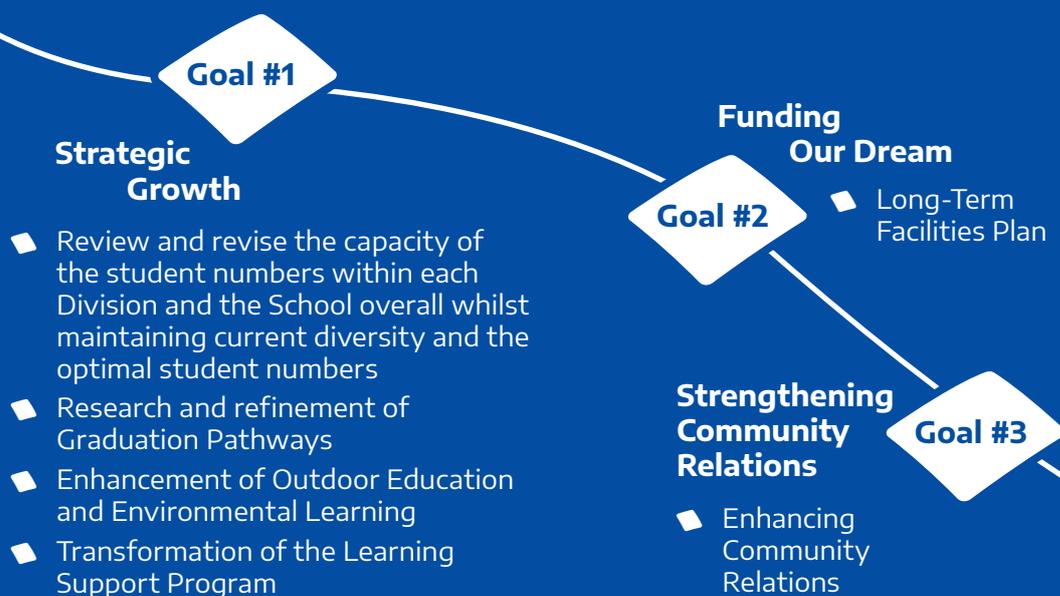
Students who achieve this impact will:

- Employ multiple strategies to effectively address challenges.
- Pursue new knowledge and skills.
- See mistakes and failures as a natural part of learning and an opportunity to learn, grow and improve.
- Demonstrate curiosity toward their personalized learning plan.
- Investigate the source and solution to various challenges.



AISZ STRATEGIC GOALS

We are currently in the second year of our three year plan which focuses on three Strategic Goals. All these areas have seen progress in their second year of development and this is shared with you in the pages of the Annual Report.



Financial Review

HISTORICAL: 2022 -2023

The Audited Financial report for the 2022-2023 school year was healthy and stable thanks to a total of 358 enrolled students during the year, with total revenues of €6.3 million, which represents a 12% increase compared to 2021.22. Operating expenditures were 17% higher than the previous year due to an increase in student and program activities and professional development travel following the COVID-19 pandemic. Total operating expenses of €5.4m combined with net financial expenses of €260k resulted in a surplus of €620k.

AISZ continuously invests in facility improvements and part of the surplus was invested in the artificial grass on the football pitch.

CURRENT: 2023-2024

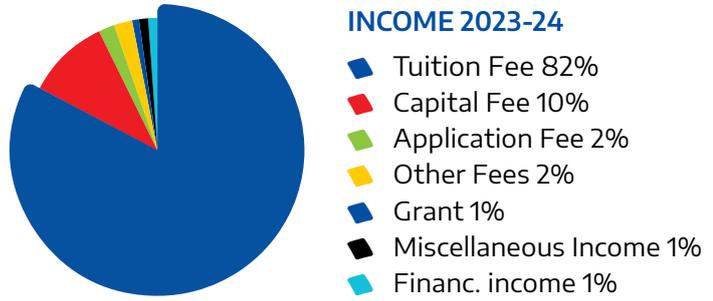
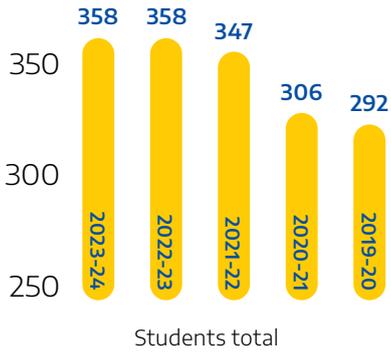
The number of students has been continuously growing for the last five years. The budgeted enrolment of 350 students has already been exceeded, and revenues are expected to be higher than planned (€6,5m). Our stable revenues enable us to maintain Capital and Operating reserves while investing in improving facility and program activities.

The tuition and Capital fees represent 93% of our total operating income, while Personnel expenses are 66% of total operating expenses. Total Operating expenses are expected to be €6.2m, and Financial expenses €266k.

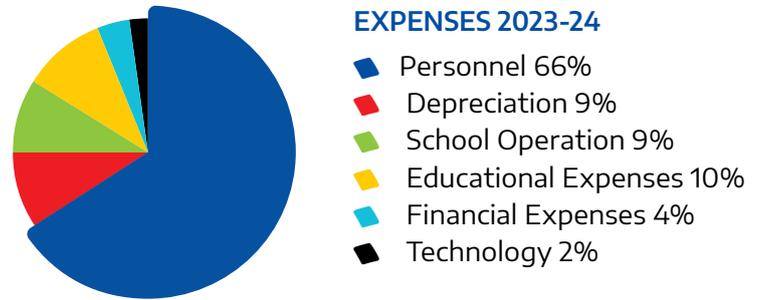
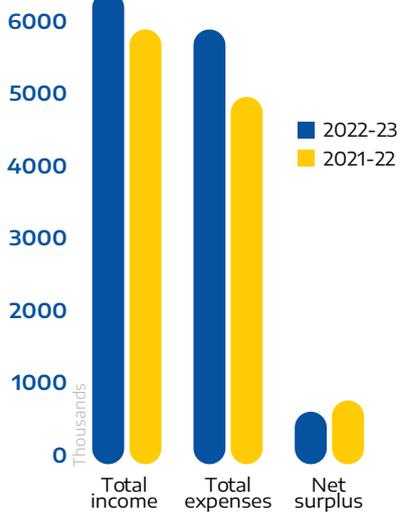
With higher revenues than planned, we are again expecting to have another strong and healthy financial year with a surplus that will be used for student education and activities.

The Finance and Facilities Committee, along with the AISZ Board as a whole, is committed to serving the AISZ Learning Community and providing the best possible educational experience for our students.





Audited Financial Statement

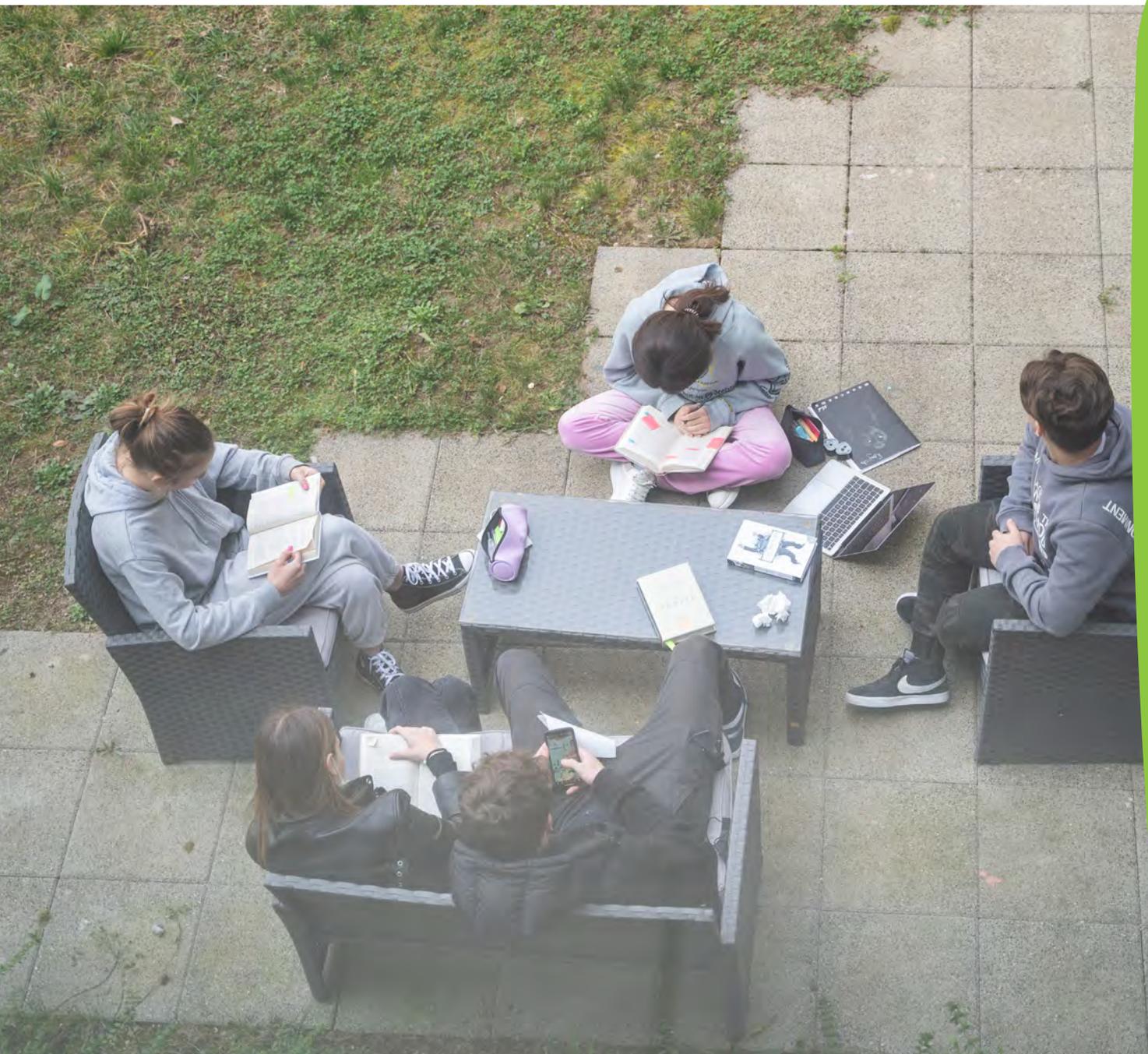


Intervention Program

The AISZ commitment to student success is unwavering. We continue to refine our strategies and systems to ensure every student receives the support and personalized learning they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

The framework employed to support this work is known as Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, or MTSS. MTSS serves as the cornerstone of our student support framework, guiding our efforts to monitor and address the diverse needs of our student body. By identifying and intervening early, we strive to close gaps before they widen, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for all

students. Research shows this to be one of the most powerful strategies a school can use to maximize student success. The AISZ Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Student Support Teams (SST) regularly review data from the classroom to inform who needs support and what support is needed so that they can determine how and when the support will be provided.





In the Lower School, there was a strong emphasis on using data to inform instructional design, particularly in the area of literacy. Teachers developed a greater understanding of the types and purposes of assessments in order to identify barriers that might be getting in the way of a child's success in reading. Teachers explored a plethora of research-based instructional routines that supported the essential components of reading. Equipped with knowledge, assessment tools, and instructional strategies, they created intervention plans to address their students' targeted areas of need.

In order to put this into action, it was all hands on deck. Homeroom teachers, student support teachers, specialist teachers and educational assistants provided support in the classroom during the reading block, which was referred to as **Tip Top time (Targeted Intervention Program to Optimize Pedagogy)**. Throughout the year, the Tip Top teachers were trained and coached to reinforce and enrich student learning through individual conferences, small group work, and book clubs. This also allowed for students with greater needs to meet more regularly with the homeroom teacher and to close learning gaps more quickly.

Collaboration was the key to making this all possible. Each month, homeroom teachers had the opportunity to meet with Tip Top teachers for professional learning and co-planning. They also met with the Lower School Learning Coordinator, Learning Support teacher, and English as an Additional Language teacher at the beginning, middle, and end of the intervention cycle in order to monitor student progress and determine if the interventions needed to be continued or revised, and to celebrate successful growth.

In the Upper School, to provide the flexibility for meeting the diverse learning needs of our student body, protected time each day was added to the schedule.

Consultancy Block has three purposes:



To support the implementation of structured and evidence-based intervention programs focused on closing gaps in literacy and/or numeracy for identified students.



To provide students and teachers with daily opportunities for increased personalized learning in their subject(s) of strength or difficulty.



To provide students with supervised time for the completion of outstanding work, to review their notes, or engage in reading for pleasure.

“

There is air in the system outside of structured class to offer personalized support that seems more robust than “after school” work. The MAP/IXL work is transformational. The appointment spreadsheet is an excellent platform. The time built around advisory and mid morning break has transformed the learning culture by breaking up the school day into different parts to build a stronger learning ecosystem. The morale of students and staff has increased in a positive way. Students can no longer fall between the cracks in many key areas. Teachers don’t have to scramble around to find students during lunch and recess and after school.

US Principal

85%

**OF STUDENTS
VERIFIED THAT
THE CONSULTANCY
BLOCK PROVIDES
VALUE TO THEM**

“

Makes a school day more productive for students and teachers. It breaks up the monotony of regular schedules where students go from one class to the next. It allows students to reflect on their needs and it provides teachers daily with an opportunity to address the needs of students that might not be addressed during class.

HS Teacher

“

I like consultancy. It's a good time to work on group projects with others and catch up on homework, as well as meet with teachers to catch up for missed classes. Even when I am not meeting with a teacher I can use this time to complete homework and tasks, as well as review my notebooks for my classes of the day.

Grade 9 Student

“

I feel like consultancy made it easier for the students to get feedback and improve. It also gives us more time if we need to catch up on something, which can be really helpful when it is a stressful period.

Grade 10 Student

Walking around the Upper School during Consultancy Block is an invigorating experience. You will observe students using tailored IXL programs in literacy and math to close gaps in knowledge and understanding. You will notice teachers and students meeting together to review core concepts from the classroom, to extend in an area of strength, or to have a detailed discussion about recent feedback. You will also notice students reading, reviewing notes for an upcoming assessment, or completing an assignment with the support of their peers and teachers nearby.

The introduction of Consultancy Block has been overwhelmingly well received by the Upper School community, with 85% of students confirming in an end of year survey that “Consultancy Block is useful to me”.



Letter from the LS Principal

As educators, we are committed to ensuring that research-based best practices form the underpinnings of the top-notch education we provide. We focus on what each child needs, and we do so while considering their academic, social, and emotional needs. We use data to inform what our students have learned and what they are ready to learn next. We reflect on our practice as educators, and we study the systems and structures we have in place to ensure we're providing the optimal learning environment for all of the students in our care.

This school year has been one of extraordinary learning for our students in Lower School. From our youngest students in PreKindergarten to our leaders in Grade 5, their naturally inquisitive natures and their joy of exploration and discovery

have inspired us every day. We are proud of the strong foundation that our students have developed as they've progressed through our engaging and rich curriculum.

A LEARNING-FOCUSED SCHEDULE

When we set learning goals, we look at how to make the best use of the time that we have available during the school day. Teachers become quite adept at planning and prioritizing so that they are as effective and efficient as possible. We also reflect upon the daily schedule to understand where it works well and how it might be tweaked to be even better.

We began this year with a revamped learning schedule in Lower School that was the result of the work of a task force of seven educators from the year before. This team collaborated for two months to dream, plan, and create a schedule that supported our young students developmentally and academically. What resulted was a developmentally-appropriate and innovative schedule built around what was best for the children.

One of the creative ways we've harnessed time this year was to ensure that all of our specialist teachers (art, music, and physical education) were available during the first hour of the morning.

During this time they are able to collaboratively plan as a team, which hasn't been possible with previous schedules. In addition, they partner with homeroom teachers three times a week to support students in their literacy learning as part of our TIP TOP time, which is explained more below.

In the Lower School, we call the final day of the school week Fabulous Friday. We begin every Friday morning with a LS Community Meeting where all students and faculty from PreK to Grade 5 meet in the Black Box theater to celebrate learning and build community. A new enhancement to the schedule this year is that every Friday concludes with a common divisional block from 14:15-15:00. During this time we have special activities such as Clan Friday where seven groups of students made up of different grade levels come together. They bake, practice mindfulness, create with origami, and more. In addition, this allows opportunities for small groups of teachers to come together for very focused professional learning.



TIP TOP TIME

Last school year an area of focus in the Lower School was improving our practice around reading and phonics instruction with the goal of increasing student learning. This year, we've gone a step further to build into our schedule an intervention program that focuses on filling in gaps in student knowledge and addressing obstacles that might be getting in the way for each individual student. We call this TIP TOP Time, which is an acronym that stands for Targeted Intervention Program to Optimize Pedagogy.

Intervention usually involves educators working with small groups of students with the same identified need or perhaps even working one-on-one with a student. To ensure every child receives the support needed, we expanded the traditional definition of literacy teacher to include our specialists as well. Three days a week, our homeroom teachers, support teachers (English as an additional language and learning support), and specialist teachers (art, music, and physical education) join homeroom classrooms to work with students on improving their reading and phonics skills. To ensure that the specialist teachers have the skills and knowledge they need, they've participated in a year-long series of workshops and coaching sessions with Sara Kirby, the Lower School Learning Coordinator. This model has proven to be quite successful for both students and teachers; over the course of the year, both groups have experienced significant growth.





LEARNING FOR PARENTS

We expanded upon the series of monthly parent workshops that began last school year. For 2023-24, the number of offerings was increased with some months having two opportunities for parents to come together and learn. We received feedback on the issues and topics that were of most interest to parents and used that information to design the schedule of workshops. A few examples of these events included:



Raising Savvy and Safe Digital Citizens

with Ana Grubac, LS Librarian
and Lauren Bastion, LS Counselor

Supporting Our English Language Learners

with Joelle Schwartz, LS EAL Teacher

The Role of Play in Learning

with Daniela Karacic
and Margareta Futac, PreK
and Katie McNeil, Kindergarten Teacher

It All Adds Up: Math in the Lower School

with Dawn Melarvie, AISZ Curriculum
Coordinator and LS Math Teachers

We look forward to continuing to provide these learning opportunities for parents in our community next school year as we partner in support of their children's education.

Focus on Lower School Learning

SERVICE LEARNING

For the past few years, Lower School faculty have identified a theme each year around which a unit of learning is designed for all students from PreKindergarten to Grade 5. One year the theme was *Changes*, and children learned how changes in their lives and in the world affects them. Last year the focus was on sustainability with children learning about what it means to take care of the world's natural resources to provide what they need now and in the future. As a faculty we reflected upon the learning that had taken place during these units, and we realized that we had the foundation for a service learning program in the Lower School.

We decided that the task of developing a service learning program could best be approached with a phased-in approach. For this first year, we focused on ensuring that all faculty shared a common understanding of the definition of the term. This work was led by two of our faculty - Ana Grubac, LS librarian and Vlatka Blagus, LS Croatian teacher - who had previously participated in training with Cathryn Berger Kaye, an educator and international service learning consultant.

Save The Strays

“

Service learning connects classroom studies with the natural caring and concern young people have for their world. Service learning allows young people to contribute to solving problems by helping others in their school community, their neighborhood, or around the world.

- Cathryn Berger Kaye ”





Inspired by Kaye's work, Ms. Blagus and Ms. Grubac held monthly sessions with the Lower School faculty to collaborate on designing the structure and goals of the program. They were also assisted by Ms. Danijela Peric, who sponsors the CAS (creativity, activity, service) program in the Upper School, to ensure alignment across the school. By the end of these sessions, each grade level had identified an area of need on which they would focus and the teachers had written the accompanying unit of study.

Throughout the school year students were immersed in service learning projects that highlighted ways to meet societal needs through informed action. Across the grade levels, each class chose a topic to investigate and then identified the action they could take to have a positive impact. For example, our youngest students in PreK and Kindergarten studied nature as they learned how to plant and maintain a community garden. They also learned about the roles needed for a productive garden; from recycler to pollinator, they learned how everyone works together. As another example, our fourth graders wanted to better understand how one's needs change as they age. The students researched ways to enrich the lives of elder members of the community and then developed intergenerational relationships with residents of a local nursing home through visits.

As a culminating event, we hosted the Lower School Service Learning Showcase on the evening of April 25 for students and their families. The children were so excited and proud to share what they've learned. As a community it was such a lovely evening of coming together and recognizing our students as global leaders of the future. One adult visitor remarked, "This event reminds me of when my own children were growing up and they attended international schools. It's a special kind of community. Thank you for bringing my own memories back to life."

Looking toward next year, the Lower School will continue to develop our service learning program and build in even more opportunities for students to have a voice in how they can have a positive impact on their world. As a school we are embracing service learning as a way for students to understand how they can bring about social change in their world. What a transformative experience this year has been!



Letter from the US Principal

Welcome to the Attention Economy.

When I started teaching in the United States in 1995, we were entering the Information Age, followed by the Digital Age, The Fourth Industrial Age, and now a phase where human attention is the latest commodity.

This phenomenon makes our work complex, yet filled with possibility as we introduce tools like A.I. to organize big data, simplify tasks, prioritize answers, and hopefully enhance learning for young people whilst keeping their attention.

When Dr. Spencer Silver tried to create a super adhesive for 3M in the 1960s, he did the opposite by inadvertently designing a non-adhesive that later became the magic behind post-its. He referred to this mistake/discovery as a “solution without a problem.”





When we launched our strategic initiative plan in 2017, one of the themes was to build systems to prepare students for jobs that didn't even exist yet. At the rate of recent technological changes, it seems like solutions are moving faster and more complex than any problems we think they can solve. When Instagram was first introduced in 2010, it took 2 and a half months to reach one million users. It only took ChatGPT five days to reach one million after its launch in 2023. I didn't anticipate that "experiencing the future, today" would literally mean that this could shift from one day to the next!

What keeps me grounded in this new Attention Economy and the paradox of solutions looking for problems is the human experience of providing opportunities for our students to express their creativity, nourish their gifts, challenge their uncertainties, and support their character.

Emerging from the pandemic, the upper school was presented with opportunities that enabled us to reassess our approach to building a stronger community. Here are the ones we focused on:

- A more personalized and focused approach to fully engaged academic work.
- The importance of rebuilding and strengthening community.

One of the extraordinary takeaways from 2019-22 was the extent to which learners didn't simply "bounce back" to the way things were before and truly needed a helping hand to get back on track. By introducing the Professional Learning Community model, we were able to clearly identify learning targets and interventions for students in math and literacy as well as the structures necessary to make them happen. We redesigned our timetable with a 20 minute 'consultancy block' accompanied by an appointment calendar so that students could meet one on one with teachers and get specific help on areas of need. The results have been remarkable. In addition to these structures, teachers are utilizing PLC protocols to assess student results and target interventions for the consultancy. It has been

a powerful experience that demonstrates true results.

In five short years, the upper school has nearly doubled in size. Our community building has made significant progress in the design of a unique middle school experience thanks to the efforts of our new middle school grade level leads (Mr. Coman, Mr. McLoughlin, Ms. Freel) who have established better routines, celebrations, and student voice into the experiences of these students.

In addition, thanks to the establishment of a competitive athletic programs built around seasons, we were able to launch a highly successful middle school basketball and volleyball program, as well as continue our strong cross country team.

In high school, the challenge of rebuilding relationships post-pandemic was enhanced by a student initiative to design conversations with multi-grade teams. These efforts led to working with a highly regarded non-governmental organization in Zagreb (Status M) focused on youth socio-emotional development. In addition to the nine sessions facilitated by the group, our students also designed a Grade 12 mentoring program for the Grade 11s. Thanks to our competitive sports initiative, we were also able to launch a successful girls' soccer team in addition to our already established and popular volleyball program.

As a teacher and Principal, I am always trying to learn new things, whether or not they relate to solutions chasing problems or the other way around. I am also excited about the work that our amazing team has done in this new phase of the human experience. As you read through this edition of AISZ story, you will learn about our middle school design, our community building efforts, our high school honors diploma, our commitment to socio-emotional health, and our focus on high quality academics.

Thank you for being part of this dedicated and caring community.

Focus on Upper School Learning

MIDDLE SCHOOL DESIGN

Our Middle School students are on an exciting journey of self-discovery. They are often navigating through social and emotional challenges whilst honing in on their academic skills to build their independence and prepare for High School. This year, AISZ made strategic investments by appointing an Upper School Associate Principal and adding an extra Advisory teacher to each grade level, enhancing our pastoral care program and community-building initiatives.

Central to our community-building efforts are the annual Unity Trips, which are designed to forge connections and a sense of belonging among students and faculty (new and returning alike) in the beautiful environment of Croatia.

Daily Advisory sessions provide a structured framework for students to manage their workload, engage with current events, and cultivate meaningful connections. Through themed days such as “Managebac Monday”, “Trending Tuesday”, “Wellness Wednesday”, “Time Management Thursday”, and “Fun Friday”, students are encouraged to be informed, stay organized, practice self-care, and foster camaraderie through shared activities.

To promote opportunities for students to connect with more people within their grade, we introduced two class lists within each grade level, resulting in Advisories red and blue, as well as classrooms A and B. The Advisory lists are used for Advisory, Consultation Blocks and Community Blocks, whilst the classroom lists are used for English, Mathematics, Individuals & Societies, and Science.

During Community Blocks, we regularly hold Red Vs. Blue tournaments, which offer students opportunities for friendly competition and connection across grades, strengthening our sense of community.

Stepping out of the regular schedule, participation in international and locally based CEESA Tournaments proved highly popular this year, providing students with off-campus engagement and the chance to connect with peers from the CEESA region through sports and shared experiences.

The return of Middle School Project Week at the end of the year provides another off schedule and multigrade platform for students to unleash their creativity, teamwork, and leadership skills by designing and building arcade games from recycled materials for Lower School enjoyment.

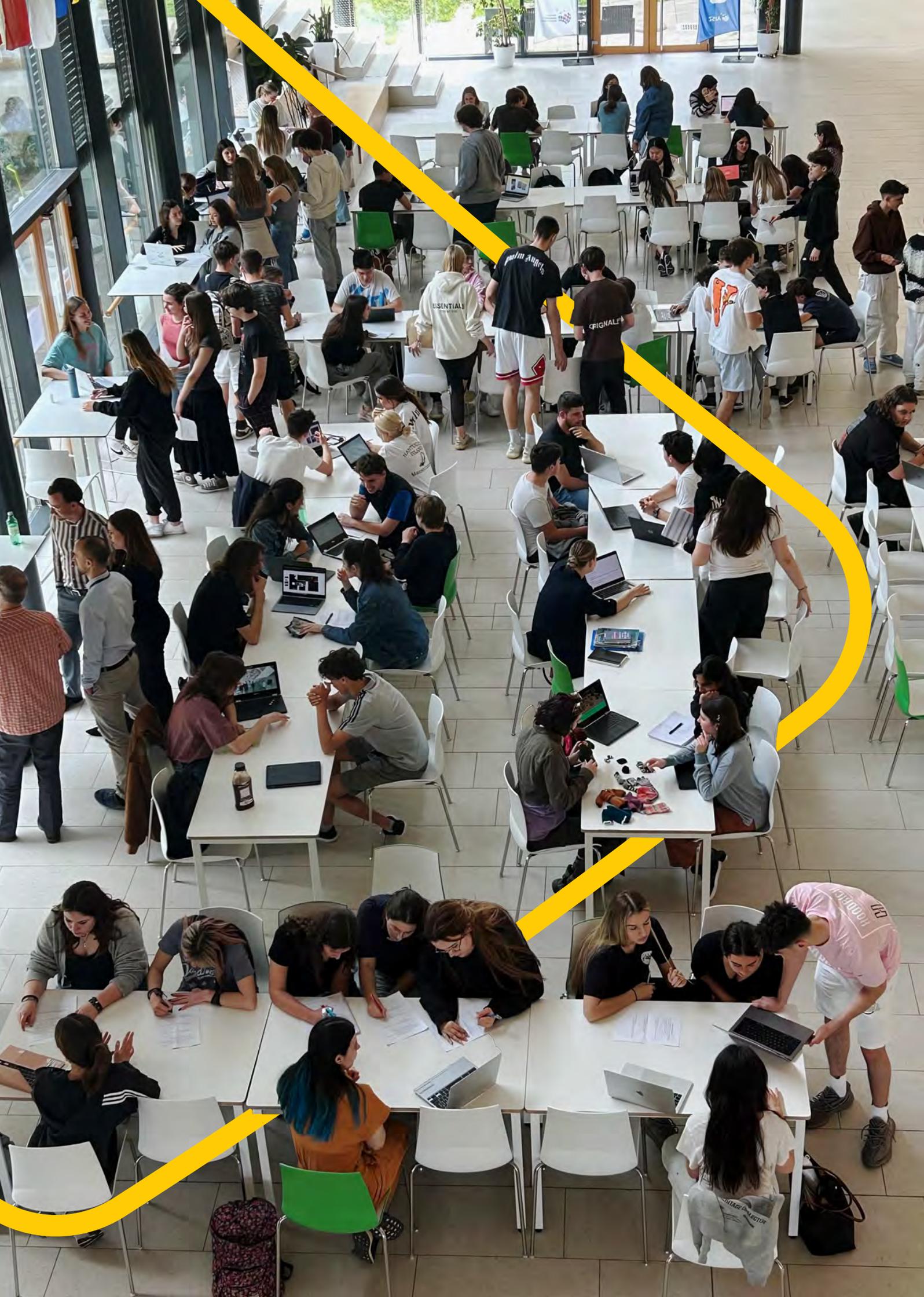
Finally, eight Middle School students enriched their leadership capabilities through the JUMP! Leadership Program, assuming roles in Student Council and contributing to the planning of future Unity Trips. These initiatives collectively reflect our commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals equipped for success in High School and beyond.

Community Building

- MS STUCO Events (stalls and activities for days like Valentine’s Day).
- SRSS-IE Data shows notable reductions in both internalising and externalising risks amongst students between October 2023 and March 2024.

We also invested:

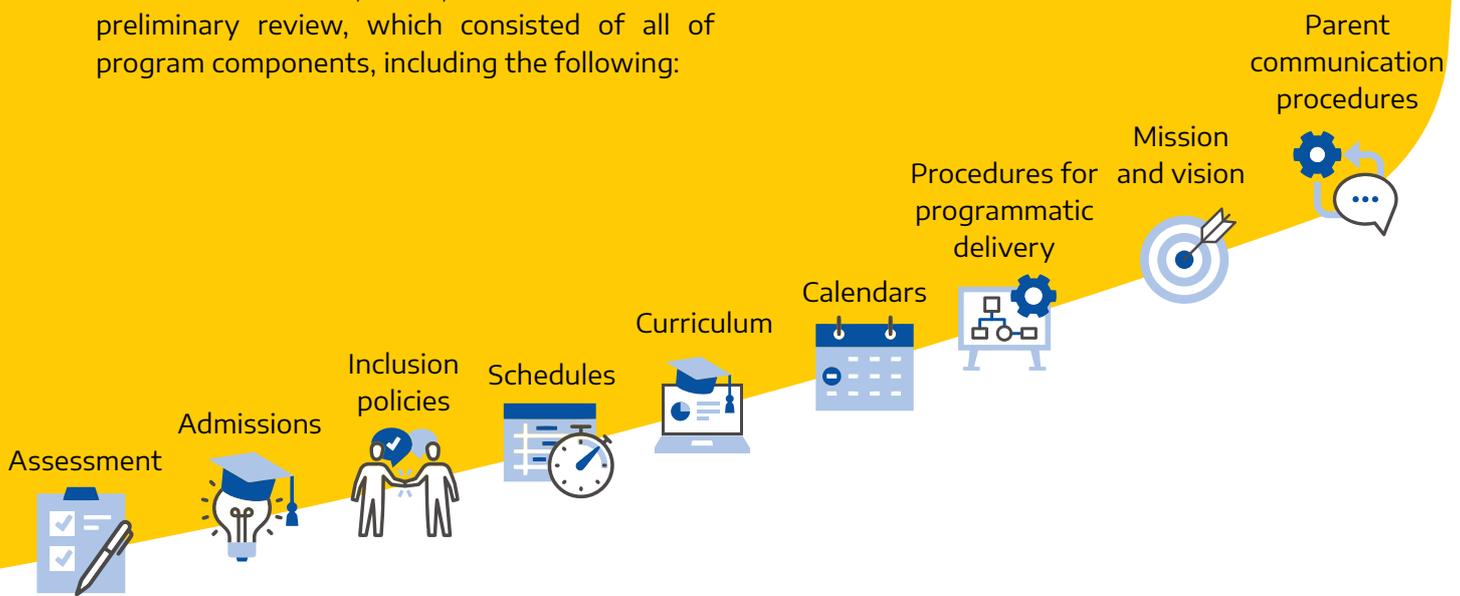
- Consultancy Block - which allows for students to get what they need without being withdrawn from classes. This is particularly helpful for students that need time with our counselor.



IB Re-Authorization

For the school year 2023-2024, AISZ experienced its 5-year IB Program re-authorization process. The requirements have changed significantly from the previous review, including new program standards and practices to address, and a new requirement that schools document their program development plans.

On November 15th, 2023, we submitted our preliminary review, which consisted of all of program components, including the following:



We had two minor items to address on one of our unit plans and on our inclusion policy. These issues were resolved by early December 2023 and then AISZ moved to the self-study phase deadlines.

During the fall and winter of the school year, IB teachers, students, parents and school leadership provided input for our self-study survey. The survey consisted of self-reflective rankings for each of the standards and practices as well as narrative conclusions for each. We submitted this report on February 1st along with our Program Development Plan. This plan focused on access and inclusion, which traced the growth, changes, and additions to our Student Support Services department. The plan also tracked and highlighted the subsequent improvements in inclusion in the IB program.

Following the completion of the reports and deadlines, Mr. Paul Buckley, Director, Mr. Stephen Dexter, Upper School Principal and Ms. Erin Henkels, IB DP Coordinator met with the IB Program Leader for the Evaluation meeting.

On March 26th, Mr. Buckley and Ms. Henkels received the final School Evaluation Report. The results of the final report were overwhelmingly positive. AISZ was praised for its leadership, teacher care and support, and our focused development on access and inclusion. Areas that we identified as needing improvement were highlighted by the report. We identified that we need to strengthen our policy review protocol and formalize that process and communication. We also highlighted that we would like to draw more on and strengthen our communications with our wider community to extend and support student learning. Overall this experience provided us a good opportunity to reflect on our program implementation and identify areas for growth.

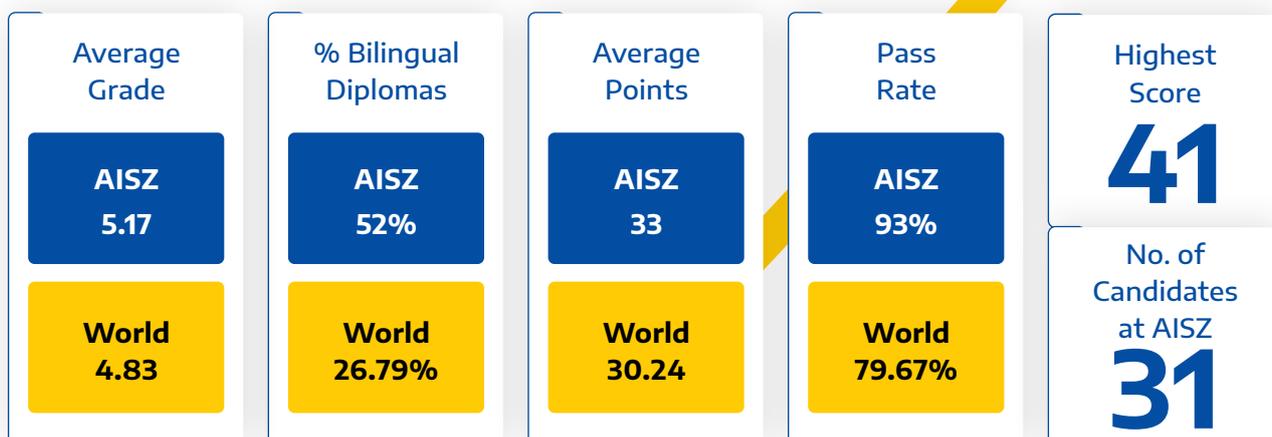
2023 Summary of IB Results

CURRICULUM

AISZ is a non-selective school for both admissions and IB Diploma enrolment. AISZ offers AERO Standard based learning up to high school and IB and college preparatory courses to international and internationally-minded high school students living in Croatia. We offer Learning Support and English language support for identified students. In Grades 11 and 12, students may choose to take The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme or IB Certificates, both requiring the successful completion of external IB exams. Students who choose not to enroll in the IB program follow IB Standard Level course content without the expectation of completing and sitting external assessments and exams. All graduates earn the AISZ American High School Diploma.

COMPARISON TO WORLD DATA USING THE JULY PUBLISHED RESULTS

(Taken from Diploma Statistical Bulletin, May 2023 Assessment Session)



RANGE OF IB SCORES

Score Range	24-29	30-34	35-39	40-45
Number of Students	7	10	6	3

RESULTS FROM THE LAST THREE YEARS, INCLUDING COMPARISON OF MAY 2022 JULY RESULTS

YEAR	Cohort size	% Diploma	% Bilingual Diploma	Average score	Highest score
2023	31	93	52	33	41
2022	17	100	41	33	44
2021	15	93	47	32	39

Letter from the College Counselor



I am very proud of all the accomplishments that our students have made this year. Through our collective efforts to prioritize the concept of FIT in the college counseling process, we have witnessed remarkable growth and success among our student body. From securing admission to their dream colleges to thriving in academic and extracurricular pursuits, our students have truly excelled. By guiding them toward colleges that align with their individual strengths, interests, and aspirations, we have empowered them to embark on journeys of personal and academic fulfillment. As a college counselor, seeing our students flourish and reach their full potential is incredibly rewarding.

In the ever-evolving world of college admissions, the concept of FIT has emerged as a pivotal trend reshaping the industry. FIT, emphasizing the alignment between a student's attributes and aspirations and the characteristics of a college or university, represents a departure from traditional metrics of success towards a more holistic understanding of student satisfaction and well-being. This trend underscores a shift towards student-centered practices within college counseling, guiding students towards educational pathways that not only offer academic rigor but also resonate with their individual preferences and values. This emphasis on FIT signals a positive evolution within the business of college admissions, one that acknowledges the importance of holistic student success and promises to shape the future of higher education for the better.

We are very proud of our graduating class. They have matured a great deal, and all of them count on a plan that best fits their needs for life after AISZ. They all have worked very hard, and their efforts have paid off. To assist them in this process, we placed an internal deadline for university applications before the Christmas break. This strategic initiative not only eases the stress of the application process for our students but also positions them favorably in the competitive world of college admissions. As a result most of our senior class had at least a conditional offer for admission to a university of their choice before this January.

In our efforts to increase the number of school visits and further expand our reach in the college admissions landscape, the American International School of Zagreb has been actively fostering relationships with universities worldwide. This past Fall several AISZ families and I were invited to attend The University Fair at AIS Belgrade organized by the Council of International Schools. This allowed our students and families to engage directly with representatives from various universities, gaining valuable insights into different academic programs, campus cultures, and application procedures. At the same time, we have seen an increase in university visits to our campus this year. These interactions not only help students narrow down their college choices but also provide them with a firsthand look at the opportunities available to them after graduation from AISZ.

Participating in the CIS Forum in Dublin was a significant milestone for our college counseling program. I was invited to present to a global panel of school counselors highlighting the innovative approaches and best practices we employ at AISZ to guide students through the college application process effectively. This experience not only showcased our dedication to excellence but also allowed us to learn from and collaborate with experts in the field, ensuring that our counseling services remain at the forefront of international education standards. As a direct result of our efforts to strengthen partnerships with universities globally, we are excited to announce the upcoming 50-university fair to be hosted at AISZ in November 2024. This event will provide an unparalleled opportunity for students to interact with a diverse array of institutions, explore different academic offerings, and network with admissions representatives. It is our hope that this fair will not only broaden our students' horizons but also inspire them to pursue their academic and career goals with confidence and enthusiasm.

At the American International School of Zagreb, we are committed to continually enhancing our college counseling program to ensure that every student receives the guidance and support they need to succeed in their college aspirations. Through our proactive outreach efforts, strategic partnerships, and commitment to excellence, we empower our students to chart their own path toward a bright and fulfilling future in higher education.

I am excited to continue contributing to AISZ's thriving and proactive community of learners. Thank you for all your support.

Anibal Bogliaccini
AISZ College Counselor / Registrar



To learn more about the college process, simply scan the QR code and visit the College Counseling Site.

Class of 2024 AISZ Graduate Placement



Class of 2024 Aisz University Offers (Blue - Accepted matriculations)

United States Of America

Christopher University
George Mason University
Northeastern University
Parsons New School
Parsons NYC
Purdue University
SAIC

Canada

McGill University
McMaster University
University of British Columbia
University of Toronto
Waterloo University

The Netherlands

Erasmus University
Tilburg University
Eindhoven Tech University
TU/e Eindhoven
University of Groningen

Spain

IE University
College for International Studies

Austria

Vienna Music Conservatory.

Italy

Academia Italiana Art
Marangoni Institute

Croatia

RIT.
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of
University of Zagreb

Hungary

Veterinary University of Budapest

Germany

Frankfurt School of Finance and
Management

Switzerland

EHL (Lausanne)

United Kingdom

Aberystwyth University
Anglia Ruskin University
Birkbeck University of London
Brunel University London
Buckinghamshire New University
Cardiff University
City University of London
Coventry University
King's College London
Kingston University
Lancaster University
LSBU
Manchester Metropolitan University
Northeastern University (London)
Oxford Brookes University
Queen Mary University
Regent's University
St. Andrews University
University of Bedfordshire
University of Birmingham
University of Brighton
University of East Anglia
University of Exeter
University of Greenwich London
(Birkbeck)
University of Law
University of Leeds
University of Nottingham
University of Portsmouth
University of Strathclyde
University of Sussex
University of Twente
University of West London
University of Westminster



AISZ Honors Diploma

For a small upper school of 225 students, we represent 40 nationalities, 30 languages and cultures, a commitment to excellence, and several opportunities to experience the future, today.

Like many schools in the world, the pandemic accelerated the speed of change and the necessity to adapt to the evolving needs of our learners. This not only means preparation for a strong university matriculation but also the opportunity to enrich the academic experience with pursuits that extend beyond the AISZ campus.

In 2023, our forward thinking Board supported the concept of a high school diploma program that would facilitate the design of a course of study and experiences to complement our current academic offerings.

After a year of study, research, focus group discussions and beta-testing, the AISZ Honors High School Diploma is ready for launch in August, 2024 with several students entering Grade 11.

STAFFING

Mr. Jeffrey Ormrod, an experienced Project Based Learning teacher, will be introducing a course for all students called “Learning by Design” in grades 9 and 10, that will enable students to learn the principles of innovative thinking, collaboration, and having a growth mindset so they can make informed decisions on their pathway for the second half of high school.

Dr. Darin Fahrney, our current learning support teacher and coordinator of strategic initiatives, has facilitated program choice and pathway options with several students.





As it is currently designed, the AISZ Honors Diploma leverages our current courses and programs as the foundational core and allows for additional choices that personalizes the pathway. Students adhere to the 24 credit graduation requirement and have flexibility within the program to make choices that qualify for graduation credit and will align with their focused area of study.

INTERDISCIPLINARY SENIOR PROJECT

At the core of the Honors Diploma is the Senior project. While there are multiple aspects of the senior project, including a project defense, the student must submit their research accompanied by a 4000 word paper as a culmination of their academic and extracurricular focus.

SENIOR PROJECT ACTION ORIENTATION

It is expected that the Honors Diploma senior project will have an action orientation. This will be defined during program development in 2023-2024. Students whose projects do not meet this requirement are required to complete an additional CAS project.

SIX EXTERNALLY VALIDATED ASSESSMENTS

In lieu of several of our graduation requirements, the Honors Diploma students are identifying six externally validated assessments or activities to complement their project that will count as one. The validations will be at a college or professional level and will be chosen by the student but pre-approved by the AISZ faculty coordinator. External validations are aligned with or support the student's senior research project. Potential external validations may include Advanced Placement courses, university courses (online or in person), professional certifications (ex: cybersecurity, programming, accounting, medical), internships or extensive projects (e.g. Duke of Edinburgh), or IB certificates. These are not meant to represent an exhaustive list and must be pre-approved by the student's advisor and college counselor for inclusion. High school-level coursework or certifications will not count toward validation.

To date, several students have already expressed interest in the program for next year. We are thrilled that this innovative design for learning is supported by our school community and that our students can experience the future by participating in a wider range of options that positively impacts their future.

Building Community

School Community Organization (SCO)

In November, we unveiled the newly established AISZ School Community Organization (SCO), a culmination of a year-long effort to revitalize our Parent Community post-pandemic. Through extensive research, it became evident that the conventional Parent Teacher Association (PTA) model no longer aligned with the mission, vision, and values of AISZ.

In response, our Board convened to formulate a set of By-Laws that better support our mission and vision.

The AISZ Board Policy outlines the purpose of the SCO:

- ◆ Bring the school community together in support of the School's Mission and Vision
- ◆ Promote the values of the school
- ◆ Support parents
- ◆ Raise funds for events or resources that augment the curriculum





Additionally, the By-Laws, authored by the AISZ Board, articulate the following goals for the SCO:

- ❖ Develop a close-knit AISZ community
- ❖ Reinforce the AISZ mission statement
- ❖ Support all AISZ students, faculty, staff, and families
- ❖ Raise funds for the benefit of all students

The SCO's leadership team, led by Sophie Laureys, Martina Lukić, Loes Lefeber, and Rachel Aram, provided direction and guidance. Scheduled monthly meetings, alternating between leadership meetings with AISZ administration and general community meetings, began in January 2024. These monthly meetings regarding SCO activities ensured transparent communication with the AISZ community. Consistent updates were published in the Bear Print.

A large part of the SCO is coordinating special events for students and families such as the annual Stroll 'n Strudel hike up Sljeme, the Spring Social for parents and teachers, and Teacher Appreciation Week. This year, our SCO initiated an exciting new event: International Day. Our student journalist, 11th grader Aleksandra Sehanovic, captured the day well in the article below from AISZ's The Bearly News monthly student publication.



International Day

On Friday, March 22nd – the global day of happiness – AISZ students across (almost) all grade levels celebrated International Day! Everybody participated in a vast array of activities, including learning an Australian dance, painting on a map of the world with handprints, spelling out their name in sign language or writing it with Chinese characters, guessing the names of spoken languages or their alphabets, picking up things with chopsticks, matching monuments from around the world to their countries and cities of provenance, along with other smaller games. From 8:15 to 11:00 am, the student body was spread across these individual stations based on a “clan” system.

Meaning, in the morning, in their homerooms, all people were given a silicone bracelet of a specific color – red, green, dark blue, light blue, white, and black – with their name written on it, and in this way were assigned to different groups of mixed grade levels for the day. This idea of each student having their name displayed on their bracelet was a particularly important component of International Day. As Ms. Melarvie explained, having all members of a clan be able to recognize each other by name “creates a sense of belonging.” She commented that, after all, “we are too small of a school to not all know each other!”

When speaking about the size of our school, Ms. Melarvie also observed how this makes it challenging to organize an International Day in a way that is often done in other, larger schools – with little booths set up to represent each country in the community, in a fair-like style. This is because, for some of the nationalities in our school, we have “only one family representing them,” and it would be a lot to ask them to set up an entire booth for their country! Instead, Ms. Melarvie emphasized we have to adapt to our context, and “start small” – see what goes well, and what we could improve for next time.

Student Voice
**Aleksandra
Sehanovic**



Moving around the different International Day stations, it was nice to see students of all grade levels laugh and have fun. Even though some of the activities might have seemed to be more targeted towards younger kids – especially from the perspective of juniors or seniors – it was easy to find all of them very entertaining.



The day concluded with a flag parade intended to both celebrate the individual national identities of all members in our community, as well as our unity, while putting politics aside. For the organization of International Day, Ms. Melarvie thanked especially the School Community Organization – a sort of new version of the PTA – for taking the time to invent and lead the many different activities.

Citation:
Sehanovic, Aleksandra.
"International Day."
The Bearly News,
27 Mar. 2024, p. 1/3.



Building a Culture of Parent Education Workshops

Did you know that back in 1945, it was believed that knowledge doubled every 25 years? In 1996, information was thought to double every six to ten years. Fast forward to 2024, and now, it is said that knowledge doubles every 12 hours! So how do we equip our students with the tools to navigate this sea of information and discern what truly matters? How do we as educators let parents know what and how we decide to teach in an ever-changing landscape of education? The answer: Parent Education Workshops.

This year, AISZ hosted 29 Parent Education Workshops ranging in scope from the Role of Play in Learning for our PK-Kindergarten parents to Exploring New Diploma Pathways for our high school students preparing for university. Together our educators challenged parents to explore what education was like when they were in school and then shift that thinking to the educational processes of today.

A Sampling of the Lower School Parent Education Workshops:

■
The Reading
Brain and
Nurturing Early
Literacy

■
Parenting with
Positivity

■
It All Adds Up:
Math in the
Lower School

■
How Assessment
Informs Learning

■
Puberty and Your
Child





A Sampling of the Upper School Parent Education Workshops:

Demystifying
the Upper School
Grading Criteria

Resilience,
Advocacy, and
Parenting: The
Hard Choices of
Parenting and
School

Academic
Showcase: Math
in the Upper
School

Academic
Showcase:
Historical
Thinking

Exploring New
AISZ Diploma
Pathways





Athletics & Extra Curricular Activities

CEESA Events

AISZ had the privilege to participate in numerous sports events organized in cooperation with the Central & Eastern European Schools Association (CEESA).

MS girls' tennis team won the CEESA MS Tennis Tournament in Istanbul. The girls represented our school in the best possible way on the tennis courts and off them. In the history of the CEESA tennis tournament, no team had ever won the tournament without losing a match, and our girls just did that. On the other hand, the MS Boys participated in the competition and won 3rd place.

The cross-country team had a few more races than they were expecting. Two in Sofia at CEESA and a few in various airports across Europe. Fortunately, our team was successful in all! This trip was a real adventure and sure to be one the students will never forget. All the students performed admirably and were a credit to our school.

On the weekend of tournaments in Bratislava, Krakow, and Sofia, it was literally a case of planes, trains, and automobiles.





Middle School (Grade 6-8) Boys Football Team went to Krakow for the CEESA MS tournament and finished a creditable 5th.

The HS Girls played in two tournaments in one weekend and got stronger and stronger as the tournaments went on. They managed to take 3rd place in the playoff game in what was a nail-biting encounter.



AISZ students showcased their intellectual prowess and team spirit at the Central and Eastern European Schools Association (CEESA) High School Knowledge Bowl Tournament, hosted by the International School of Belgrade in the historic city of Belgrade, Serbia. The event brought together 10 schools from across the region, bringing together a total of 18 teams in a spirited competition that tested the students' knowledge across various academic disciplines. AISZ was represented by two outstanding teams. Team A (our seniors and juniors) demonstrated exceptional knowledge and teamwork, securing a commendable third place in a fiercely competitive tournament. Team B (our younger grade 9 and grade 10 students) also put forth a strong showing, ranking 12th and showcasing the depth of talent within AISZ. These achievements are a testament to the hard work, preparation, and dedication of our students. The tournament was not only about competition. Students had the opportunity to engage in a variety of enriching activities outside the quiz room.



For three days, AISZ was part of the 2nd Annual CEESA Rock Band Festival held in Budapest, where they had the opportunity to engage in music, learning, and collaboration.



AISZ Bears hosted the CEESA middle school boys' basketball tournament and finished in 2nd place. Five teams from Latvia, Sofia, Bucharest, Krakow, and Zagreb participated in the tournament. The team worked very hard the entire season to prepare for the tournament and played their hearts out the entire time. The MS Bears represented AISZ with great sportsmanship, hustle, determination, and class. The tournament was a great success.





In 2024, the CEESA HS Math Competition was hosted by AISZ with much pleasure. Bringing together 70 students and coaches on-site, the atmosphere was full of excitement as participants gathered to showcase their mathematical prowess. We were excited to represent our school and the city of Zagreb.



CEESA MS GIRLS VOLLEYBALL IN SKOPJE

AISZ proudly represented at an exciting CEESA Middle School volleyball tournament hosted by NOVA International School in Skopje. Teams from six different cities, including Belgrade, Sofia, Baku, Istanbul, Tirana, and Zagreb, gathered in Skopje, North Macedonia, for three days of fun and games.

Our middle school players showed off their skills and teamwork on the courts, playing against teams from all over the region. Even though the competition was tough, our team played their hearts out and had a blast doing it!

We're thrilled to announce that out of the 8 teams, AISZ won 4th place! But that's not all - our team was also recognized for having the most positive energy, teamwork, and smiling faces throughout the tournament. Whether we were cheering each other on or high-fiving after a good play, we showed what it means to be a team.



AMIS Music Teachers Conference

AISZ hosted over 120 music teachers from International Schools around the world. The Association for Music in International Schools held their annual conference here in November 2023. Teachers from as far away as Columbia and Hong Kong participated in over 40 workshops led by featured clinicians and fellow teachers.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Jim Frankel, Director of Music First and Head of Digital Education for Wise Music, spoke on the impact of AI in music education. Darla Hanley, Dean of Music at Berklee College of Music, curriculum consultant Nyssa Brown (MusicEd Forward), MYP/IB music technology consultant Samuel Wright (WrightStuffMusic), Marla Butke and David Frego from the Dalcroze Society of America as well as Roger Sams and Beth Ann Hepburn, co-authors of the Purposeful Pathways curriculum were the featured clinicians.

All participants left Croatia raving about Zagreb, AISZ, and all who worked to make the weekend an amazing experience.

This was truly exciting for our HS music program. Several of our HS music students got to perform at the AMIS. Two of the AMIS senior solo finalists performed at the grand opening session for these educators and received great praise for their outstanding performance. Fran Farkas (piano gr. 10), performed "Obermann's Valley" by Liszt and Ante Penava (high brass WINNER of the competition gr. 12) performed "Arija i igra" by Arco.





The world's greatest acoustic guitarist visits AISZ

Tommy Emmanuel visited AISZ to spend time with our current and future IBDP students and aspiring guitarists. Tommy Emmanuel was in Zagreb for one sellout evening, and he found time in his busy schedule to visit our school and talk about music, playing, composing, and a bit of life philosophy with our students. Needless to say, what kind of an experience this was for our students.



Alumni

Interview with
Dino Redzebasic Kucukalic
Class of 2023

What advice would you give our upcoming graduates?

The summer before college is long - use that time to prepare but also relax (with an emphasis on relaxing).



Which college are you attending and where?
Could you tell us a little bit about your college?

I'm attending FER (Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing) in Zagreb. It is going very well so far; I have passed all my subjects so far and I definitely learned a lot of new things. It has been difficult to adapt at first but after a few months I adapted well.

During your 4 years here at AISZ, what was the biggest takeaway or memory you have that you associate with the school?

Playing guitar in the school band. When I was Grade 11 it was the last day of the first semester and for the first time I entered the band room. I was there and one of my peers, Vito, was at the recording studio and he saw me take the guitar and I played for the first time on an electric guitar. Vito comes over and asks to "jam" together as

he plays the drums. Since then we have played all the time. That's a core memory in addition to the LEGO robotics. I started the team here - I participated in a competition for it in MS. When I came to AISZ I realized I had the opportunity and resources to start a team; and afterwards be a mentor. We formed a team and started preparing. We had a few months and it was a bit challenging with covid still at that point. It was difficult to show the students what exactly was expected from them in the competition. We prepared so well and participated and managed to qualify for the regional tournament and everyone was so happy - including me. After the competition, a student approached me and said that they spent the whole class researching the whole robot ideas instead of a regular Science class - he was happy about it and so it made me happy and proud.

Is there a specific skill that you developed during your time in the school that you can attribute back to the school?

Effective organization. Time management, dividing my work into a well developed schedule. All the subjects were connected and you had to know how to divide your time in order to do well. Teachers helped all of us a lot with this. They also effectively communicated the subjects and I knew what was going on after the class. Now in college, you don't necessarily understand everything instantly and easily, as you have to reaffirm the lesson at home. Each class at AISZ was structured well and you knew what to take away from the class.

How did the transition from AISZ to your next steps go?

It was difficult the first few months, especially the transition from English to Croatian. Studying all subjects in Croatian - terms and lingo was so different. After a few months you get used to it and it is familiar. I caught up on all of the terminology.

What has been the easiest and what has been the most challenging in the transition?

Compared to some of my peers I realized that after AISZ I found it easier to manage my time well. I know how to schedule my day so I can incorporate academics and my hobbies while my peers are struggling more. The most challenging was the curriculum - in college it built up on what students were doing in Croatian schools while the AISZ curriculum is different. I found it more difficult than the other students in college.

Were your next steps after moving on from AISZ what you expected? And how well has AISZ in general prepared you?

Yes and no. I expected it to be a lot more focused on what I wanna study - electrical engineering. I didn't expect that I'm gonna be this independent when I first came to college - maybe even a bit too independent. Noone checks in on you. AISZ prepared me well for that part because in IB we had to do a lot of independent work. Plan a schedule and manage time well so I can say that I was well prepared.

What could AISZ do for graduates in the future to make the transition smoother?

AISZ did a great job honestly. At AISZ we focused a lot on the mental aspect of everything - to relax and have time for ourselves and you really need that in college because you can get overworked.

Arriving Faculty

We welcome our new Faculty, arriving in August 2024.



Wendy Herbert
MS General Science Teacher



Natalija Židkova
EAL and IB/DP English B
Teacher



James Welch
HS General Science Teacher



Karen Killeen
Upper School Learning
Support Teacher



Thomas Faulkner
IB/DP Economics/Personal
finance and business Teacher



Morgan Miller
Kindergarden Teacher



Phillippa Colley
Athletics & Activities
Director



Laura Peers
Grade 2 Teacher



Emily Arrighi
Grade 1 Teacher



Ekaterina Skvortcova
LS EA



Stefanie Donelly
Moderate and Intensive
Learning Support Needs
Teacher



Claudia Iordache
LS EAL

AISZ
social media

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Leaving Faculty

The end of the year always brings mixed feelings. In June, we say goodbye to some of our faculty and staff. We wish them all the very best in their future endeavors and look forward to seeing them either online or in person at one of our alumni functions. Our entire AISZ Community says thank you for your contributions.

Once a Bear, always a Bear.



3 years
Adam Strelec
Grade 3 Teacher



1 year
Iva Vego
HR Manager



3 years
David Voltz
Grade 5 Teacher



11 years
Danijela Mikolavčić
Administrative Assistant /
Accountant



6 months
Derek Davies
Athletics & Activities
Director



1 year
Marija Miletić
EAL Teacher



2 years
Veronica Freel
Science Teacher



6 months
Petrina McGregor
MS/HS English & Social
Studies Teacher



11 years
Damir Šprljan
Outdoor Education
Facilitator & Emergency
Coverage



2 years
Katie McNeil
Kindergarten Teacher



1 year
Joelle Schwartz
LS EAL Teacher



6 months
Clinton Knox
MS/HS English & Social
Studies Teacher



2 years
Lindsey Baldwin
US Economics and
Personal Finance Teacher



4 years
Cheri Amarna
US Science Teacher

Staff Longevity

10 years

Tina Rowe

US P.E. and Outdoor Education Teacher



Romana Chevriér Rados
Medical Officer



Daniela Karačić
Pre-K Teacher



Danijela Mikolavčić
Accountant



Pero Grgić
Maintenance and Facilities



Vlatka Blagus
LS and US Croatian Teacher



Danijela Perić
Teacher and CAS Coordinator



Ozren Soldo
US History and TOK Teacher



Lana Škrđatić Puž
US Music Teacher



Tomislav Osredečki
Maintenance and Facilities



15 years

20 years

Jacqueline Čaleta
LS Atelierist
(Artist in Residence)



Dalibor Mandarić
LS Physical and
Health Education
Teacher



Ana Martinčević Grubač
LS Librarian



Martina Mencer Salluzzo
US French Teacher



Nela Puđa
Grade 1 Teacher



Neven Sorić
ICT Manager



Lidija Šimunec
LS and US
German Teacher



Kristina Šprljan
US English Teacher,
TOK and Croatian
University Facilitator



Gordana Vučković
US German Teacher



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