

Annual Report 2024-2025

Experiencing the future, today.





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Welcome from the Director

As I reflect on the academic year now behind us, I do so with deep gratitude and immense pride in presenting this year's Annual Report for the American International School of Zagreb. This moment carries special significance for me—not only as we celebrate another year of accomplishments and growth—but as I prepare to close the final chapter of my professional journey in education nearly 30 of those in international school leadership.

At its core, education is a lifelong journey—one of curiosity, discovery, and transformation. At AISZ, this journey comes alive through the exchange of ideas, the celebration of cultures, and the nurturing of each student's potential. It has been an extraordinary privilege to serve a community so deeply committed to inclusion, respect, innovation, and excellence. Together, we've created a learning environment where every student feels seen, supported, and inspired to grow into a thoughtful, compassionate global citizen.

This report reflects the breadth of all we've achieved together over the past year. From academic excellence to artistic expression, from athletic triumphs to community service, every milestone is a testament to the dedication and passion of our students, educators, families, and Board of Trustees.

Our mission to develop internationally minded students who are responsible, resilient, respectful, and kind is stronger than ever. In an ever-evolving world, AISZ continues to equip students with the mindset, tools, and values needed to lead with empathy, think critically, and act with integrity. Through rich classroom experiences, dynamic extracurriculars, and the unifying power of our Community Meetings and Community Blocks, we continue to model what a truly connected, caring, and forward-looking school can be.

When I arrived at AISZ in 2016, the immense potential of this school, as it transitioned into its new campus, was clear. One of my key aspirations was to shape AISZ into a "lighthouse school"—a beacon of innovation and inspiration for others agrees the region and beyond

Professionally, our impact is clear: the number of workshops we've delivered to other schools is a source of pride. Hosting the first-ever AMIS (International Music) conference in a small school setting, pioneering our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)—now widely shared and modeled across the region—and hosting the CEESA Regional Conference are just a few examples of how our work has resonated beyond our own walls. Even our recent Professional Assistants Job-Alike event received outstanding feedback and underscored the high level of excellence and professionalism that defines our community. Also, the work we have undertaken to become a quality Professional Learning Community is, in itself, transformative. Meanwhile, student activities and athletics have thrived—and I offer heartfelt congratulations to all our student representatives who have led with spirit and pride.

As I now prepare to step away from my role and into life beyond work, I do so with absolute confidence in what lies ahead. AISZ is in the care of a passionate and talented team, a visionary Board and a community that truly believes in the transformative power of education.

I extend my deepest thanks to our extraordinary Board of Trustees, the AISZ Leadership Team, our dedicated staff, and above all, our incredible students and their families.

The future is bright, and I can't wait to see this remarkable school continue to evolve and flourish. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for the privilege of serving this community. It has been the honor of a lifetime—and I look forward to seeing you all at the 60th Anniversary Gala.

With warmest regards and enduring affection,

Paul Buckley, Director
American International School of Zagreb



Letter from the AISZ **Board of Trustees**

Dear Members of the AISZ Community,

As the Chair of the School Board of Trustees, it has been an honor to serve the AISZ community over the last three years on the AISZ board, and the last two years as president of the school board. This has been a remarkable journey, and I have been grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the growth and success of our school.

It is with a mix of sadness and gratitude that we bid farewell to Director Paul Buckley. His leadership and dedication have been instrumental in making AISZ the premier international school in Croatia. We thank him for his outstanding service and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

Looking ahead, we are excited to welcome our incoming director, Darin Fahrney, who is no stranger to us. We are confident that his experience and vision will continue to drive AISZ forward. We eagerly anticipate celebrating the 60th anniversary of the school in the 2025-2026 school year, a milestone that reflects our long-standing commitment to excellence in education.

I would also like to highlight the Bridges program, which has been a cornerstone of our efforts to foster a supportive and community without borders.

This program exemplifies our dedication to providing a holistic educational experience that prepares all students for the challenges of the future.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to my fellow Board members for their unwavering dedication and commitment, which have been crucial in furthering the development of AISZ. I would like to specifically thank Tomislav Matić and Danielle Harms for all their efforts on the board as they move on. We are also pleased to welcome back John Gašparac, a familiar face, and to introduce our new Board President, Richard "Trey" Lyons from the U.S. Embassy. Additionally, I would like to express my appreciation to all the staff and faculty who work tirelessly to make our school a vibrant and nurturing environment for our students.

As we look forward to the next academic year, I hope that you and your family have an enjoyable summer, whether staying in Croatia or traveling back to your home country. The upcoming year promises to be busy and exciting, and we look forward to seeing both familiar and new faces on campus in August.

Warm regards,

Christian J. Lynch Chair of AISZ Board of Trustees



AISZ School Board Comprises:



Paul Buckley



Christian J. Lynch Acting Dep



Graciela Arroyo Nava



Danielle Harms



Evgeniya Herrera



Ivan Jandrić



Tomislav Matić



Martin Walder



School Leadership



AISZ Leadership Team

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



Paul Buckley
Director



Tamara Black Lower School Principal



Stephen Dexter Upper School Principal



Tatjana Turza Business & Operations Manager



William Coman
Upper School
Associate Principal



Neven Sorić ICT Manager



Hana Sekanović HR Manager



Darin Fahrney Director of Strategic Initiatives



Iva VegoCommunication and
Advancement Manager



Martina Ožir Admissions & Alumni Transition Manager



Phillipa ColleyActivities and Athletics
Director



AISZ Academic Leadership Team

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



Tamara Black



Darin FahrneyDirector of Strategic Initiatives



Stephen Dexter Upper School Principal



Erin Henkels
IB Coordinator



William ComanUpper School Associate Principal



Sara Kirby
LS Learning Coordinator
& Instructional Coach



Paul Buckley Director

Key facts

59 Years in Existence (opened in 1966.)
23958m2 Campus area

Elementary School

Nationalities

Young Leaders Scholarship

Employees

Teaching Faculty

Total Employees

Nationalities

Teachers with Med degrees

10 years of experience

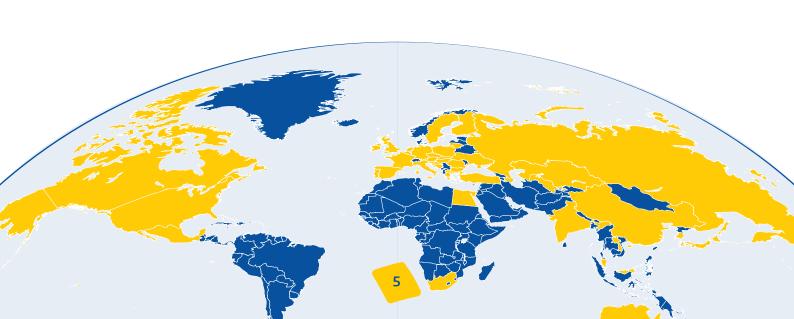
Nationalities in 2024 - 25

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

Vision

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.

Mission

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.

Experiencing the Future, Today

We develop skills and character for futures rich with promise

Our learning principles

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



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



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



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



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

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 in the final 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.



Strategic Growth

 Review and revise the capacity of the student numbers within each Division and the School overall whilst maintaining current diversity and the optimal student numbers.



Funding Our Dream

Long-Term Facilities Plan



Strengthening Community Relations

Enhancing Community Relations



Financial Review

Historical: 2023 - 2024

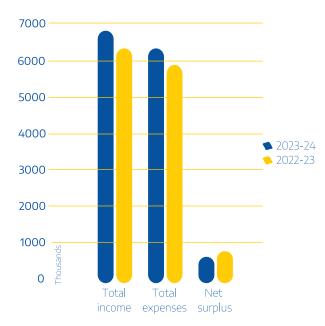
We finished the 2023.2024 school year with a healthy financial report, thanks to strong financial management and planning as well as a stable number of enrolled students.

According to audited figures, total revenues were €6.7 million, which represents a 6.9% increase compared to 2022.2023. Operating expenditure were 11.5% higher due to an increase in the number of employees and students and curriculum activities. Total operating expenses of €6.0m combined with net financial expenses of €166k resulted in a surplus of €527k.

Current: 2024 - 2025

The number of students had been continuously growing and has now been stable for the last two years. The budgeted enrolment of 352 students has already been exceeded.

Audited Financial Statement



The tuition and Capital fees represent 93% of our total operating income and it is expected to be at the planned level of €6.9m. The majority of our operating expenditure relate primarily to personnel expenses (71%) and other educational support. Total Operating expenses are expected to be €6.6m, and Financial expenses €200k.

We are again expecting to have another strong and healthy financial year with a surplus that will enable AISZ to continuously invest in facility improvements, student activities and strengthening the curriculum.

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.

Income 2024 - 25



Expenses 2024 - 25





Schoolwide Focus

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) at the American International School of Zagreb

At the American International School of Zagreb (AISZ), we are committed to ensuring that all students achieve high levels of success in their academic journey and are supported in their social, emotional and behavioral development. This commitment is underpinned by our implementation of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), a framework that provides a comprehensive approach to supporting the diverse needs of every student. Through MTSS, we aim to deliver targeted interventions, personalized extensions, and data-driven strategies that guarantee all students are supported in their learning and can reach their fullest potential.

AISZ is becoming an international school leader in the area of MTSS. We are proud to share that multiple school leaders from across Central and Eastern Europe have visited AISZ to observe this system. Further, our educators have led over a dozen workshops internationally to support implementation of this approach in other schools. The results have been impressive, showing an increase in students reaching their academic growth targets, a decrease in behavior referrals and a decrease in students identified with social emotional concerns.

MTSS Framework: A Success in Ensuring High-Quality Learning for All

MTSS is an inclusive approach designed to ensure that every student has access to high-quality education, regardless of their starting point. The framework operates on the premise that every student can learn at high levels, but some may need additional support in different ways and at different times. At AISZ, we adopt a tiered model that provides varying levels of intervention and extension to meet students where they are and guide them forward.

The first tier, **Tier 1**, focuses on quality core instruction in the classroom, where all students engage with high-level teaching and learning. When students show signs of needing additional support or extension, they are provided with targeted interventions in **Tier 2** and **Tier 3**, which are more intensive, individualized, or small-group in nature. This ensures that we meet their academic needs as early as possible and ensure continued growth. For students needing further challenge, **Tier 2** and **Tier 3** also include opportunities for extension.

TIP TOP Time and Consultation Block: Supporting All Learners

As part of our tiers of intervention, AISZ has developed and implemented innovative systems such as **TIP TOP Time** and the **Consultation Block** that fill gaps and extend the learning for students.

▶ **TIP TOP Time** is a dedicated period at the lower school where students can engage in personalized, targeted interventions or enrichment activities. Whether students need additional help with a concept or are ready for an extension of their learning, TIP TOP Time provides an invaluable opportunity for educators to focus on the individual needs of each student.

► The **Consultation Block** is a collaborative time at the upper school when students can gain ready access to what they need to succeed. Be it one on one time with a teacher, organized interventions to fill gaps in learning, or simply available time to dive into an area of interest or that they are passionate about. Having our teachers available each day for support has been an added bonus for our International Baccalaureate students and Honors Diploma students as well.

These systems not only ensure that every student receives the support or challenge they need but also foster a culture of shared responsibility among staff, where the success of every student is a collective priority.



Great Schools take an MTSS Approach to Learning

MTSS at AISZ was created based on a yearlong review of what schools of excellence are implementing to best support students. The approach is supported by a strong body of research; emphasizing the importance of a collaborative, whole-school approach to learning.

Delivering on our Mission that calls on us to develop "...skills and character for futures rich with promise" is the foundation of this approach. Our implementation this year of school wide character values: Respect, Responsibility, Resilience and Kindness are the final piece to fully implementing MTSS at AISZ. These character values are at the heart of our MTSS approach and supports not just the academic needs of our students but their social emotional wellbeing as well.

In conclusion, AISZ's approach to MTSS represents a commitment to ensuring that every student receives the support they need to succeed, both academically and socially. With targeted interventions, systems like TIP TOP Time and the Consultation Block, a strong research rationale, and a culture of collective responsibility, AISZ is becoming a world leader in this important educational approach.

"I work with schools around the world and AISZ is a model for how to support the academic growth of students."

Megan Holmstrom - Education Consultant



Character Strong

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is an essential part of our school curriculum. It develops students' emotional intelligence, resilience, and interpersonal skills and helps them to succeed both academically and personally. Research shows that SEL programs improve academic performance, reduce behavioral issues, and improve long-term well-being by helping students learn how to manage their stress, build healthy relationships, and navigate through challenges effectively. Students have to feel safe and supported at school before they can ever be in a place to unlock key academic skills.

This year, SEL at AISZ has been enhanced by introducing a new school-wide resource for advisory and counseling lessons. The **Character Strong** program provides comprehensive, evidence-based support to help students develop essential life skills.

In the Lower School, the program emphasizes character development, bullying prevention, and student safety. In the Upper School, the focus expands to include healthy habits, social awareness, empathy-building, self-management, stress management, coping strategies, and relationship skills. These concepts are taught through engaging activities and meaningful discussions, fostering personal growth and well-being for all students.

"I love consultancy blocks. It gives me the chance to see my teachers right when I need the help."

AISZ student - Mackenzie

"Your school is amazing! We are beginning to implement these strategies at our school; AISZ is serving as the model for our work."

External CEESA School Director - Ivan





Lower School at AISZ

The 2024-25 academic year has been filled with growth, exploration, and discovery for our Lower School students. From our enthusiastic Pre-Kindergarten learners to our confident Grade 5 leaders, their curiosity and passion for learning have been truly inspiring. We take immense pride in the strong educational foundation they have built through engaging, authentic learning experiences designed by our dedicated and talented faculty.

As educators, we remain steadfast in our commitment to delivering an exceptional, well-rounded education. Our approach emphasizes the academic, social, and emotional development of every student, employing data-driven insights and reflective teaching practices to tailor instruction and optimize learning outcomes. By continually refining our pedagogical strategies, we foster an environment in which each student feels supported, challenged, and empowered to make the most of new opportunities.

A Structured Approach to Intervention

In the Lower School, this was the second year of dedicated intervention sessions that we call Tip Top (Targeted Intervention Program to Optimize Pedagogy). The Tip Top initiative ensures that every student receives individualized academic support, and it is a cornerstone of our school-wide implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) that leverages data-driven decision-making to enhance instructional efficacy.

In the 2023-24 academic year, the Tip Top program ran three days per week, focusing solely on literacy. To maximize impact, we restructured the schedule to engage all Lower School faculty—including homeroom teachers and specialists—creating a collaborative, school-wide approach. The results were evident, with end-of-year data reflecting gains in student achievement.

Building upon this success, we expanded Tip Top time for the 2024-25 academic year to a daily schedule, alternating between literacy and mathematics. Once again, data indicates a positive impact on student learning. Additionally, an unforeseen but welcome outcome was a marked reduction in the number of students referred to the Support Services Team (SST) for academic concerns. New SST referrals decreased from 16 in 2022-23 to just five in 2024-25, highlighting the program's effectiveness in proactively addressing student needs.

Advancing Professional Learning

A key focus this year in the Lower School has been the enhancement of mathematics instruction. Our faculty has actively pursued professional growth through expert-led training and collaborative learning. One of the most impactful initiatives was the engagement of international mathematics consultant Megan Holmstrom, who worked closely with our educators to refine instructional practices. More details on this initiative can be found in the "Focus on Lower School Learning" section of this Annual Report.

As part of our ongoing commitment to MTSS implementation, we have also led professional development workshops to share our innovative approach with colleagues across the CEESA region.

In January, we hosted a two-day workshop on the AISZ campus for school leaders, providing insight into the commitment and resources necessary for effective MTSS implementation. In February, a team of three AISZ administrators—Dr. Darin Fahrney, Will Coman, and Tamara Black—traveled to the Nova International School Skopie to facilitate a two-day workshop for approximately 40 educators from CEESA schools, guiding them in developing and implementing their own MTSS frameworks, including Tip Top. Finally, in March, several AISZ educators, including Lower School faculty, led a series of sessions on MTSS at the CEESA annual conference in Split. We look forward to continuing these meaningful professional learning engagements in the future.

Building Meaningful Connections

We firmly believe that a strong partnership between parents and educators is fundamental to student success. By fostering meaningful connections and inviting families to participate in the learning journey, we aim to create a vibrant, supportive community.

In November, we hosted our inaugural Fall Foto Festival for Kindergarten through Grade 2 families. Themed "Through the Eyes of Children," this event showcased student photography and writing, culminating in a musical performance and a communal meal featuring autumnal soups and bread. With over 90% of families in attendance. the festival was a resounding success.

In the spring we once again hosted the Lower School **Service Learning Showcase** for all families from PreKindergarten to Grade 5. In this unit, students studied ways to meet societal needs through informed action on issues that they feel strongly about. The Showcase brought together the community to celebrate and recognize our students as global leaders of the future.

Throughout the year, Lower School teachers incorporated classroom **learning celebrations**, inviting families to engage with students' academic achievements. Notable events included a Grade 3 cultural exploration, where students shared foods from around the world, with many parents contributing homemade snacks. Grade 4 students also presented their cultural studies projects through multimedia presentations for parents and friends. Additionally, our weekly Lower School Community Meetings provided students with opportunities to share their learning experiences through performances at the Black Box Theater, further strengthening our sense of community.

As we reflect on the 2024-25 academic year, we are proud of our students' achievements, the dedication of our faculty, and the meaningful connections we have fostered within



Focus on Lower School Learning

Building Strong Foundations: A Journey of Math Professional Learning

This year, our Lower School teachers embarked on a transformative professional learning journey to deepen their expertise in effective math instruction. Through expert coaching, collaborative learning, and targeted professional development, our educators refined their instructional practices to ensure all students develop a deep, conceptual understanding of mathematics.

Collaborative Learning

The journey began in September with a visit from international math specialist Megan Holmstrom. Over two days, Megan observed math lessons across the Lower School, providing insightful feedback and facilitating meaningful discussions about instructional philosophy. She shared research-based best practices from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and collaborated with our Professional Learning Teams to explore problem-based mathematics instruction.

Megan Holmstrom returned in the spring for math labsite sessions with PreK, K–2, and 3–5 teams, modeling problem-based instruction and collaborative discourse. She also demonstrated how to leverage student work to highlight key mathematical concepts. Additionally, she partnered with our MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) team to refine assessment and curriculum alignment.

To keep momentum going throughout the year, teachers engaged in coaching cycles led by Learning Coordinator Sara Kirby. These cycles helped educators set student-centered, standards-based goals while participating in a structured five-week process of co-planning and co-teaching. This reflective approach not only enhanced student learning but also strengthened teachers' confidence and pedagogical skills.

Supporting All Learners

Tip Top Time was introduced in math this year to provide targeted support for students. Every other day, classroom teachers collaborate with Educational Assistants (EAs), Learning Support, EAL teachers, and specialists (Art, Music, PE, Library) to deliver intervention or extension activities tailored to individual student needs. This program has already proven invaluable, and we look forward to its continued growth next year.

Professional Development

In November, our Turkey Trot Professional Learning Day reinforced the belief that *everyone is a math person*, cultivating a growth mindset among teachers and students. Educators led and attended peer-led sessions, "trotting" between workshops to expand their instructional toolkits. Key strategies included:

- Purposeful questioning to deepen student thinking
- Differentiation to make math accessible for all learners
- Game-based learning to extend mathematical reasoning

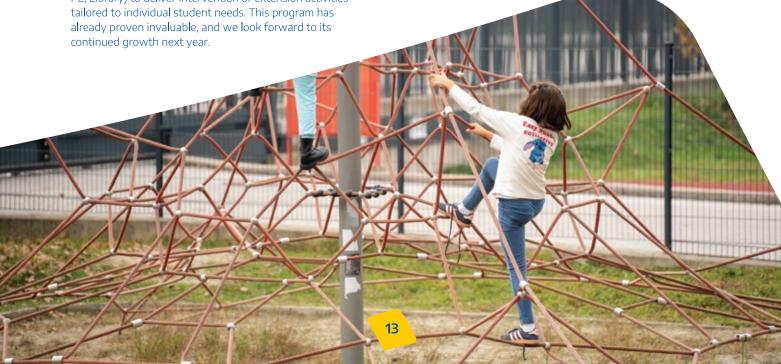
In the second semester, teachers participated in online learning modules with math expert Graham Fletcher.

- ▶ PK–2 teachers explored Foundations of Numerical Reasoning
- Grades 3–5 teachers focused on Foundations of Fractions
- These sessions strengthened teachers' conceptual knowledge while providing practical classroom strategies to support student learning in number sense and fractions.

Looking Ahead

The strong foundation built this year will guide our ongoing review of assessment practices and curriculum development. The expertise our teachers have gained ensures that all students will continue to engage in rich, meaningful math experiences, regardless of curricular resources.

This year's professional learning has not only elevated our teachers' instructional skills but also reaffirmed our commitment to inspiring a love of mathematics in every student. We eagerly anticipate further growth as a vibrant math-learning community.





Upper School at AISZ

One of the things I appreciate most about our students is that they are quite honest about their experience. During Spirit Week, for example, when I was wearing a special outfit for the occasion, a student approached me and said, "Your awkwardness makes me feel much better about mine." This was one of the greatest compliments I have ever received.

As adults, we easily forget that the emotions of being in school are often more powerful than the academics of learning. We have put a large emphasis on this phenomenon and in response, have developed everything from a robust advisory program, to revitalized student councils, to Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), to feedback and celebration of our four character traits (respect, responsibility, resilience, and kindness) to ensure that every one of our students feels known, advocated for and supported.

In early Spring, we conducted a survey of every teacher in the upper school, asking them to identify the students with whom they have built a relationship, not just as their subject or advisory teacher, but someone that students trusted and could go to. Almost 100% of the students had at least one adult on this list. (The small percentage that weren't identified were our newer students who hadn't had a chance to have built a strong relationship).

Character Matters

From our commitment to the CharacterStrong curriculum, to our coaching around the proper use of A.I. tools, and to self advocacy when dealing with difficult situations, we have put a lot of energy into developing the type of people we want to send into the world.

Furthermore, we are designing systems and feedback loops so that students understand what it means to embody each of our character traits. One of our "next steps" is to give students an opportunity to receive feedback from their participation in Unity Trips as it relates to our four character traits.

Community Reconnections

AISZ is once again expanding its impact beyond our walls and truly showing the power of our learning community. A notable connection from this year includes the RIT (Rochester Institute of Technology) Career Day, where our students joined over 600 university students to meet with employers such as L'Oréal, Coca-Cola and PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers).

Other connections include our partnerships with a local elementary school in Sisak and schools from the CEESA region. We hosted our local neighbours for a day workshop focused on Music, Literacy and Science, and our international connections for two multi-day professional workshops: one for 40 executive assistants for the CEESA Job-a-like, and another for 20 school leaders at the CEESA MTSS Summit.

This list goes on to include hosting the CEESA Knowledge Bowl, Rock Festival, CEESA Basketball tournaments, or the off campus travel to places like Vienna (DP Art), Graz (German students) and Prague (MUN).

From building our PLC model for academic excellence and our MTSS systems of support to our commitment to world class diploma pathways that open access to the best universities and post secondary opportunities, it is an honor to continually learn and grow (whether it's awkward or not) with our diverse community of learners and dedicated staff.

Focus on Upper School Learning

Five years ago, when we first went into a lockdown, we began a learning journey that continues to this day. Far beyond learning gaps and study skills, we underestimated (like most schools) the impact on socio-emotional development and wellbeing. Fast forward to 2025, our team is very proud of the platforms we have designed to strengthen everything from student resilience to problem solving and critical thinking.

Top 10 skills of 2025

- Analythical thinking and inovation
- Active learning and learning strategies
- Complex problem-solving
- Critical thinking and analysis
- Creativity, originality and initiative
- Leadership and social influence
- Technology use, monitoring and control
- Technology design and programming
- Resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility
- Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation

Type of skill:

- Problem solving Self-management
- Working with people Techology use and development

Source: Future of Jobs Report 2020, World Economic Forum.

The World Economic Forum top skills list has been a "barometer of relevance" for our work since it was published in the early 2000s. We have seen many iterations over the years, noticing trends come and go. But one thing that has been constant is the overwhelming emphasis on critical people skills such as self management, working with people, and problem solving.

From our MTSS systems featured in this report, to our consultancy blocks, learning support, Character Strong, student council revival, advisories, and enhanced cell phone policies, we are exceptionally proud of the focus that we are putting on the student experience at AIST.

Yondr Pouch

From the research cited in books such as The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt to studies by The Truman Group on anxiety and wellness in students, it became critically clear that we had not escaped the aftershocks of the pandemic, specifically cell phone addiction. In the book, the author refers to the transition from the "play based childhood" that most adults can relate to, which has now been overshadowed by the "phone based childhood." Specifically, the domains were are concerned about range from sleep and social deprivation to attention fragmentation and addiction. Of course, for as long as there have been teenagers, many of these problems have been present, but post pandemic they became much more widespread and acute, impacting the learning process.

When we unveiled the Yondr Pouch policy, we expected a lot of pushback from the community. These devices were, after all, private property and why couldn't students just put them away?

Thanks to the support of many of our parents (and begrudgingly, many students once they understood the reasons), we launched the new policy shortly after the winter break.

What did we discover? Bathroom visits plummeted noticeably. Students were having more conversations with one another, seemingly less distracted, and many were not even missing their devices. We will be collecting more feedback by the end of the year but are pleasantly surprised at how quickly this decision has become just part of the way we do things.



Partnership with Elementary School 22. lipnja Sisak

Shortly after the devastating earthquake that badly damaged buildings in Sisak, we reached out to UNICEF to see what partnerships could form that would enhance our connections to the local community. What has blossomed from this relationship with the local school has been nothing short of inspiring. When our teachers and students first visited a year ago, they were met with music, culture, learning and food that made our students and staff feel a part of a real partnership.

In 2024, a group of grade six students accompanied by Ms. Lana and Ms. Sarah visited the Osnovna škola 22. lipnja Sisak. This school year, the same grade level students, accompanied by a counselor, music teacher, English teacher, and science teacher, visited our school. The idea behind their visit was to show them a day in the life of an AISZ teacher and an AISZ student. They came during Advisory and Consultation time and had three workshops (science, music, and library-themed).

They visited during the week of 3 important events: Earth Day, CEESA Rock Band Festival and Library Week, and the topic of workshops were designed in a way that reflects those three events. We offered teachers the opportunity to visit classes and chat with the Principal to see the structure of the day of an AISZ teacher and the specifics of our curriculum outline. CAS students helped organize the gifts and workshops and helped navigate students and teachers during the day.

Grade 7 students were ambassadors and hosts of each workshop and showed the visiting students the experience of a day in the life of a student. Several boxes of library books were donated to support the development and growth of their library, especially the development of the English section.



Student Council Initiatives

We are so happy to have revitalized the high school and middle school student councils post pandemic. We have always had student councils but this last year has seen an exceptional burst of community building energy.

A special thanks to Ms. Ringrose and Mr. Welch and Ms. Killeen for their efforts to rebuild these important student-led associations.



Middle School

The academic year was kicked off with an Assembly to celebrate the new year and show off some of our musical talents.

Next the student council organized the middle school dance that was held in November, which was funded by our successful bake sale in October. We had a high number of students attend to dance, laugh and enjoy themselves.

February brought our annual Valentines Day card sale, where the MS StuCo did the work of Cupid to send cards from secret admirers.

During March, the student council organized an Assembly to celebrate the achievements of our sporting, robotics and MUN teams.

April brought our first student council lead Escape room to build our community spirit.

For the rest of the academic year, the student council will work on the end of year celebrations and continue to plan community building events for the last days of school.

High School

December brought festive cheer as the Council provided gingerbread house kits for each high school advisory to build, decorate, and ultimately eat.

The new year kicked off with plans for Spirit Week and a High School Dance in February. Upper School students voted on dress themes for February 10 - 14, which included Pajama Day, Color War, Anything but a Backpack Day, Twin Day, and Reverse Day. The week concluded with a Year 9-10 Valentine's Dance, organized by the Student Council.

Organization of a winter pep rally, celebrating the Knowledge Bowl team, Robotics team, and Basketball team. In addition to recognizing student achievement, awards were also given to students who excelled in their participation in Spirit Week.

In March, the Council partnered with the Merci Club to organize an assembly on homelessness featuring a guest speaker from the organization Fajter. This included creating a presentation in the Upper School advisories leading up to the assembly.



2024 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 2024 Assessment Session)



Range of IB scores

Score Range	24-29	30-34	35-39	40-45
Number of Students	11	7	4	1

Results from the last three years, including comparison of May 2022 July result.
 2019 is added in as May 2024 represents the first full return to May 2019 parameters.

Year	Cohort size (cert + DP)	% Diploma	% Bilingual Diploma	Average score	Highest score
2024	31	92.3	46	31	41
2023	31	93	52	33	41
2022	17	100	41	33	44
2019	18	94	61	30	36



Letter from the College Counselor

I am proud to present this year's Graduate Placement Report for the Class of 2025. Once again, our school community has demonstrated the value of a student-centered approach, focusing on FIT as the cornerstone of the college counseling process. By guiding students toward institutions that reflect their academic strengths, personal interests, and long-term aspirations, we empower them to build futures filled with meaning and purpose.

The concept of FIT continues to gain traction globally, moving beyond traditional success metrics to focus on student well-being and satisfaction. Our strategy includes encouraging early application planning, fostering diverse university visits and fairs, and providing individualized support throughout the process. This year, 85% of our students have applied to university and received at least one offer — a result that places us well above international benchmarks.

We are especially proud of the geographic and academic diversity of our students' choices. From creative arts schools in the UK and Italy to business programs in the Netherlands and scholarship-supported universities in the U.S., the Class of 2025 has embraced a wide range of exciting and well-matched options.

We remain committed to refining our program and fostering global partnerships. With the success of our past participation in university fairs and international counseling forums, we hosted our CIS university fair on campus this past fall with 21 universities in attendance. This event was open to the broader community and proved to be a great success. Building on that momentum, we are working to bring the CIS tour back to AISZ next fall, and due to this year's success, we anticipate an even larger number of university representatives.

Class of 2025 AISZ University Offers, as of April 2025. (Blue - Accepted matriculations)

United States of America

Pace University (90% athletic scholarship; Incentive Awards totaling \$112,000) Oregon State University (Minds Move Mountains Scholarship - \$30,000) University of Mississippi (Ole Miss)

Iowa State University

Texas A&M at Blinn

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Syracuse University University of Missouri

George Washington University

The Netherlands

University of Amsterdam Gerrit Rietveld Academy

Maastricht University

Utrecht University

Leiden University

University of Groningen Erasmus University Italy Bocconi University John Cabot University

Instituto Europeo di Design (IED)

United Kingdom

King's College London (Conditional) Bath Spa University (Conditional) Hartpury University (Conditional)

University of Warwick (Conditional)

University of Exeter (Conditional)
University of West London

(Conditional)

Manchester Metropolitan University (Conditional)

University of Winchester (Conditional) University of Liverpool (Conditional)

University for the Creative Arts (Conditional)

Istituto Marangoni London (Conditional)

London College of Contemporary Arts (Conditional) University of the Arts London (UAL) (Conditional)

- Spain
 Les Roches Business School (Marbella)

 IE University
- AustriaWebster University
- Slovenia
 University of Ljubljana

Other Destinations

Applications also submitted to institutions in Belgium, France, Ireland, and Australia, with outcomes pending.



Students Not Pursuing University Immediately (15%)

Gap Year: 2 (one applied this year and deferred to next year)

- Military Service: 1
- Religious Mission: 1
- Life Skills Program: 1

The Class of 2025 has shown resilience, ambition, and a clear sense of purpose in shaping their post-secondary journeys. We are excited to see how they will grow and thrive in the next chapter of their lives.

Highlights

Applications submitted to over 18 countries

- 85% of students received at least one offer
- 40% of students applied to the UK
- **38%** to the US
- 19% to the Netherlands.
 All creative arts candidates developed and submitted competitive portfolios.

On behalf of the entire AISZ community, I want to congratulate the Class of 2025. We are proud of everything you have accomplished and look forward to seeing what your futures hold. You are ready. You are capable. And your journey is just beginning.



The Imagined

AISZ Bridges Program

In the spirit of *The Imagined*, the Bridges Program at AISZ brings our strategic vision to life — where inclusive, future-focused learning is not aspirational, but actualized. Designed for students in Grades 6–12 with a wide range of neurodiverse profiles, Bridges provides an individualized, strength-based educational experience that integrates academic learning with social, emotional, and functional life skills development.

Bridges students are fully embedded in the AISZ community. They follow the same 10-day rotating schedule as their peers, participate in advisory and community blocks, and are included in electives such as music, design, drama, and foreign language. Academic needs are met both in regular classrooms — with support and modifications — and in the Bridges classroom, where students receive targeted instruction in reading, writing, math, executive functioning and personal development.

Every learner in Bridges has an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) co-created with families, based on current evaluations, student interests, and long-term goals. These goals include not only academic progress, but also self-advocacy, independence, and preparation for life beyond school — whether that means further education, vocational training, or supported living. Coursework leads to an AISZ high school diploma with a transcript that recognizes the needed modifications and a graduation portfolio showcasing each student's unique capabilities.

By designing systems that recognize and respond to learner variability, Bridges redefines what excellence in education looks like. It's not only a program — it's a living expression of our schools belief that diversity strengthens learning, and that every student has a future rich with promise.



Artificial Intelligence at AISZ: Building a Culture of Responsible Innovation

At AISZ, we're actively shaping a culture that embraces the opportunities of artificial intelligence (AI) while prioritizing data privacy, ethical use, and informed engagement. AI is here to stay—and we believe in learning how to use it thoughtfully, not avoiding it.

Throughout the year, AI has been integrated across classrooms and departments in purposeful, privacy-conscious ways. Teachers are using AI tools to enhance learning experiences, streamline tasks, and explore new teaching strategies. Students are also being guided on how to use AI critically and responsibly, gaining the skills they need to navigate an AI-powered world.

Staff training has been a key focus, with ongoing professional development sessions and participation in CEESA conferences. From the classroom to administration, our entire community is learning how to work with AI in ways that support our values and educational goals.

AISZ is committed to staying ahead—not just in technology, but in how we use it wisely.





Building Community

School Community Organization (SCO)

Thank you, SCO Team, for a Wonderful Year of Support and Community!

As we reflect on the school year, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to the School Community Organization (SCO) Team for their incredible dedication and contributions to the AISZ community.

The SCO is a parent-run organization committed to supporting AISZ through a wide range of events, activities, and initiatives that enrich the lives of our students, faculty, and families. This year, their creativity, energy, and teamwork helped to create memorable experiences that brought our community closer together and celebrated the spirit of AISZ.

From organizing festive gatherings and cultural celebrations to supporting school-wide initiatives and welcoming new families, the SCO has played a vital role in fostering connection, belonging, and school spirit. Their behind-the-scenes efforts have made a big impact—helping our school feel more like home for everyone.

We are deeply grateful for their time, passion, and unwavering commitment to making AISZ a vibrant, inclusive, and engaging place to learn and grow.

To all the SCO members and volunteers—thank you for your partnership and for all the ways, big and small, you've helped support and strengthen our school community this year. We couldn't have done it without you.



Parent Education Workshops

Lower School

Building on the success of previous years' monthly parent workshops, we were excited to expand our offerings for 2024-25 with some months featuring multiple events covering a wide range of topics. We also held a few sessions virtually to provide better access to parents who were not able to be present at school during the scheduled times. The topics of the workshops were designed based on parent feedback and led by our dedicated educators and specialists.

Here are some highlights from the year's workshops:

September 27: Safeguarding (All Parents)

Lauren Bastion, Lower School Counselor and Laura Palmer, Upper School Counselor

October 29: Keeping Kids Safe Online

(All Parents, Virtual Event) Ana Grubac, Lower School Librarian and Lauren Bastion. Lower School Counselor

November 12: Fun with Phonics (K-Grade 2)

Sara Kirby, Lower School Learning Coordinator

December 4: Parenting with Positivity (Grades 3-5)

Lauren Bastion, Lower School Counselor and Dawn Melarvie, Grade 5 Teacher

January 17: Exploring Lower School Math (K-Grade 5)

Dawn Melarvie, Grade 5 Teacher, Kaitlyn Bradley, Grade 3 Teacher, and Emily Arrighi, Grade 1 Teacher

February 4: Let's Make Music! (All Parents)

Cyndi Campbell, Lower School Music Teacher

March 6: Puberty: The Wonder Years (Grades 3-5, Virtual Event)

Lauren Bastion, Lower School Counselor and Dalibor Mandaric, Lower School PE Teacher

March 26: Parenting with Positivity (PreK-Grade 2)

Daniela Karacic, PreK Teacher and Lauren Bastion, Lower School Counselor

April 29: The Wonder of Early Learning (PreK-K)

Sara Kirby, Lower School Learning Coordinator

May 27: Preparing Your Family to Leave AISZ (All Parents, Virtual Event)

Lauren Bastion, Lower School Counselor

June 10: A Summer of Reading (All Parents)

Ana Grubac, Lower School Librarian



In addition to these workshops, special events that provided further opportunities for parent engagement included celebrations in the homeroom classrooms, the Fall Foto Festival (Grades K-2, November 21), the Lower School Service Learning Showcase (All, April 17), and the Grade 5 Moving Up Ceremony (June 13).

Upper School

September 25: Safeguarding Workshop: The Essentials of Safeguarding Practices for Schools and Community: (School Counselor Laura Palmer)

October 30: Grading Criteria: From Rubrics to Assessments: Understanding the Basis of Criteria Grading Systems at AISZ. (Kristina Sprljan, English teacher and Stephen Dexter, Upper School Principal).

November 13: The Enhanced Cell Phone Policy at AISZ.

A conversation about the rationale and implementation of the new expectation regarding Yondr pouches and protocols for cell phone use. (William Coman, Assistant Principal, Stephen Dexter, Upper School Principal, Paul Buckley, School Director).

December 11: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support: Ensuring that every student is known, advocated for, and supported at AISZ. (U.S. Grade Level Leads, Learning Support Team, Will Coman, Associate Principal)

January 21: Grade 11 University Planning and Pathways for Parents and Students (Anibal Bogliaccini, College Counselor and Stephen Dexter, Upper School Principal).

February 3: Grade 9 and 10 parents Pathways and Course selections Erin Henkels, IB/DP coordinator, Anibal Bogliaccini, College Counselor, Stephen Dexter, Upper School Principal

March 19: Professional Learning Communities: A Framework for Academic Excellence (Focus on math).

Brandon Driggs, Angela Talarn Zaragoza, Scott McLoughlin, Megan Kite

April 16: Earth Day AISZ: What sustainability means at AISZ

Upper School Science Team

May 27: Preparing your family to leave AISZ.

(Administrative Team and Counselors)



CEESA Presentations

CEESA Connections: Celebrating Growth, Leadership, and Community at AISZ

This year, AISZ proudly stood at the heart of two key CEESA events that reflected who we are and who we continue to become—a learning community that is respectful, resilient, responsible, and kind.

In January, AISZ hosted the first of a two-part CEESA MTSS program: MTSS School Visit: Laying the Groundwork, welcoming educators and leaders from across the CEESA region. This two-day event, led by Dr. Darin Fahrney, Tamara Black, and William Coman, highlighted the strength of our academic and student support systems. Visitors from 7 CEESA schools observed our programs in action, joined structured sessions, and engaged in professional dialogue around the design and implementation of our Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). The visit underscored the clarity of our approach and the dedication of our staff to ensuring strong outcomes for all students.

The second part of the CEESA MTSS series took place in February at NOVA IS Skopje, where the AISZ team again took the lead—this time delivering a hands-on workshop: Creating a Multi-Tiered System of Support at Your School. Educators from 6 CEESA schools participated in the two-day summit, which focused on building or refining MTSS frameworks through collaborative planning, case studies, and coaching. The event combined strategy, structure, and shared learning—reinforcing AISZ's commitment to effective student support and meaningful regional collaboration.

We were equally honored to serve as the host school for the CEESA 2025 Conference in Split, a landmark event that brought together over 420 educators from across the world and one where AISZ truly shined. With 15 of our staff members presenting, AISZ led conversations on innovation, inclusion, creativity, and data-informed leadership. Sessions included:

"Balancing Innovation and Integrity: The Role of AI in Modern Education"

Kristina Šprljan

"Empowering Musical Creators"

Cynthia Campbell, Lana Skrgatić Puž

"MTSS at AISZ: Tiered SEL Strategies for Neurodiverse Students"

Marija Ivković

"Leading with Data"

Sara Kirby, Cassandra Nutini, Tamara Black

"Creating a Sense of Belonging through Extracurricular Programming"

Tim Henkels

"Incorporating Maker Education into CORE Subjects"
Jeffrey Ormrod

"Effective Use of Learning Support Accommodations Plans"

Karen Killeen

"Smart Schools, Safe Data: Al & GDPR Compliance"
Iva Vego

"All Kids Can Learn"

Tamara Black (and Megan Holmstrom)

"Building Bridges: Launching Programs for Students with Intensive Needs in International Schools"

William Coman, Dr. Darin Fahrney

"Building Bridges: A Case Study of the Bridges Program at AISZ (Part B)"

Stephanie Donnelly, Ivana Oštrić

The depth of these contributions reflect the outstanding work happening at AISZ every day. They also demonstrate how our educators lead with responsibility, innovate with respect for learners, support each other with kindness, and model resilience as we grow together.



Administrative & Professional Assistants' Job-Alike at AISZ

Collaboration, Learning, and Growth Across International Schools

AISZ was proud to be the host of this year's Job-Alike for Administrative and Professional Assistants. This special professional learning event brought together over 30 delegates from approximately 14 international schools across the region.

The goal of the Job-Alike was to create a collaborative space where administrative and professional assistants can share best practices, exchange ideas, and learn from one another to strengthen the essential operational and logistical functions that keep schools running smoothly.

From supporting School Boards of Trustees and Directors, to working in close partnership with Principals, faculty, and staff, the work of administrative professionals is integral to student success and school excellence.

This event focused on enhancing the systems and workflows that empower these professionals to do their jobs even more efficiently and effectively.

Participants engaged in workshops, roundtable discussions, and skill-sharing sessions, exploring topics such as communication strategies, project management, data organization, school governance support, and fostering a culture of service and professionalism.

We were honored to welcome our colleagues from across the region and enjoyed a weekend filled with professional growth, meaningful connections, and renewed inspiration.





Activities & Athletics at AISZ

Year in Summary

70+ Activities Offered PK to G12 throughout the year

900+ Registrations for activities across all age groups

Introduction of Online Registration Platform with attendance function

Team Photos for the yearbook and a memory wall, capturing our students' achievements and to build up a visual history accessible to students

Introduction of Extended Activity Sessions to offer more appropriate training times for MS & HS representative sports

Gym Space Expanded for Lower School activity offerings

The 2024–25 year has seen incredible energy, growth, and pride in the Activities and Athletics program at AISZ. With opportunities available for all age levels, students developed teamwork, commitment, and a deeper connection to our AISZ community. Representing the AISZ Bears, our students not only learned the skills needed to compete and perform, they lived our school's core character values of Respect, Responsibility, Kindness and Resilience.

Lower School

In our Lower School, students eagerly participated in pathway sports which are, age-appropriate skill based training designed to help young learners build a strong foundation as they grow, with the goal of preparing them to confidently try out for middle and high school representative teams in the years ahead. Students in grades 4 and 5 have the opportunity to learn tennis, volleyball, football and basketball skills after school.

Through these sessions, students developed not only technical abilities, but also the habits of teamwork, effort, and inclusion. They practiced self-discipline and emotional regulation, learning how to face challenges with a positive mindset and to support one another through both successes and setbacks. Each experience encouraged curiosity, perseverance, and personal growth and offered a joyful introduction to our school's vibrant co-curricular life as proud

Upper School Athletics

The Bears proudly wore school colors in competitions from Krakow to Istanbul. Our Middle School students took part in CEESA events including cross country, tennis, football and volleyball, as well as local friendlies hosted at AISZ. Our High School athletes represented our school at CEESA tournaments in girls football, boys basketball, and cross country. Additional local competitions included the Zagreb Schools Games and friendly home matches with neighbouring Zagreb schools and sports clubs.

Participation in these school representative teams gave students the chance to compete with pride, build strong friendships, and experience what it means to be part of something bigger than themselves.



Sports Team Awards and Achievements

HS Girls Football placed 3rd overall in Belgrade
HS Girls CEESA Cross Country earned 2nd place in Krakow

Activities & Academic Teams

This year, our students took on enriching challenges in academic and performance-based activities.

- Model United Nations (MUN) participants attended TrojMUN in Prague, debating global and historical issues with students from across Europe.
- Knowledge Bowl saw three of our High School teams compete in the CEESA-hosted tournament here at AISZ with one team placing 3rd overall.
- Lego Robotics engaged students in engineering, creativity, and collaboration, preparing them to think critically and problem-solve with confidence. Our Lego Bears made it though to the national finals, eventually placing 8th overall in Croatia.

Visual & Performing Arts, Clubs, and More

The 2025 AISZ Rock Band Festival brought energy and excitement to our co-curricular calendar, culminating in a student-led concert at Kontesa Klub in the city center. The event was a celebration of creativity, school spirit, and the power of collaboration.

Other student activities have included:

- HS Rock Band
- Chess Club
- Table Tennis
- Sewing,
- Science Club
- Board Games
- Cooking
- Inline Skating
- LS Choir
- Rock Climbing

Facilities

AISZ is proud to provide excellent spaces for our activities and athletics program

- 1 x 5-a-side football field with lights
- 4 x outdoor tennis courts with lights
- 1 x gymnasium (volleyball / basketball / badminton)
- 1 x black box theatre
- 1x music/dance room

Hosted Events

This year, AISZ welcomed CEESA partner schools for the High School Knowledge Bowl and our very own Rock Band Festival, where student musicians took the stage at one of Zagreb's premier music venues. These events showcased not only the talents of our students, but also our culture of inclusion, excellence, and school pride.

The Activities and Athletics program at AISZ continues to grow, and in quality and opportunities and we are just at the very beginning of our journey. Our students are learning what it means to show up for one another, to persevere, and to carry themselves with respect and kindness, as proud AISZ Bears.



AISZ Diplomats Shine at MUN Conference in Prague

Between March 27 and 31, a delegation of twelve students from Grades 8 to 12 proudly represented AISZ at the Model United Nations (MUN) conference hosted by Trojské Gymnázium in the stunning city of Prague. Flying out from Zagreb, our student delegates embarked on an unforgettable journey of diplomacy, discovery, and debate.

Each student was assigned to represent a different country in one of several distinguished committees: the Disarmament and International Security Committee, the Historical Security Council, the Political and Decolonization Committee, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Security Council, and the Business Congress. Within these committees, our AISZ Diplomats tackled a wide range of complex global issues, including the future of electromobility, child labor in the fast fashion industry, the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, nuclear weapon storage, foreign interference in elections, and achieving stability in Myanmar.

Our students made us incredibly proud throughout the conference by participating fully in debates, delivering powerful speeches to large audiences, and upholding the highest standards of conduct during the entire trip. Their dedication, diplomacy, and attitude truly embodied the spirit of international cooperation and student leadership.

The trip wasn't all business, however. It also provided a wonderful opportunity to explore the cultural and historical treasures of Prague. We dined together in local restaurants, wandered through the charming streets of the Old Town, and enjoyed a special evening boat cruise along the Vltava River, generously hosted by Mr. Buckley. One of the highlights of our time together was a memorable evening at the elegant Savoy Hotel, where students relaxed and celebrated with delicious food and drinks.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Trojské Gymnázium for organizing such a well-run and inspiring event. Our AISZ Delegates returned home with new knowledge, deeper friendships, and a renewed passion for global issues—and many are already counting down the days until next year's conference.

This year's AISZ MUN team included: Duncan Cordray, Ana Trampuž, Katarina Grozdić, Farah Imanli, Anja Šprljan, Hana Majer, Tena Pranjić, Lucija Pašalić, Maria Runje, Leona Grubač, Minwoo Kim, and Siena Robens.



Lego Bears: AISZ Robotics Team

This was a rebuilding year for the LEGO Bears, as far as the team members went, but we still had some success. We began with 10 participants, only two of whom were returning members from last year. In the second semester, six of these continued to make up our final team. In addition, one of the returning students, Maksym, took on a leadership role and he is looking forward to being a coach next year.

The FLL competition has 4 elements that are scored equally: Core Values, Robot Design, Robot Game and Innovation projects. This year's theme was called 'Submerged' and was focused around creating solutions for the Seas and Oceans. Our Lego Bears decided to pursue addressing the issue of invasive algae, which impacts not only our beautiful and local seashore, but also the world-over. Our team not only conducted research and created their own model device, they were also able to meet with and interview an expert on algae, Mr. Ung Eng Huan from Malaysia, to help them improve their innovation project. Our team also built and programmed an original robot, which the students have named Gregory V.

Unfortunately, the underwater currents on the game table must have been too strong on the tournament days, because we did not score as high as we had during our practice sessions.

The team participated in two First Lego League tournaments in the Spring organized by the Croatian Robotics Association (Hrvatski Robotički Savez). The first of these, the regional competition, took place in Buzet and our students placed 9th out of 17 teams from the 'western part' of Croatia. The second of these competitions, the Croatian National First Lego League Robotics Competition, was held here in Zagreb at the FER (Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science). Our students placed 10th out of 20 teams from all over Croatia.

This competition was fierce (and loud) and even though we did not advance any further, we had a great time and learned a lot from the experience. We have also made some great connections with other teams that we hope to expand upon next year.





Borna Mustapic - Class of 2019

Which college/uni are you attending and where? If you're not at college, what work do you do? Could you tell us a little bit about your college/work? Which college did you attend after AISZ and major?

I first went to the University of Leeds and my major was Media and Communications. After that, I studied at IE in Madrid and my major was Digital Marketing and Data Analytics.

I'm opening a carpentry business named Taiga. I'm the director at the company - and it's an adventure. Quite literally, knock on wood!

How do you think your time at the school shaped who you are today?

Personally, it made me way more independent than ever before and it mainly built my confidence.

Was there a teacher, mentor, or experience at the school that had a lasting impact on you?

There were many. My main memory was in my first year and it's how I met my best friend to this day. It was through Math class with Mr. Dino. Mr. Dino had the walls on which you could draw and we did Math equations. I erased my best friend's equation and he went crazy because of it - and it was the first time anyone heard him speak. Mr. Dino was in shock and so was everyone else.

And Mr. Soldo for being Mr. Soldo - my love for history came from him.

- If you could go back in time, is there anything you would do differently during your time at the school?
 I would try to delay my enrollment for a year so I can be in the new building instead of the old one!
- What has surprised you the most about life after leaving the school?

In all honesty - just how much easier it gets. People put too much stress over being independent after school and that's only when you start to realize that control over your own life is a lot easier than if someone controls it for you.

How has your perspective on education and career choices evolved since graduating?

I realized that choosing the right major is very important and it shouldn't just be based on your likings. Try to research and talk to people about what's profitable in life. Some jobs are valued a lot more internationally, so don't only be based in

Croatia - and if you are - research what's of value here. Croatia doesn't value soft skills as much as they do hard skills.

Do you feel that the school prepared you well for the challenges of college or the workforce? Why or why not?

Yes, I do believe that AISZ and particularly IB prepared me very well considering I went to study abroad. I can't speak for people in Croatia, but internationally, I was more than prepared since everywhere I went I had a community to go into because of the IB. That was a big deal and an icebreaker - except when they tell you they took Math Studies:)

Do you stay in touch with former classmates or teachers? If so, how has that connection influenced your journey?

I'm still best friends with 3 people from my class and we see each other almost every day. With teachers, less so, but they are always open to communicate (unless it's Mr. Dino and he doesn't reply to my messages).

What kind of alumni initiatives or networking opportunities would you find valuable?

Giving tips, little get togethers in different European cities. Little TED talks for seniors.

Where do you see yourself in the next five years, and how do you think your school experience plays a role in that?

It definitely was one of the reasons I came back to Zagreb because I was offered a work opportunity by one of my former classmates' parents. In 5 years, I see myself in Zagreb, building my own company and being an entrepreneur.

If you had to describe the school in three words, what would they be?

Independent, confident, critical thinking.

- What advice would you give our upcoming graduates? Just don't be scared - and if something is scary, it doesn't necessarily mean it's bad. Take risks.
- How likely are you to recommend the school to prospective families?

Very. 5 out of 5.

Would you say you're more likely to recommend the school as an alum than when you were a student of the school? If yes, why do you think that is?

No - the same. If not more, then cus I was enjoying it a lot more when I was here.

Transitions

Arriving Staff

We welcome our new Faculty, arriving in August 2025.



Doreen Garrigan Lower School Principal



Susannah Derbenwick Lower School Counselor



Katherine McMullen Upper School Associate Principal



Nadine Dickinson Upper School Curriculum Coordinator



Peter Morgan Upper School Academic and College Counselor



Haley Finn Upper School Counselor



Myles Finn Upper School



Rory McCormick Upper School Math



Virgine Roserat Upper School French



Jack Morgan Upper School Math



James McMullen Upper School 1:1 Student Support



Oliver Mando Schoolwide Communication Manager

Leaving Staff

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.



Paul Buckley Schoolwide Director 9 years



Tamara Black Lower School Principal 7 years



Craig Mews
Upper School
US IBDP Physics & Chemistry Teacher



Laura Palmer Upper School Counselor 6 years



Marta Travica Lower School Art & Croatian Teacher 6 years



William Coman
Upper School
Associate Principal
& Schoolwide Student services



Frederic Gibault
Upper School
French Teacher



Lauren Bastion Lower School Counselor



Anibal Bogliaccini Upper School College Counselor & Registrar 3 years



Petter Broden
Upper School
1:1 Student Support



Jodie Ringrose
Upper School
Performing Arts
2 years



Petra Crnički Lower School EAL Assistant 2 years



Angela Talarn Zaragoza Upper School MS/HS Mathematics Teacher 2 years



Iva Vego Schoolwide Communication & Advancement Manager 2 years

Farewell to Our Director: Honoring a Legacy of Leadership and Growth

As we approach the end of this academic year, we prepare to say farewell to a remarkable leader who has left an indelible mark on our school community. After nearly a decade of dedicated service, our Director, Paul Buckley, will be departing AISZ at the conclusion of this school year.

Since joining the school in 2016, Mr. Buckley has led AISZ through a period of tremendous growth, transformation, and achievement. Under his visionary leadership, the school has not only expanded in size but also in spirit, innovation, and academic excellence.

Throughout his tenure, Mr. Buckley spearheaded initiatives that modernized our curriculum, deepened our commitment to student-centered learning, and strengthened the school's global outlook. He fostered a culture of continuous improvement, inclusivity, and collaboration—ensuring that every student, teacher, and family felt part of a vibrant, forward-thinking community.

Some of the many accomplishments during Mr. Buckley's time at AISZ include:

- Building of a state of the art school campus and the successful completion of several major campus upgrades and facility improvements since, creating an inspiring and sustainable learning environment.
- Strengthening our international programs and partnerships, making AISZ a leader in innovation and inquiry-based learning.
- Leading the school through unprecedented challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, with resilience, clarity and compassion.
- Building a strong leadership team and professional learning culture, empowering staff to grow, lead, and thrive.
- Cultivating a welcoming and engaged school community, where students are supported academically, socially, and emotionally.

- Implemented a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) at AISZ, ensuring personalized learning by closely monitoring each student and providing targeted support or challenge to maximize their success.
- Introduced the Bridges Program at AISZ, a groundbreaking initiative that fully integrates neurodiverse students (grades 6–12) into academic, social, and extracurricular life, reflecting a strong commitment to inclusion and equity.
- ▶ Integrated and expanded the outdoor education program into the core curriculum, promoting experiential learning and student well-being through nature-based experiences.
- Led CEESA as Executive Committee Chair through challenging times, launching new initiatives like the CEESA Rock Band Festival to enhance student engagement and regional collaboration.

A few quotes from our long-term students:

"A great director and an even better person."

"I am going to miss his great bass jams during CEESA rock band festival." Cecilia Arizti

More than the accomplishments on paper, Mr. Buckley will be remembered for his genuine care, unwavering dedication, and passion for education. He has always placed students at the heart of every decision and inspired all of us to imagine what a school can be when guided by courage, integrity, and a deep sense of purpose.

As we reflect on the legacy Mr. Buckley leaves behind, we do so with gratitude and admiration. While it is difficult to say goodbye, we know that the foundation they've built will continue to support and shape AISZ for years to come. On behalf of the entire AISZ community, thank you for your leadership, vision, and heart. You will always be part of the AISZ story, and you will be greatly missed.

We wish you all the best in your next chapter—may it be filled with as much purpose and impact as the one you've written here with us.

written here with us.

With heartfelt appreciation, The AISZ Community



Farewell to William Coman: Upper School Associate Principal and Schoolwide Student Support Coordinator

When Mr. Coman arrived in the middle of the pandemic, he was hired to design systems for learning support and work individually as well with teams of teachers to improve the learning opportunities for our diverse student population. What he has accomplished in five short years has been nothing short of remarkable.

His vision around data driven decisions resulted in a comprehensive data dashboard that enabled our team to look at everything from student absenteeism to MAP scores to behavior assessment data that gave us a truly holistic view of each student and their progress.

His focus on systems of success was instrumental in the transition from a Response to Intervention (RTI) model to the currently high functioning Multi-Tiered Systems of Support. In short, MTSS formalizes the work that high quality schools do, from ensuring that families have an understanding and access to diagnostic assessments to designing learning plans for students to making sure that quality teaching practices enforce our curriculum.

In 2023, Mr. Coman accepted the role of Associate Principal (in addition to his lead role in learning support). His mandate was simple: to support the design of a unique middle school experience. He started by being a part of the selection of teachers that had a uniquely focused view on the middle school years and then proceeded to design everything from the space for middle school to the advisory programs to the student council. Thanks to his exceptional work, the perception of the middle school drastically improved and has become a vibrant and unique experience thanks to his efforts.

Mr. Coman's attention to detail, appreciation of the student experience, thoughtful consideration of various perspectives, and visionary design of models like MTSS and the middle school have transformed AISZ for the foreseeable future. He has made an enormous impact on the upper school and we are confident that he will continue to make a positive impact on student learning for years to come.

Stephen Dexter, Upper School Principal



Farewell to Tamara Black: Lower School Principal

Since joining AISZ in 2018, I've had the privilege of working closely with Tammy Black in a number of roles—from first grade teacher to Literacy Specialist, and now Learning Coordinator. Each step of the way, her belief in me played a big part in my growth. She has a way of seeing people's potential and encouraging them to take the next step, and I know I'm just one of many who have grown under her leadership.

During her time at AISZ, Tammy built not only strong systems, but also a strong sense of community. She created space for student voice through our weekly community meetings. She brought families together with events such as the Service Learning Showcase and Bring Your Parents to School days. Tip Top Time—a collaborative intervention model for reading and math—demonstrated her commitment to meeting every student's needs through teamwork.

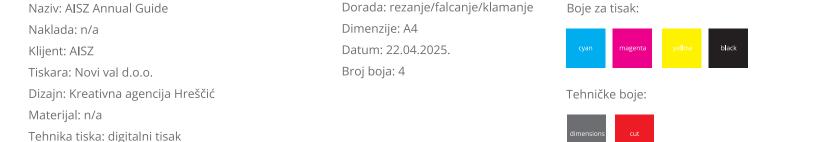
Tammy communicates with clarity and honesty, listens deeply, and brings a thoughtful, driven energy to her leadership. Her impact on AISZ is lasting, and her influence will be felt long after she moves on. As we look forward to building on the foundation she helped create, we wish her every success in this next chapter, and inshallah—as she would often say—our paths will cross again.

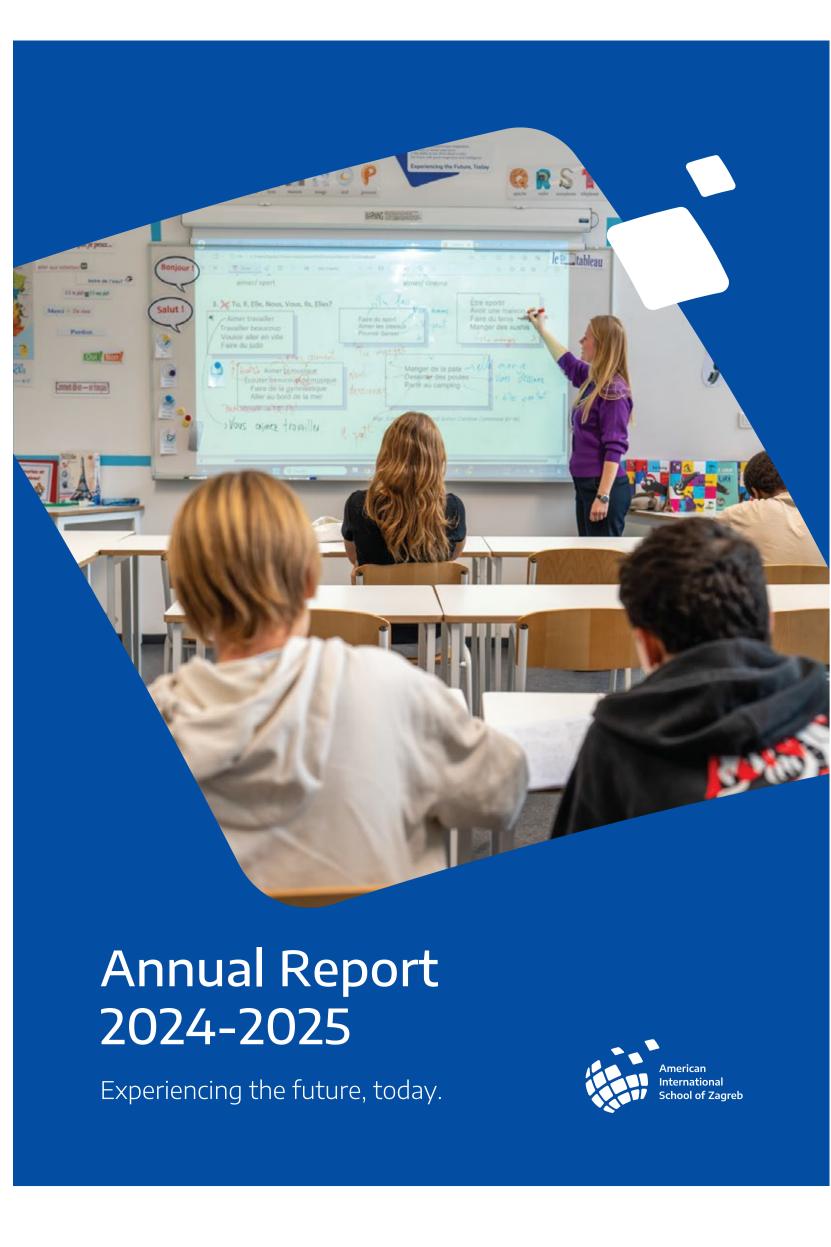
Sara Kirby, Lower School Learning Coordinator





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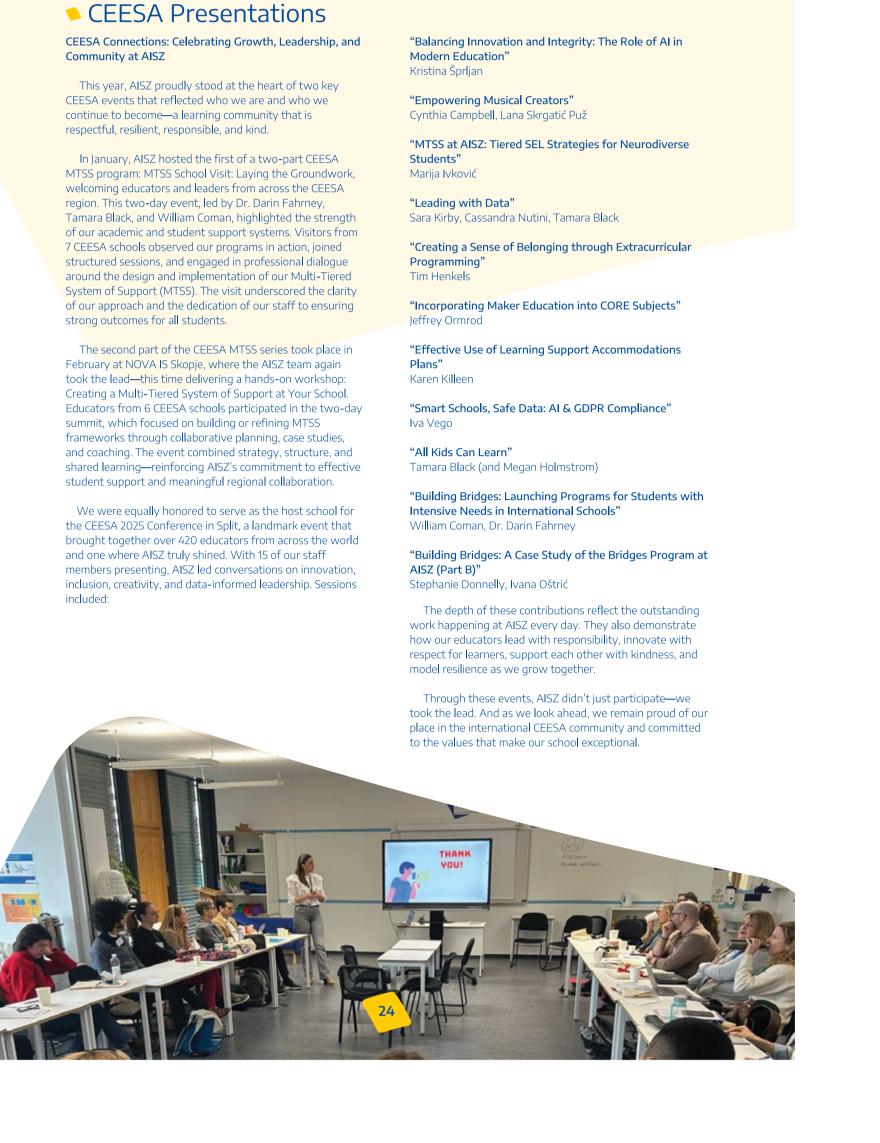




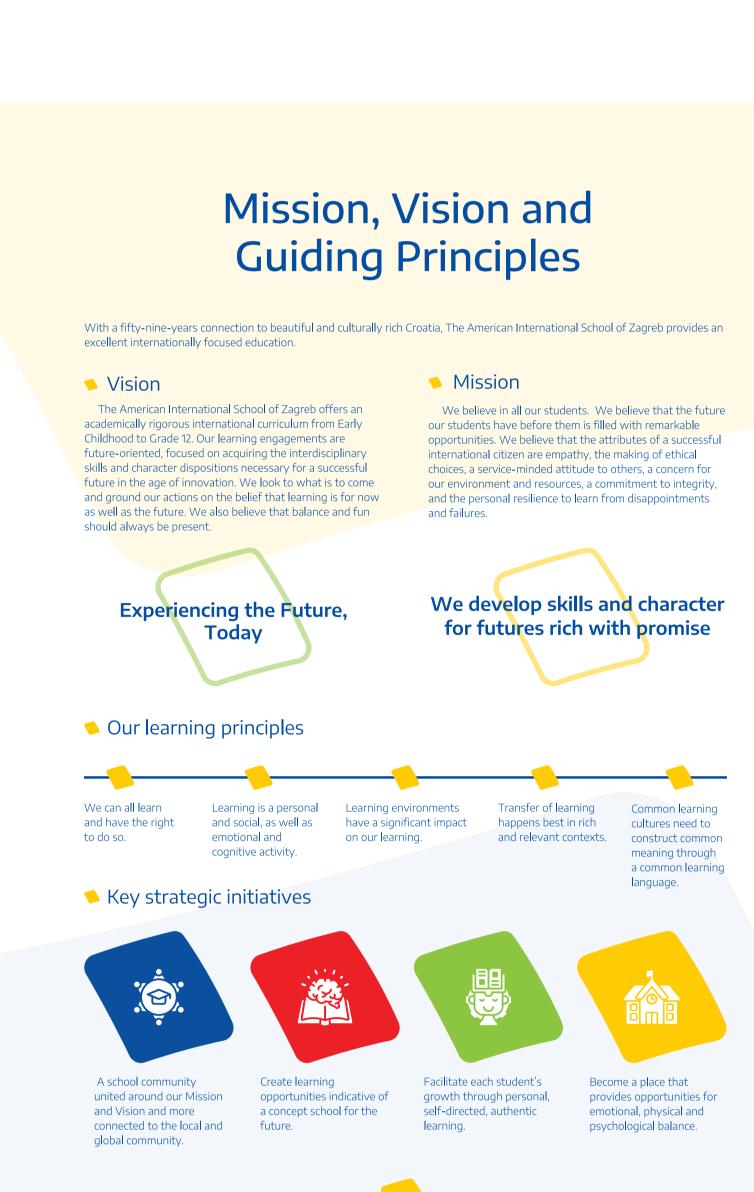










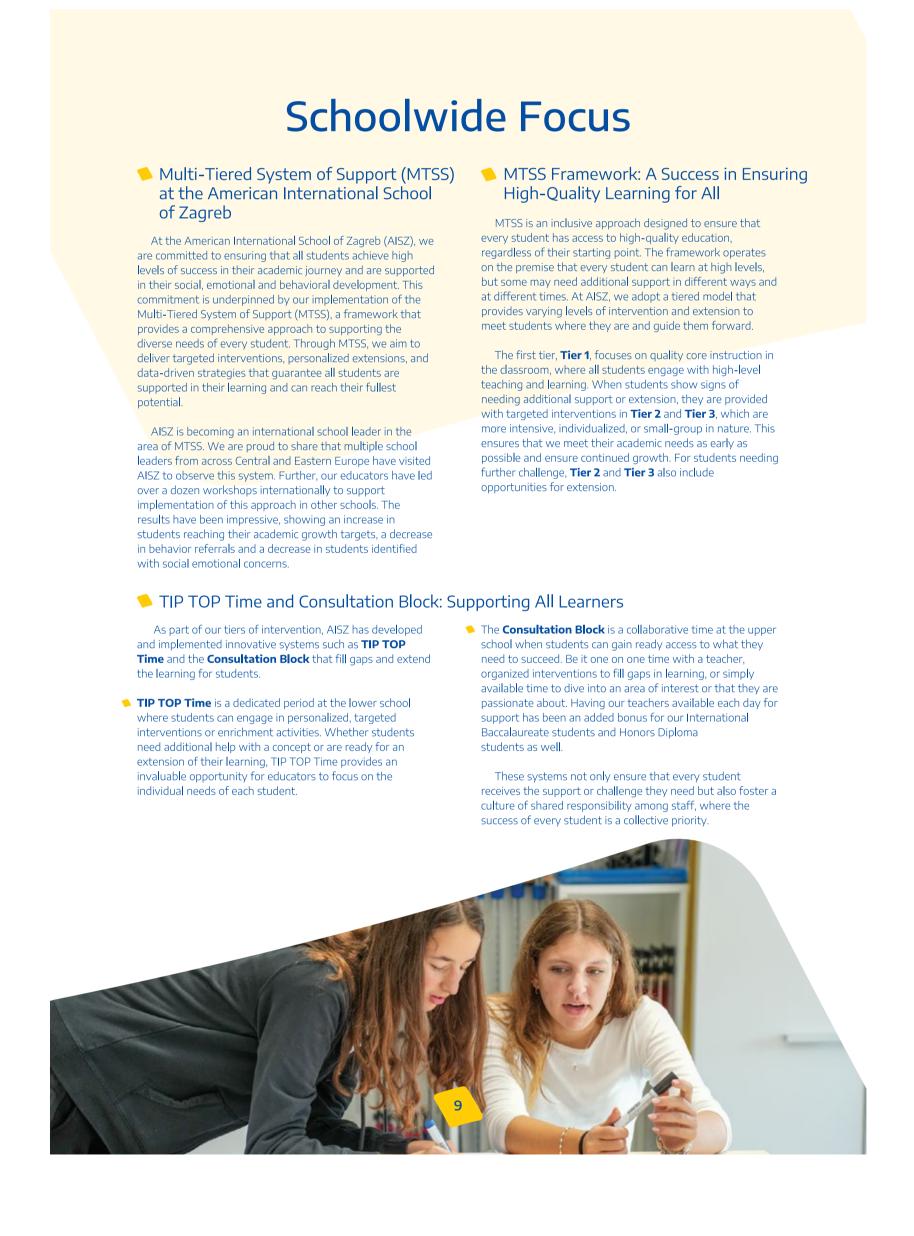






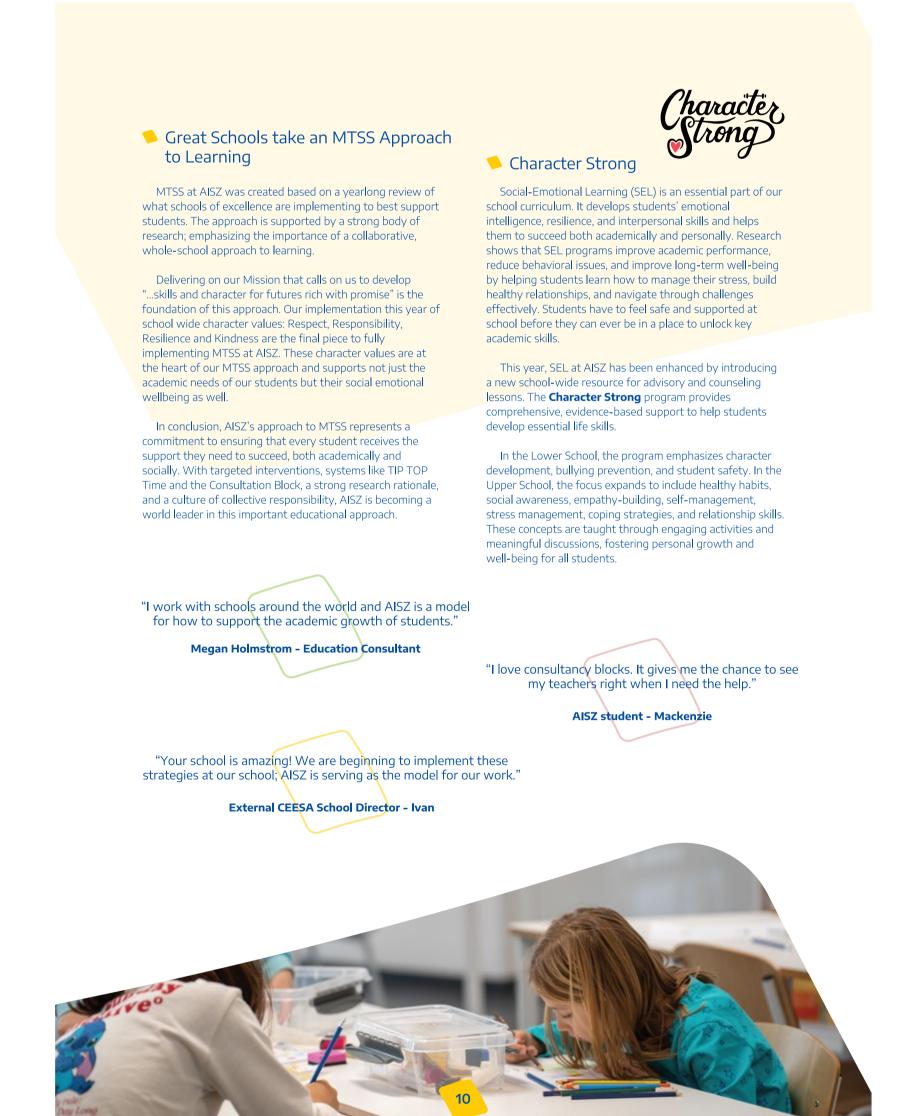




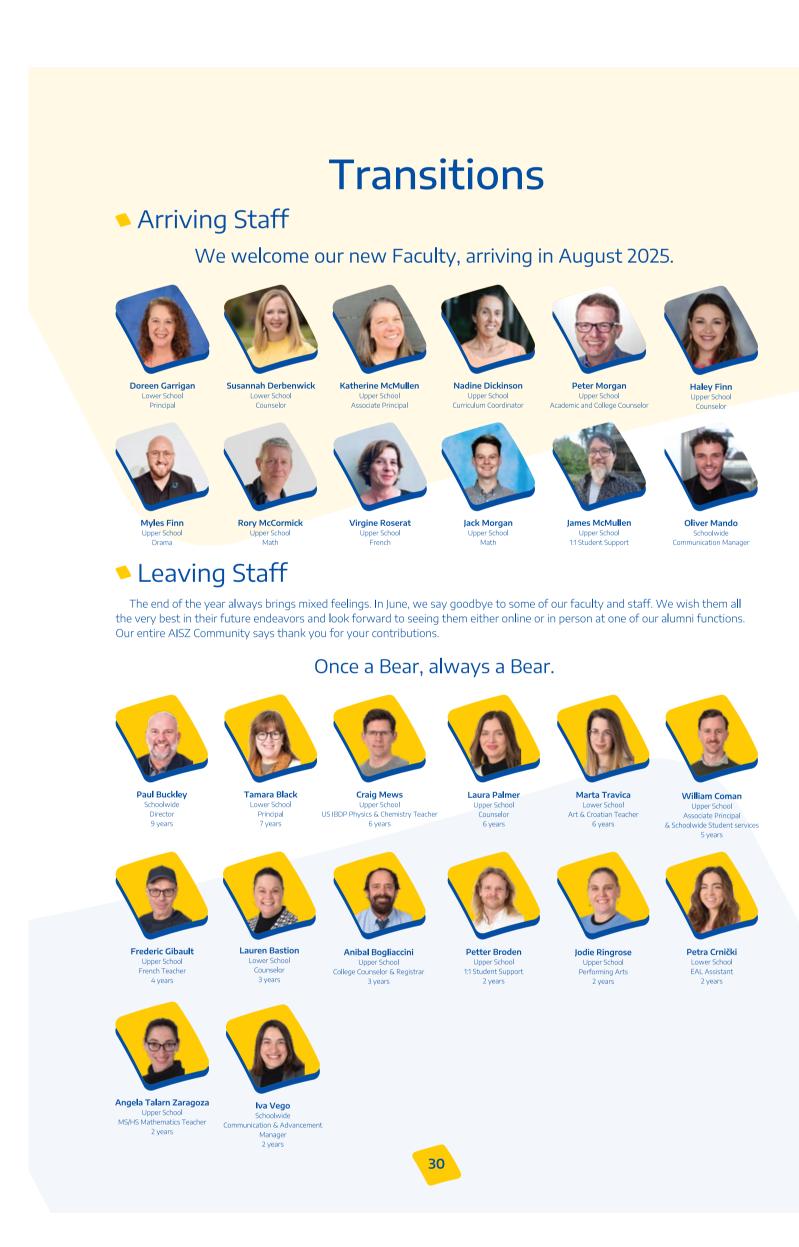


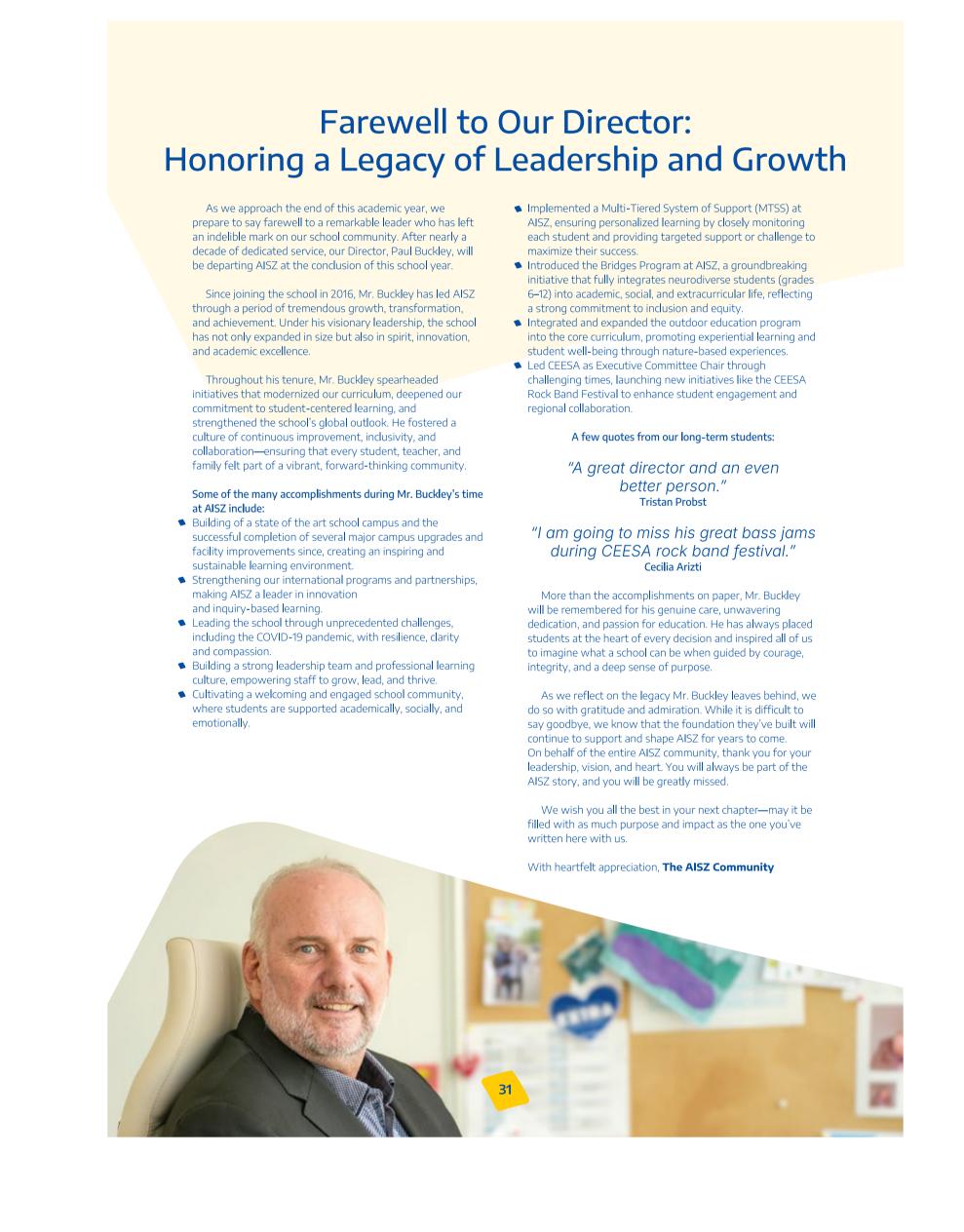




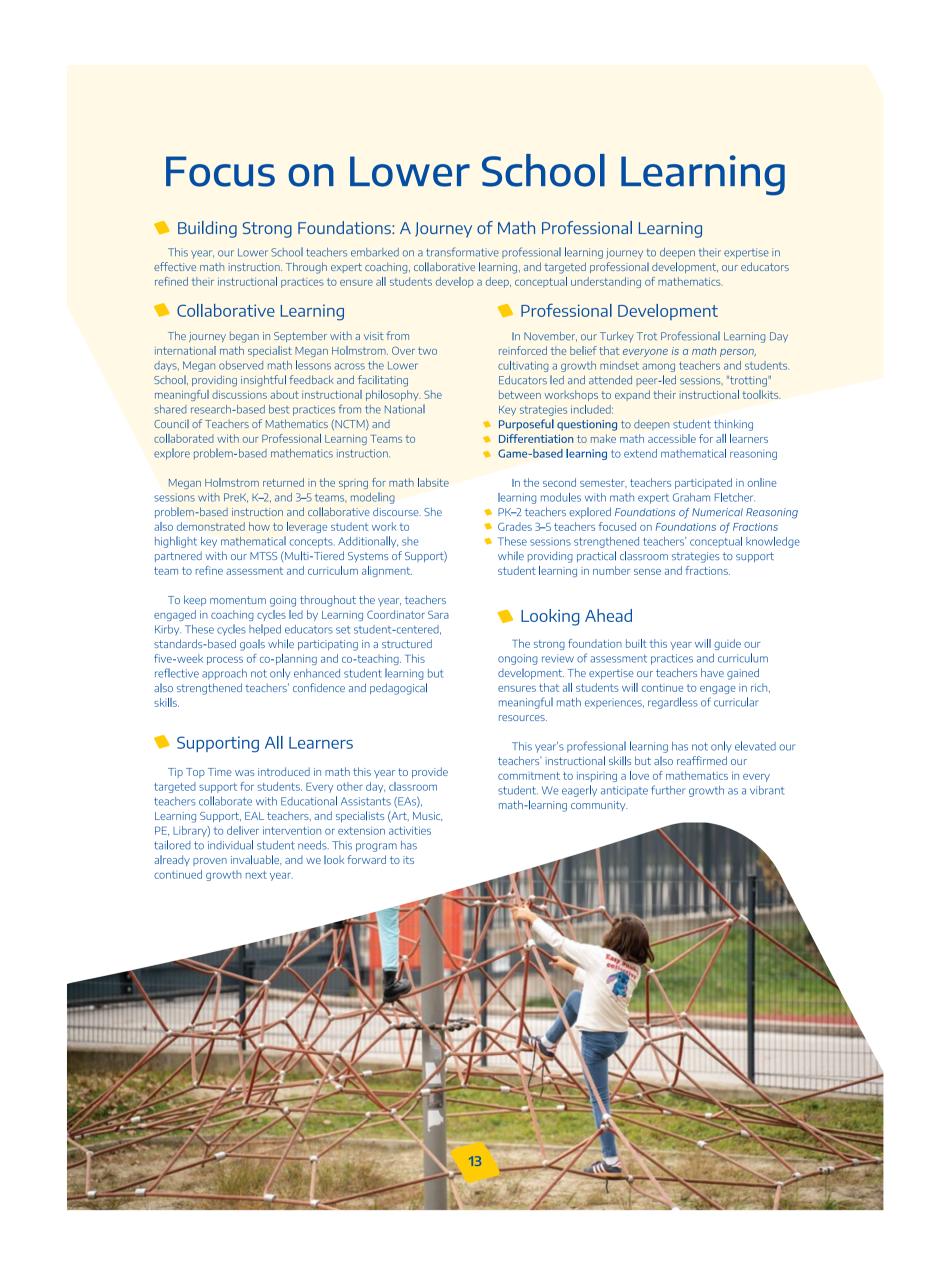


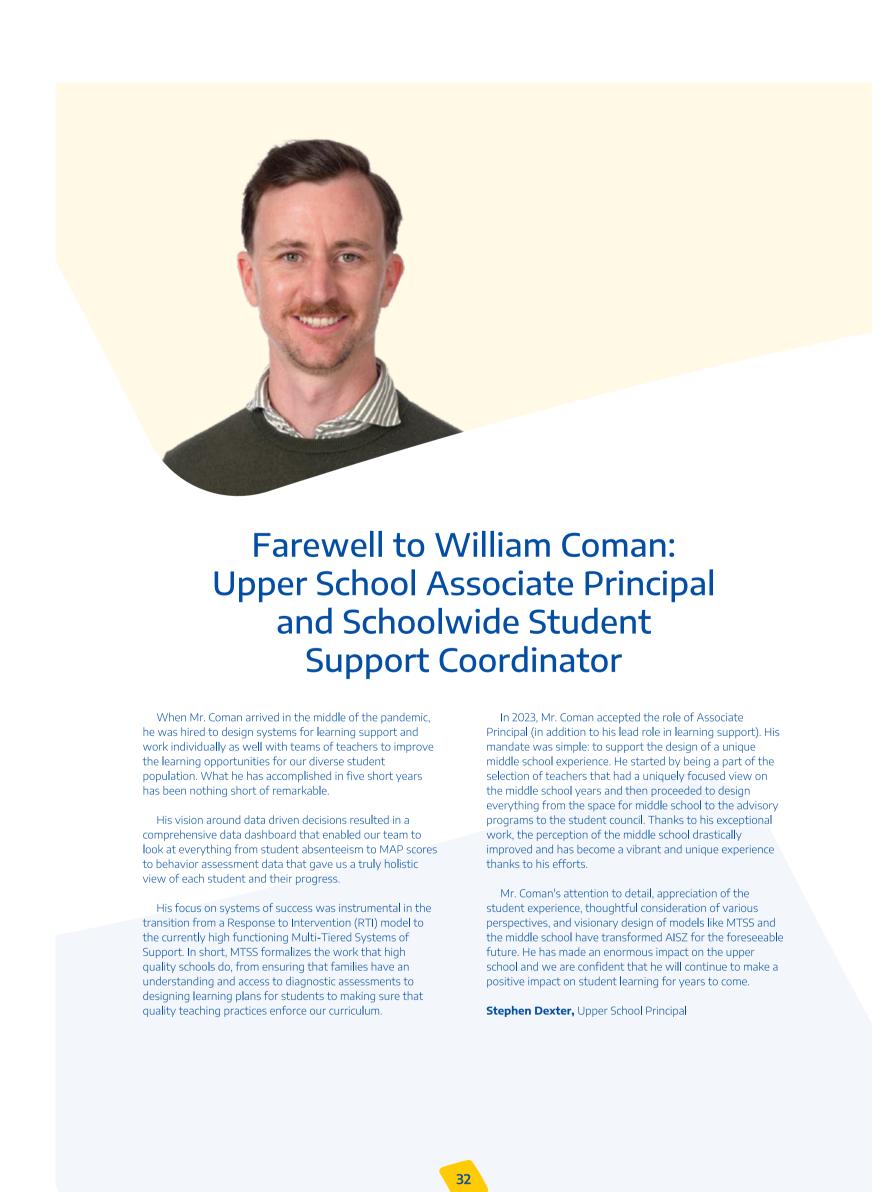




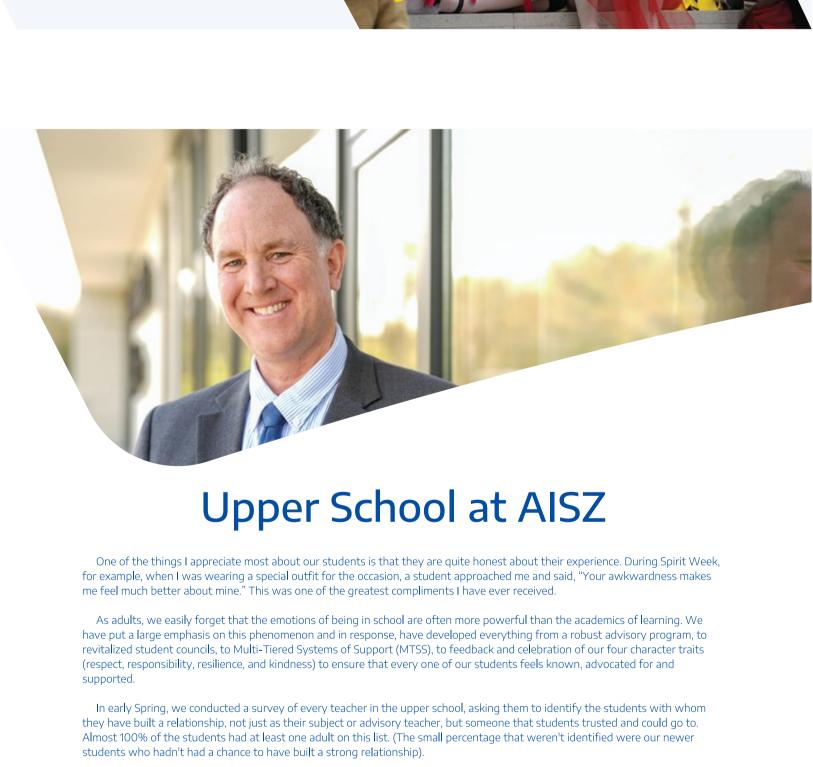












participation in Unity Trips as it relates to our four character off campus travel to places like Vienna (DP Art), Graz

Other connections include our partnerships with a local

elementary school in Sisak and schools from the CEESA

region. We hosted our local neighbours for a day workshop

focused on Music, Literacy and Science, and our international

connections for two multi-day professional workshops: one

for 40 executive assistants for the CEESA Job-a-like, and

another for 20 school leaders at the CEESA MTSS Summit.

(German students) and Prague (MUN).

This list goes on to include hosting the CEESA Knowledge Bowl, Rock Festival, CEESA Basketball tournaments, or the

From building our PLC model for academic excellence and

our MTSS systems of support to our commitment to world class diploma pathways that open access to the best

universities and post secondary opportunities, it is an honor

to continually learn and grow (whether it's awkward or not)

We are so happy to have revitalized the high school and middle school student councils post pandemic. We have avs had student councils but this last year has seen an

A special thanks to Ms. Ringrose and Mr. Welch and Ms.

exceptional burst of community building energy.

Killeen for their efforts to rebuild these important

student-led associations.

with our diverse community of learners and dedicated staff.

Character Matters

want to send into the world.

From our commitment to the CharacterStrong curriculum,

self advocacy when dealing with difficult situations, we have

to our coaching around the proper use of A.I. tools, and to

put a lot of energy into developing the type of people we

Furthermore, we are designing systems and feedback

students an opportunity to receive feedback from their

AISZ is once again expanding its impact beyond our walls

and truly showing the power of our learning community. A

(Rochester Institute of Technology) Career Day, where our students joined over 600 university students to meet with

notable connection from this year includes the RIT

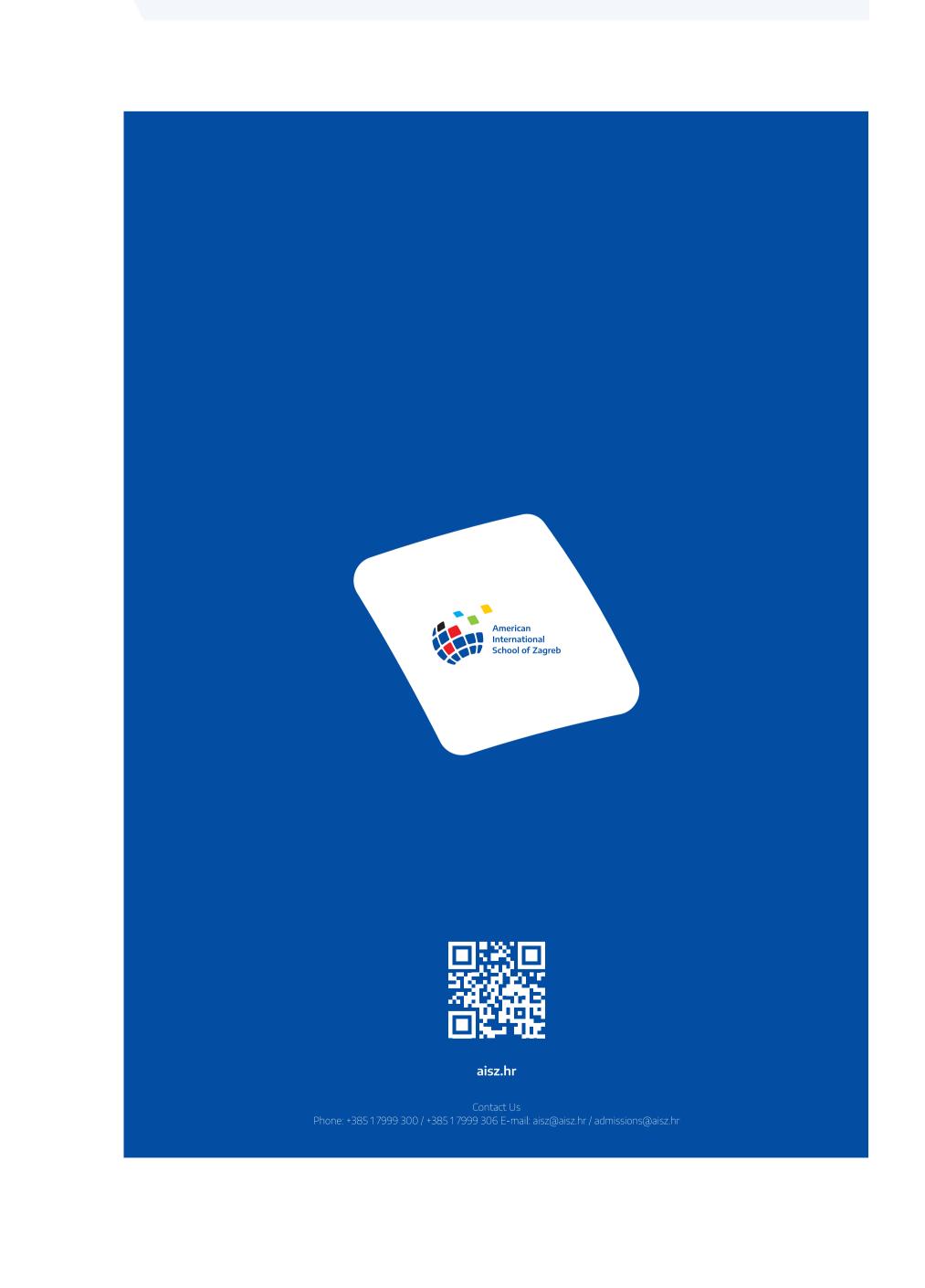
employers such as L'Oréal, Coca-Cola and PwC

(PricewaterhouseCoopers).

Community Reconnections

loops so that students understand what it means to embody each of our character traits. One of our "next steps" is to give











High School

December brought festive cheer as the Council provided

gingerbread house kits for each high school advisory to

Middle School

The academic year was kicked off with an Assembly to

celebrate the new year and show off some of our musical



