

Experiencing
the future, today.



Annual Report 2020-2021

Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles

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

OUR VISION

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.

OUR MISSION

We develop skills and character for futures rich with promise.

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.

OUR LEARNING PRINCIPLES

At AISZ we believe:

1. We can all learn and have the right to do so.
2. Learning is a personal and social, as well as emotional and cognitive activity.
3. Learning environments have a significant impact on our learning.
4. Transfer of learning happens best in rich and relevant contexts.
5. Common learning cultures need to construct common meaning through a common learning language.

Strategic Plan

KEY STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

1. A school community united around our Mission and Vision and more connected to the local and global community.
2. Create learning opportunities indicative of a concept school for the future.
3. Facilitate each students' growth through personal, self-directed, and authentic learning.
4. Become a place that provides opportunities for emotional, physical, and psychological balance.

STUDENT IMPACT GOALS

1. Every student becomes an expert in his or her learning.
2. Every student is known, advocated for, and supported.
3. Every student personalizes learning and pursues dreams.

SYMBOLISM OF DESIGN

The values and essence of AISZ are intentionally incorporated into our image. Like the Olympic Rings, the colors on our logo are used on the flag of every nation in the world.



Key facts

55

Years in Existence
opened in 1966

23958 m²
Campus area

4

Central & Eastern
European Schools
Association events



STUDENTS

306

Students
Whole year

296

Students
End of the year

207

Families

39

Nationalities

117

Elementary School

179

Upper School

18

Class of 2020

8

Croatian Young Leaders
Scholarship

18

Class of 2020
College acceptance

EMPLOYEES

74

Total Employees

49

Faculty Members

7

Nationalities

29

Bilingual/Multiple
Languages spoken

36

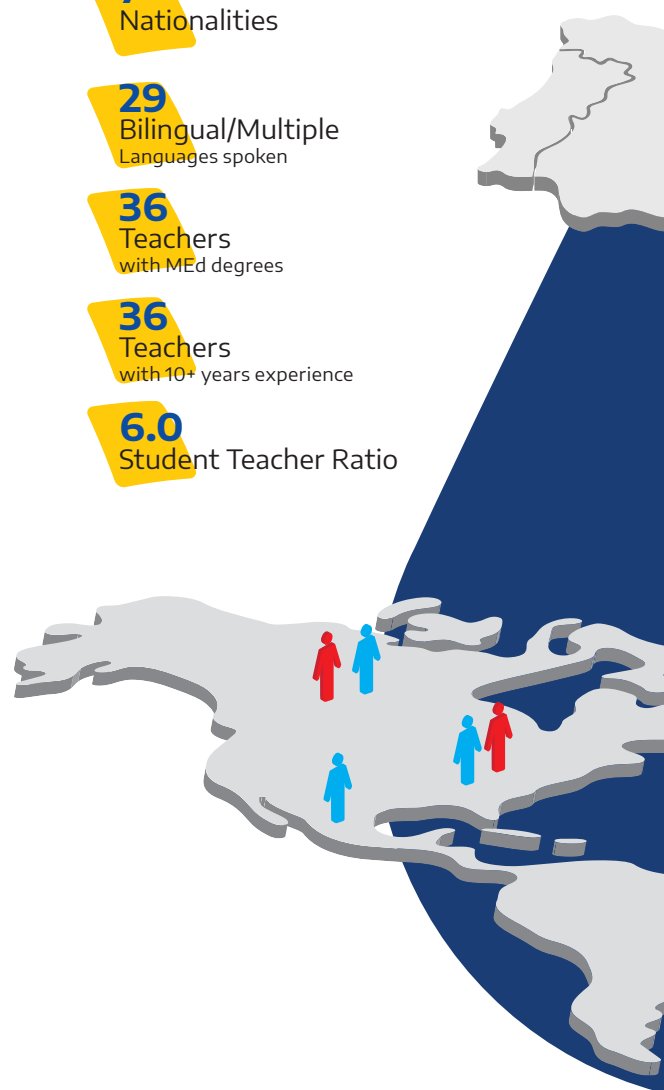
Teachers
with MEd degrees

36

Teachers
with 10+ years experience

6.0

Student Teacher Ratio





EMPLOYEES

- American
- Australian
- British
- Belgian
- Canadian
- Croatian
- Swiss



STUDENTS

- American
- Australian
- Austrian
- Bosnian
- British
- Bulgarian
- Canadian
- Chinese
- Croatian
- Czech
- Dutch
- Egyptian
- Finnish
- French
- German
- Greek
- Hungarian
- Indian
- Indonesia
- Irish
- Israeli
- Italian
- Japanese
- Kazakh
- Korean
- Lao, Laotian
- Lithuanian
- Malaysian
- Mexican
- Montenegrin
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Qatari
- Romanian
- Russian
- Spanish
- Swedish
- Swiss
- Ukraine



Letter from the Board of Trustees

Dear Parents and Community,

Thanks to all our parents, teachers, staff, and students for your continued support and resilience over the past year. Although the pandemic may have disrupted some normal activities, it did not prevent the AISZ Board and Administration from making significant progress on our three strategic goals.

Our first goal remains to provide an academic experience on par with the top schools in Central Europe. We built on the excellent work of the previous school year and continued our focus on improved academic outcomes and recruiting and retaining top-notch faculty. This year, Ms. Dawn Melarvie joined the AISZ team in the newly established Curriculum Coordinator position, advancing the school's work to align, document and further develop our curriculum. Even during the pandemic, the school continued on its path of development and completed a successful accreditation process. Although our accreditation was delayed from last spring, the continued work of the school's leadership and faculty demonstrated the school's tremendous growth since work began in fall 2019. You can read more about it on these pages, but this work, led by Lower School Principal Ms. Tamara Black, will help us set programmatic and organizational goals for the future.

In support of the school's efforts to support diversity and inclusion, the Board adopted a charter on diversity and inclusion that will guide AISZ's efforts to create a supportive community and to advance our students' understanding of people from diverse cultures and backgrounds. This policy now reflects the recent focus on these issues globally and brings our school into line with both the EU and Croatian Diversity Charters. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are the foundation of all successful international schools.

Our second goal was to provide enhanced opportunities to experience a range of learning situations outside the classroom. Although our usual Unity Trips did not occur again, due to the health restrictions, we were delighted to find a window of opportunity in both the pandemic and the weather to organize one day of skiing on Sljeme for each upper school class. While the pandemic inhibited our efforts to expand extracurricular and after-school activities, student councils underwent formal leadership training from the Jump Foundation. We look forward to renewing our extracurricular activities as soon as the epidemiological situation allows and looking for ways to incorporate environmental sustainability into student programs and school operations.

Our third goal was to strengthen AISZ's operational efficiency. On the administration side, the Board supported the separation of functions, and the establishment of a discrete Human Resources Operations Manager position and an Admissions/Alumni Manager position. Both these new positions will support the continued growth of the school. As a Board, we continued our focus on reducing the impact of Board turnover and professionalizing our Board's operations. We updated the school's policy manual and the Board's by-laws to ensure both were aligned to the best practices of other international schools. One of the highlights of this work was bringing up to date our policy on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

As you will see in the Financial Report, the school's financial health remains strong. In recognition of reduced in-person instruction in the previous academic year, we offered a tuition rebate to our community in the fall, and unlike many CEESA schools, we kept the tuition and school fees on the same level as in the previous school year.

And of course, one of our top priorities throughout the year was the health, safety, and wellness of our students and staff. We appreciate the commitment of our students, staff, and parents in adhering to the school's health protocols in order to maintain in-person learning for the greater part of the year.

Victoria J. Taylor
Chargé d'Affaires, a.i.



Being a Trustee on the Board of an International School is a voluntary commitment to the future strategic direction and stability of the school, and we are indeed fortunate to have such a strong and positive Board as we do. The Board focuses on the strategic direction and fiduciary security of the school for future generations, whilst the School Director manages the day-to-day operation and leadership of the school. In harmony, we strive to offer the best present and future educational experiences for international and internationally-minded families of Zagreb.

Travis Piper
US Ambassador Appointee



Beverly Hickman
US Ambassador Appointee



Petr Kašička
Parent Representative



Graciela Arroyo Nava
Parent Representative



John Gašparac
Board Appointee - Treasurer



Tomislav Matić
Board Appointee



Paul Buckley
AISZ Director, Ex-officio



Letter from the Director

Dear AISZ Community,

Once again we are coming to the end of another AISZ academic year. In March 2020, we closed the school in the face of the burgeoning global pandemic and eighteen months later all our worlds are being impacted still. Unlike many schools around the world, AISZ has been fortunate to maintain a steady in person and hybrid modality of education delivery for most of this year. As we close one year and move into the planning for the next, we have a keen eye on the uncertain future - we are in continuous planning and monitoring to ensure we remain flexible and adaptable.

As with every year, the cycle of international schools is always one of the transitions. At this time of the year, it is natural for people to move on to different locations or positions around the world or at home. This year is no exception, so if you are a leaving family, I hope you will think fondly of your time and friends here in Zagreb and AISZ. Please keep in contact with Martina Ozir as our newly appointed Alumni Manager so we know how you are doing. This year in our faculty we are losing members and friends as well. You will find the details further in this annual report. This year some of our longest serving faculty and staff are leaving us and I want to thank them all for their dedication over such a significant period of time.

Within these pages too, you will find reflections on the Upper School Advisory Program which has been one of the main objectives of the Upper School Team and a personal passion of our Upper School Principal Stephen Dexter. Also included are details of our accreditation and goals for improvement arising from our self-study and accreditation virtual visit. The process was a highly successful one as we “looked under every rock” to gather data and evidence



which support our findings and projected goals. This process is a significant amount of work in any year, but during the one in which we have all experienced, it is monumental. Thank you to Tamara Black, LS Principal, for leading the process, Dawn Melarvie, Curriculum Coordinator and Instructional Coach, and all the faculty and staff who worked tirelessly on this self-improvement process.

Another highlight was the work of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion task force who developed wording for our newly adopted Charter and Policy, organized and conducted staff and student training, established “Safe Space” trained staff who are the go-to people for students if they need support. One of the three pillars of our school is for AISZ to live a culture of Extraordinary Care, where each student is known, supported, and advocated for. The work of this task force has helped us live our Mission and Vision.

Finally, I wish to thank Victoria Taylor for her two years as AISZ School Board Chair. Under her leadership, the Board of Trustees has reviewed and updated the AISZ School Policy Manual and By-Laws, professionalized Board operations through consistent and comprehensive Board Training, addressed the factors influencing the endemic churn of leadership and governance positions within the school and created a firm and stable basis for future school development. Of course, all this is not the work of one person and the contributions of all Board Members working in the Finance & Facility Committee and the Governance Committee, as well as the

full board, has been significant. This year we are also losing Petr Kašička, whose attention to detail and skill in policy design - as well as his generous personality and humor - will be sorely missed. I thank Victoria and Petr, and all our members for their outstanding work on the AISZ School Board of Trustees, on behalf of every student attending our school - both now and in the future.

Letter from US Principal

Dear AISZ Community,

I started this complex academic year with a lot of new rules, but also a quote that was new to me at the time and attributed to everyone from the former mayor of Chicago Rahm Emanuel to Winston Churchill. They apparently said, "Never waste a good crisis."

I love this quote because of the courage it implies in the face of adversity, turning a sense of victimhood into a feeling of possibility.

We have, in fact, taken full advantage of this crisis, from improving our focus on student care and wellness (that has always been important but went to a new level) as well as the way we deliver instruction, access the outdoors, and build community. It has been extremely stressful at times, but also exhilarating as the 'great accelerator' has enabled us to accomplish things that normally would take years.

Last Spring, when we were at peak uncertainty about the dangers of this pandemic, we had to cancel the all school parade to celebrate the graduating Class of 2020. This year, we persisted and created a spectacular socially distanced, outdoor parade with inspiring hits from the 80s and a rose ceremony. We even asked students to offer some words of encouragement. One brave first-grader stepped forward to speak.

There are so many other things to look back on over the year and I hope the pages of our Annual Report will help you understand more about our school and our year.

Paul Buckley
Director.



She said, "If things are hard, don't give up." It was the simplest and best advice for a class that has been through so much.

And so we continue in our second year of making the most of a crisis...

Part of our vision statement is "The Imagined." But who would have imagined that the future that this class would have experienced would include two earthquakes and a pandemic?! And yet...

When we redesigned the timetable in the Summer of 2020 to enable a three-tier model (virtual, in-person, hybrid) learning environments, we did so with the intention of slowing things down for more stability, focus, and support for our students. This has provided us the opportunity to connect on a deeper level with students with fewer transitions and more time to focus on academic thinking.

When we designed the temperature check in the morning (with music to start the day), we

discovered the importance of greeting every student as an individual and starting the day with a “Good morning, dobro jutro! How are you today?” which gave everyone a sense of community before they even walked in the door.

When we designed a virtual Outdoor Ed program, we never imagined that it would be successful, but this has enabled us to create half and full day experiences where, rather than work in front of a computer on virtual days, students can build campsites, ski on Sljeme, do teambuilding activities, and of course Unity Treks.

Letter from the LS Principal

LOWER SCHOOL: YEAR IN REVIEW

The Lower School is where children begin their journey toward becoming joyful, lifelong learners, and we have a responsibility to educate and develop these global citizens of tomorrow. One way we do this is to nurture their ability to adapt quickly and exercise flexibility of thought and action. The AISZ Strategic Plan calls upon us to do just that as we create learning opportunities indicative of a concept school for the future. Never have these skills been more relevant and important than during the 2020-21 academic year as we faced unprecedented challenges in delivering an engaging and challenging learning experience.

We were fortunate to be able to accommodate all of our Lower School students from PreKindergarten to Grade 5 on campus every school day this year while maintaining the appropriate social distancing. While there were instances of classes needing to self-isolate due to exposure to the COVID virus, these were few and far between, which meant that virtual learning was kept to a minimum for our young students.

Heading into the second half of 2021 and hopefully the end of this pandemic crisis, I cannot thank the AISZ community enough for its resiliency, faith in the measures we had to take to guarantee a viable learning environment, and the opportunity to make the most out of this crisis. It has (and will continue to be) an exciting journey that has enabled us to develop the skills and character for futures rich with promise.

Stephen Dexter
Upper School Principal.



LEARNING AS PROFESSIONALS

As exemplifies a community of lifelong learners, we are constantly reflecting upon how we teach and why we teach the way we do with the same spirit and passion that we hope to convey to our students. Throughout this academic year, Lower School faculty have participated in professional development experiences to further enhance and develop their teaching practice. Literacy teachers participated in online conference days hosted by Teachers College, Columbia University that focused on reading, using the *Units of Study* resource materials. They attended the first session during the summer break and then continued in the fall with monthly meetings through December.

During last year’s curriculum review cycle, faculty identified *Everyday Math* as the primary

resource that would best support our students' mathematics learning from PreK to Grade 5. To kick off the implementation of *Everyday Math*, Megan Holmstrom (an international math consultant who has worked with AISZ the past two years) led a full day virtual workshop at the beginning of the year.

As a school that believes in the power of inquiry-based learning, we were excited to host a series of virtual workshops for our faculty and staff with Kath Murdoch, a renowned expert on the power of inquiry. Teachers left with new ideas and strategies for how to engage students through an inquiry-based framework for learning.

ENSURING A CONSISTENT AND COHESIVE CURRICULUM

The Lower School curriculum is standards-based and delivered using best instructional practices with research-based resources. As a school with high expectations for student learning, a major project that has been ongoing in the Lower School is the review and refinement of a guaranteed and viable curriculum. As a division, we deepened our understanding of power standards with a work session led by our director, Paul Buckley. We also continued documenting unit plans using Atlas as our curriculum management platform. All of this work has strengthened the cohesion and alignment of what is taught across the school.

During this school year, the Lower School faculty focused on science during a curriculum review process and identified FOSS (Full Option Science System), which comes from Lawrence Hall of Science at the University of California, Berkeley, as the primary resource to support science learning for grades PreK to Grade 5. We will begin implementing FOSS during the 2021-22 school year.

We also began a rollout of digital citizenship instruction for Grades K-5 using Common Sense Media. A team of our educators that included Ana Grubač, Andrea Diamant, Ines Šitum, and

Sara Batinić completed requirements to become certified Common Sense Media educators and led the implementation of this learning. In addition, they also led the charge for AISZ to be designated as a Common Sense School, which was no small feat. We see this area as vital to preparing our students for the future.

LOWER SCHOOL PROGRAM GUIDE

Lower School students experience a rich and engaging inquiry-based program from PreKindergarten for three- and four-year-olds through Grade 5. The *Lower School Program Guide* was created to explain the what, how, and why of learning in these grades. The *Guide* provides information about the curriculum with division- and subject-area overviews, and specific curricula and learning units for each grade level.

Our curriculum is dynamic and evolves based upon student needs, faculty reflection, and what is learned from the field of educational research. Therefore, each year the *Guide* will be updated to reflect how we are meeting students' needs and enhancing their learning experiences.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

We believe that working together as a community will help us achieve the best possible results for our students. While our health and safety guidelines have not allowed us to gather as a Lower School group face-to-face, we have had opportunities for virtual Community Meetings throughout the year. For example, we held a Lower School Winter Virtual Community Meeting on the final day of school in December before winter break. All LS students and faculty Zoomed in for holiday sing-alongs and videos, and celebration of the successful completion of the first semester. We also kicked off Library Week in April with a virtual community meeting. Students participated from their classrooms and enjoyed videos and a book reading while they were dressed as their favorite book character.

In addition to division-wide experiences, we've emphasized social and emotional well-being among our students. We know that many of our students have struggled to cope with the stress brought on by the pandemic. Their social interactions with their friends and peers have also been strained due to limitations that have been placed on close contact with others. One way we've supported students through this time is to focus on deepening and strengthening relationships within the classrooms. In addition, our counseling and support services teams have provided ongoing support to students and staff during this time.

FOCUSING ON THE WHOLE CHILD

We recognize that academic, social, and emotional growth are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Traction in a subject area takes place when children trust their teachers and classmates and when they feel free to take intellectual and social risks—sharing a poem with the class, asking a fellow learner for help with a math problem, or standing up for

someone who is being treated unfairly. Likewise, the greatest social and emotional growth takes place when children feel intellectually capable and engaged by a rich and challenging curriculum.

Our focus on the whole child has been integral to our successful work, and students have learned and grown in ways we couldn't even have imagined in previous years. All of this has only been possible because of the exceptional partnership we have with our students' families. Because of the way we came together as a community, our students are well-positioned for the next steps in their learning journeys.

Tamara Black
Lower School Principal.



American International
School of Zagreb

Financial Review

HISTORICAL: 2019 -2020

Thanks to an increased number of enrolled students (280 enrolled students vs. 262 in 2018.2019), we finished the 2019 - 2020 school year with a financially healthy report. With strong financial management and planning, we are continuously receiving clean audit reports. According to audited figures, the total actual revenue exceeded the forecast of €4.6m by 5.6% due to an increased number of students. Expenditures were 4.7% lower than planned, mainly due to unspent expenditure for outdoor student activities, student travel and hosting events, and Professional Development.

Due to all unforeseen circumstances related to the COVID pandemic, actual costs incurred were €320k below the budgeted amount and represent a saving to the school. AISZ managed to finish the year with a surplus of €685k and part of the savings was retained to address needs associated with the ongoing pandemic whilst the remainder of these savings (€205k) was returned to families during the fall semester of 2020-2021. The Board also decided to freeze tuition fees for the next school year at 2019.2020 rates.

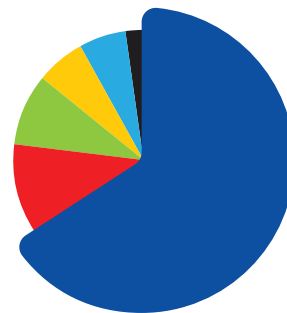
CURRENT: 2020-2021

The financial school year 2020-2021 looks healthy and stable thanks to a record of 306 enrolled students (293 planned) during the year with income predominantly from Tuition fees. Majority of expenditure relates primarily to personnel expenses and other educational support. The result of the current academic year holds some uncertainty as a result of the ongoing global health situation. The budget was prepared by planning the second semester without the pandemic, and consequently, we are expecting some savings in this regard.

Combining higher revenues than planned due to a higher number of students, reimbursement to families, and projected savings, we are in opinion to have a strong position to respond as needed.

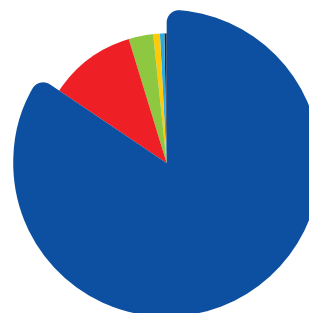
The Finance and Facilities Committee, along with the AISZ Board as a whole, is committed to serving the AISZ Learning Community and providing the best possible educational experience for our students.

Generally, a school has a very large percentage of costs that are fixed and AISZ is no exception. In particular, 86.6% of our budgeted costs are fixed, allocated to personnel, depreciation and school operations. AISZ is a zero-based budget, non-profit organization.



EXPENSES 2020-21

- Personnel 66%
- Depreciation 11%
- School Operation 9%
- Educational Expenses 6%
- Financial Expenses 6%
- Technology 2%



INCOME 2020-21

- Tuition Fee 84.5%
- Capital Fee 11%
- Admission Fee 3.1%
- Other Fees 0.7%
- Grant 0.6%
- Miscellaneous Income 0.1%



Flexible Program Delivery

LOWER SCHOOL

In the Lower School, this year we were fortunate to be able to accommodate all of our students from PreKindergarten to Grade 5 on-campus every school day while maintaining the appropriate social distancing as outlined in our health guidelines. To achieve this feat, we reworked the daily schedule to ensure that grade level cohorts did not mix during the day, creating virtual bubbles around groups of students. Even with these safeguards in place, we would not have been as successful in providing continuous face-to-face learning without the commitment of the AISZ community to following the health guidelines. In fact, we had very few instances of classes going into self-isolation due to exposure to the COVID virus, which meant that the need for virtual learning was kept to a minimum.

To prepare for this year, we called upon lessons learned during the spring semester of 2020 when we first shifted to an all-virtual learning platform in response to the global pandemic. Not surprisingly, we found that moving to a virtual platform had the most impact on the learning of our youngest students. Teachers had to quickly determine which strategies and tools would be most effective at the different grade levels, and they had to ascertain what support students and

parents needed to best be set up for success. Based on those experiences, we were able to plan how learning would work this year if we did need to go virtual.

In keeping with the goal of limiting face-to-face gatherings, we held several events virtually and did so quite successfully. Back to School Night traditionally kicks off the school year, and this year was no different. We hosted virtual Back to School Night meetings for parents that included a large group meeting on Zoom with the Lower School Principal, and then each homeroom teacher hosted class gatherings at each grade level.

Fall goal-setting conferences and spring student-led conferences were also held virtually this year. In the Lower School, all of these conferences included the student, parents, and teacher. The students even took the lead in facilitating the conversations beginning with our youngest learners in PreK. They were able to explain where they were in their learning and what next steps they needed to take. We highly value these opportunities for students to become articulate advocates of their own learning, and they are another example of how we bring our strategic plan to life. During these important conversations, the pride that students

exhibited in their successes and their learning were truly inspirational.

UPPER SCHOOL

The biggest challenge in the summer of 2020 was how to design a timetable that enabled a program of delivery in a pandemic. The guiding principles of this restructuring included simplification of the day, off timetable opportunities for pastoral care, and a dynamic model for the unpredictable nature of possible school closures. The end result (following several weeks of research in April and May 2020) was a four day rotation of four/90 minute blocks a day, a community block on Fridays, and a backup timetable for a full virtual timetable with a fixed off timetable day on Wednesdays for personalized support, catchup, and off screen time for wellness. The end result has enabled our upper school to run a hybrid (two days at school and two days at home), full virtual (all learning at home), and full time in school (not available in 2020-21). This significant adjustment to our timetabling model has been well received and allowed us to continue teaching and learning.

Asynchronous and Synchronous Learning:
Another opportunity for our teaching staff has been the adaptation of a live online teaching experience juxtaposed with asynchronous,

or, independent work with personalized instruction or practice in an asynchronous environment. Both approaches to teaching and learning come with their own set of challenges and opportunities for growth, from setting expectations around attendance and 'cameras on' during live classes, to supporting students in virtual arts and outdoor education classes to work independently on personal goals and projects.

Several opportunities have presented themselves during these new learning ventures for both our teachers and students. First, the online experience has given students that like to operate more independently the chance to set their own work schedules, work in the comforts of their home learning environment, and participate in a different method from in person learning. Second, the virtual and hybrid experience has built in more flexibility for students to take field trips on virtual days and allows a variety of learning settings for students. Some of the challenges noted by both teachers and students in a flexible delivery model have been the loss of community such as when the school is filled with everyone at once, the opportunity to meet and share across grade levels (since cohorts must stay together), and the socio-emotional support that comes with being in school on a more consistent basis.



AISZ Diversity Charter

This year, AISZ completed and published its own Diversity Charter, the stated values of which are supported by “The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. AISZ also subscribes to tenants of the European Union and Croatian Diversity Charters.”

As such, our policy states that “In fulfilling our mission, AISZ is dedicated to creating systems that value the unique contributions of all students and staff to our school and fully engage all members of our school community in achieving our vision. We commit to explicitly embedding a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens in our organizational and learning culture.”

With the adoption of our diversity charter, DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) has continued to be a focus at AISZ this year. Following on from our foundation committee of 2018, we have formed a new DEI committee with all members participating in CIS accredited trainings related to race and equity issues in international schools. As we expanded our work, all staff were invited to become a “safe zone teacher” and a Safe Zone training was provided to those teachers who volunteered themselves for the role. We have hung a poster with the faces of these teachers around our school and provided rainbow decals so that students can easily identify these teachers. The key role of these staff members is to provide another avenue for direct support related to DEI or any other area of social, emotional or academic concern a student may have.

How DEI looks in practice this 2020-2021 year. Although COVID has limited our ability in some ways, we have been able to build in activities and initiatives to build community and understanding around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- February was designated as DEI month in which all students had an opportunity to discuss what diversity, equity, and inclusion looks and feels like in their lives and the world.
- Our security guard, Mr. Dennis Coleman, shared information with Middle School students about Black History Month and the important changes black people have led/ been a part of throughout history.
- Students have been offering their voices and helping in the creation of a new DEI vision statement for our school. We hope to have older students bring that vision to the Lower School as well before the end of the year.
- Teachers are looking critically to select more varied literature.

As we look towards 2021-2022, we look forward to carrying this really important work forward and continuing to celebrate all of the ways our differences make us richer.

As an international school, we embrace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. AISZ is committed to and accountable for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of its forms.





Live your truth.

Who you are is beautiful



Need to talk?

Come see one of us,
we are here to help

2020 Summary of IB Results & High School Profile

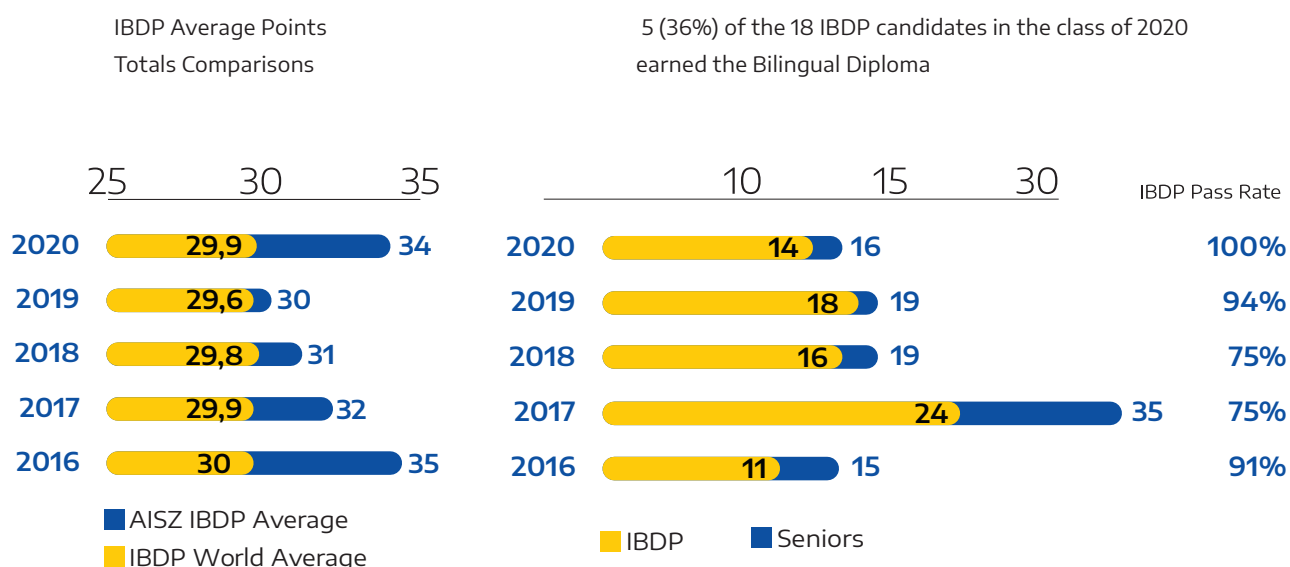
CURRICULUM

AISZ is a non-selective school, for both admissions and IB Diploma enrolment. AISZ offers AERO Standards 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 programme, 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.

2020 - 21 PROFILE COVID STATEMENT

Due to COVID19 and Croatian government health regulations, AISZ moved to a full virtual learning model from March 13, 2020 until the end of the academic year, June 12, 2020. School opened August 19, 2020 with Lower School, PreK-G5 in school full time, with face to face learning on campus as usual. For increased flexibility, Grades 6-12 have moved to a 4 day block schedule, with G6-8 and G9-12 alternating two consecutive days face-to-face followed by two consecutive days of virtual learning, creating a hybrid learning environment. Local SAT and IELTS test sittings were also canceled due to Covid restrictions and subsequent organizational closures, limiting opportunities from test practice and sitting from March 2020 to September 2020.

SUMMARY OF IB DIPLOMA RESULTS 2016-2020



2020 AISZ Graduate Placement

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2020!

As of September 2020, our students had been accepted to the following universities:

ASIA

Yonsei University

INDIA

Quantum University

CROATIA

Rochester Institute of Technology
Zagreb School of Economics and Management
University of Zagreb

THE NETHERLANDS

Erasmus University Rotterdam
Utrecht University
Tilburg University

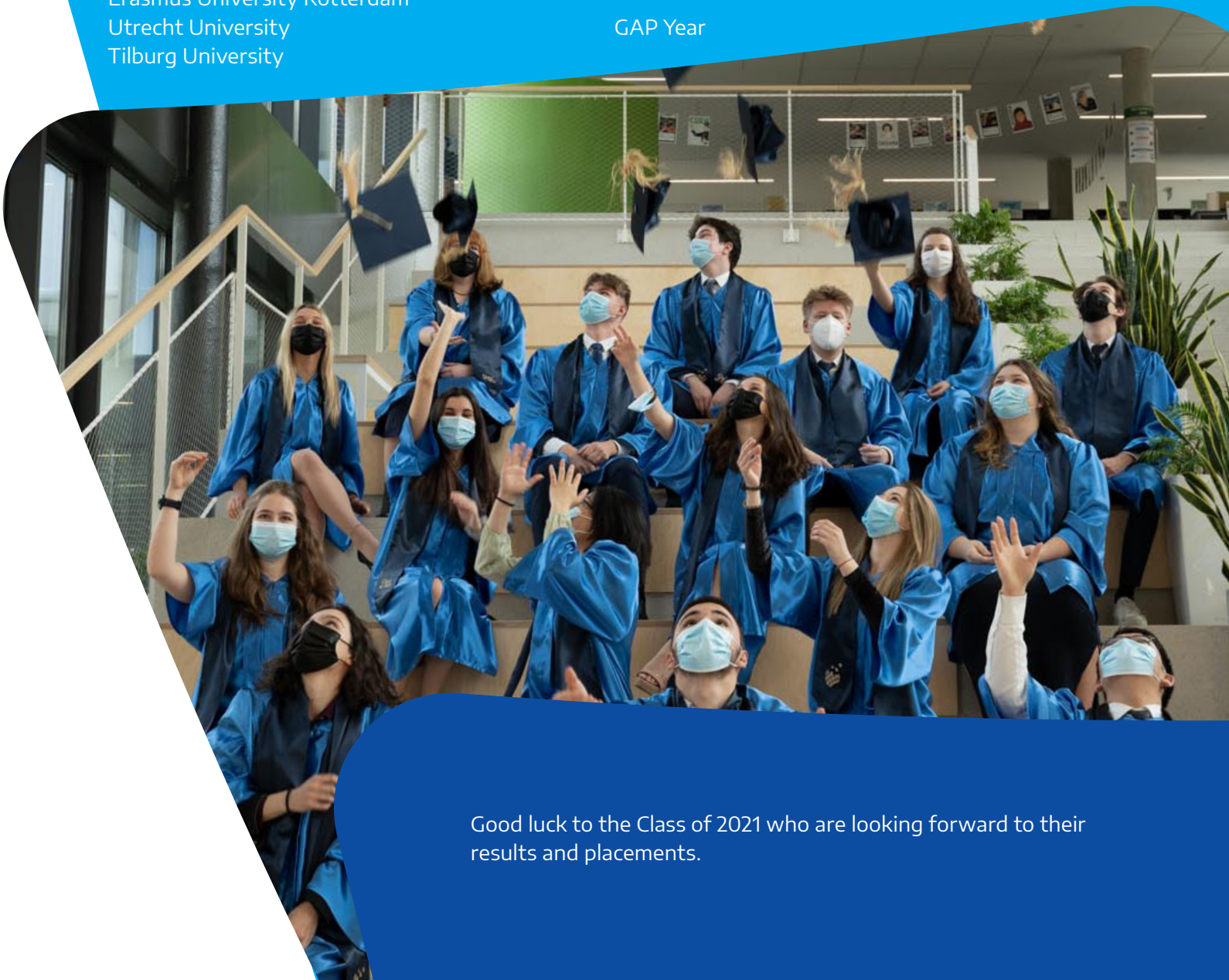
OTHER EUROPE

Italy - Bocconi
Austria - TU Wien
Germany
Italy

UNITED KINGDOM

Brunel University
Convery University
Heriot Watt University
University of Sussex
University of Exeter

GAP Year



Good luck to the Class of 2021 who are looking forward to their results and placements.

MSA Accreditation

Every seven years, the American International School of Zagreb goes through a rigorous process in pursuit of re-accreditation by the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA). While we began this work during the 2019-20 school year, the pandemic delayed our completion of the requirements until April 2021. We are proud to announce that AISZ has been re-accredited through 2028.

To be accredited, a school voluntarily completes a self-evaluation to demonstrate that they are meeting a defined set of 12 research-based performance standards. The standards examine schools in a holistic way, supplementing student-testing data. This provides a more complete measure of a school's performance and charts a strategic and realistic course for continuous school improvement.

The process begins with a self-study conducted by the school and requires input from various stakeholders including school leaders, teachers, parents, and students. Following the self-study, a team of volunteer educators from Middle States-accredited schools conducts a peer review to observe school operations and interview various community members. The team then makes its recommendation to MSA, where it undergoes a multi-level review by some of the best educators in the field before being approved.

The visiting accreditation team conducted a virtual visit from April 12-14, 2021. During this time they met with representative groups of faculty members, board members, students, parents, and school leaders. On the final day, the chair of the team read their report that included four strengths and three recommendations for our school. The report also noted that we exceed expectations in eight of the twelve standards and have no monitoring issues or

stipulations that require attention. This is an extraordinary feat as very few schools exhibit this level of excellence during the accreditation process.

AISZ received four commendations, a number that is more than usually achieved during an accreditation visit, and three recommendations as follows:

COMMENDATIONS

1. Mission and Vision

The extent that the school adheres to and is driven by its Mission and Vision is extraordinary. The visiting team found consistent evidence throughout the school and was able to clearly identify and tell stories exemplifying this important factor. Consistently throughout the school, the Mission and Vision led every decision, action, and interaction.

2. Collaboration and Reflection

At every level of the school, from the Board to the Students, collaboration and reflection are intricately woven into the fabric of the school. Board with Leadership, Leadership with Staff, Staff with Students, Students with Students, Students with Leadership, Staff with Parents; it was noted that it was impossible for the visiting team to be engaged with the school at any time and not witness immense constructive collaboration and reflection. The team stated that it was impossible to draw any other conclusion than the fact that the success of AISZ was based on teamwork and collaboration of the whole group, rather than the individual efforts of a few.

3. A Remarkable Culture of Extraordinary Care

Students and Parents remarked to the team that in the school, students could clearly identify multiple adults who knew them, advocated for them, and supported them. At every level

throughout the school, the team stated that it was impossible not to be impressed by the very real culture of extraordinary care and the benefits that had on all the students and staff who worked at the school.

4. Pedagogy and Instructional Practice

The extent to which instructional practice is student-centered and the consistency of that practice throughout the school from PreK to Grade 12 impressed the visiting team. In all the classes the team visited, students were doing most of the speaking and not the teacher. Students and Parents remarked that students were aware that it was their role to be active in their learning and it was expected of them to respond to challenges and apply their learning to new contexts. It was their responsibility to think in new ways and to challenge the teacher with their thinking. Teachers treat the students as equals and this is reciprocated by the students. Parents told the team that on the whole, their children cannot wait to come to school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Do not stop

AISZ was encouraged not to stop but to keep going in reflection and school development because AISZ is doing “a great job”. The team felt every time an area for development was indicated by a response in the self-study, the school had either addressed it or was in the process of addressing it.

2. Do not lose the Magic

There is a certain magic in small schools and AISZ has captured and capitalized upon this magic. It was recognized by the team that the

school has an increasing demand for enrollment and will definitely grow in the near and mid-term future. AISZ is encouraged to be very deliberate in this growth and to protect the very special culture and community which has been established over the last six years.

3. Take Time to Celebrate

In very dynamic schools, with a clear focus on development and improvement, it is sometimes easy to move on to the next thing without taking the time to celebrate the big and small wins. AISZ is encouraged to take time to do this and to ritualize the acknowledgments and the successes that come from such a focused improvement cycle.



Congratulations to the entire AISZ community for such a successful re-accreditation process. With our positive and forward-looking culture and the strong relationships we have as a community, we look forward to continually growing, learning, and striving for excellence.

Wellness

Entering 2021, we knew that wellness was going to require more focus than ever before. Wellness has taken on a new meaning in this pandemic/earthquake era, and we had to make a number of structural and programmatic changes in order to ensure that our students were known, advocated for, and supported. In the virtual days of Spring 2020, we started by creating a page called 'The Bear Cave' in the Google Classroom Suite where our counselors posed surveys to check in on how students were coping and to have virtual check ins with their homeroom teachers on our Friday advisory blocks (aptly named "Frisory").

We were very pleased with the adaptability of our teachers to engage in the delivery of the Frisory program and the leadership of our student support team in adapting the curriculum from the International School Counselor Association (ISCA) standards. Here are the topics that we covered each month throughout the year in Frisory:

- September: Organizational Skills and Transitions
- October: Stress Management
- November: Self-Esteem and Confidence
- December: Conflict Resolution
- January: Attitude, Effort, Persistence
- February: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)
- March: Boundaries and Consent
- April: Peer Pressure
- May: Digital Citizenship
- June: Transition

In addition to the above topics, we alternated with pastoral "check-ins" where each homeroom teacher would take time to meet with small groups and individuals to check in on their wellbeing, attendance, and overall experience at school.

Another experiment that we introduced during the virtual months was "Wisory" which meant that each Wednesday, we would not have scheduled classes, but rather a chance for students to unplug, check in with their teachers as needed, catch up, and unwind from a stressful week of online classes. It was a very popular addition to the schedule and something that we hope to continue in the future, even in non-pandemic times.

SOMEONE TO TALK TO

Every school asks, "Does each child have at least one adult that they can talk to?" It seems obvious that classroom teachers serve that purpose. But unless a school makes this deliberate, students don't always seek this support. We initiated a "Need to Talk?" campaign around our Safe Zone training with posters in the building that specifically instructed students that they had people in the building that they could talk to at any time. One of our students commented during our recent accreditation visit that the posters made them feel comfortable, "like we could talk to someone and they had our back."

We also have assigned four teachers in each grade level as homeroom teachers that not only sponsor the Frisory activities each month but also serve as a connection to parents and guardians.

CEESA WELLNESS CHALLENGE!

Although wellness is not designed as a competition, a little friendly rivalry can sometimes be a good motivator. In the Fall, our high school came in the first place and our middle school second in the first annual CEESA Wellness Challenge by submitting the most steps, water consumed, sleep hours, art produced and meditation! We hope to continue this tradition in the future and thank Ms. Palmer for motivating our school to participate.

VIRTUAL BAKE OFF

The lack of community connections was one of the biggest losses of the pandemic times. Our middle school scored huge wellness points with our community by creating the first ever “Virtual Bake Off” just before the holidays. Normally, students and staff might bake something at home and bring it in to share. But in the style of our favorite cooking channels, our students put the video on their kitchens and cookware, showing their true creativity in the cooking process and their amazing ability to put together some tasty treats in a limited amount of time. We can’t wait to continue this tradition even after the requirements of virtual celebration has passed.

JUMP! FOUNDATION LEADERSHIP ACADEMY AND GARDEN PROJECT

One of our core values is to promote student advocacy and voice. In September, we worked with the JUMP! Foundation, a global leader in student programs and experiential learning to develop the foundation of team building skills with our students in middle and high school. From the 15 hours of interactive training and designing with our facilitator (located virtually in Thailand), our students created not only more confidence in themselves as leaders, but also a specific outcome that is now being realized in our Butterfly & Kitchen Garden Project near the entrance to the school. It is an ideal opportunity for our students to not only work with their hands, but to work with local experts on sustainable farming practices, the stress reduction qualities of working a garden, and the joys of the outdoors. Thanks to our high school student council leadership for this initiative.



Curriculum Development

AISZ is a true community of learners, with students and teachers alike constantly being challenged to grow. For teachers, professional learning can take many forms in schools. The framework we use is the structure of a Professional Learning Community (PLC). Our educators meet regularly, share their expertise, and work collaboratively to improve their own teaching skills and the academic performance of their students.

The PLC Process centers around four questions:

- What do we want all students to know and be able to do?
- How will we know if they learn it?
- How will we respond when some students do not learn?
- How will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient?

Simply, teams of teachers - either grade level, vertical, special topic, or subject matter teams - work collaboratively to enhance student learning. This year, two types of PLCs stood out. One was in the form of a collaborative book study and the other a curriculum review.

COLLABORATIVE STUDY GROUPS: SPOTLIGHT ON PHONICS K- 2

How do teachers continue their learning and enhance their practice? A case study.

Over several months, our Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 teachers embarked upon a collaborative book study using *A Guide to the Phonics Units of Study*, developed by Teachers College at Columbia University. One year ago, AISZ adopted this newly-developed phonics program and began implementing it in Kindergarten and Grade 1, with the addition of Grade 2 this year. The next step in the process - to create a unified vision and framework for phonics - has become a reality this year through this professional book study. Our essential

question was: *How do we develop a cohesive phonics program that is research-based, involves best practices, and integrates with what is already happening in our classrooms?* Our goal for the study was to paint a picture of what phonics should look like, feel like, and sound like at AISZ.

Here is a glimpse into our discussion:

“Phonics is not a stand alone subject. It needs to be taught daily and explicitly within reading and writing.”

“Phonics is active and engaging and children need to learn by doing.”

“The biggest challenge is keeping the lessons ‘lean and efficient’ - no longer than twenty minutes. How do you introduce different strategies, provide various learning groups such as pairs, whole class, or small groups, and be vigilant about assessing within each lesson?” Everyone agreed. And here it begins...

Throughout the weeks and chapters of our book, common agreement frameworks were defined. The structure of phonics mini-lessons and small group lessons were explored. Strategies were shared on how to ensure the students were applying their phonics knowledge not only during the dedicated time, but in reading workshop, writing workshop, and sprinkled throughout the whole day. The role of continual assessment was discussed, including how we can best manage the data to more effectively pinpoint student growth and to plan differentiated instruction for all students.

When you observe student learning during a phonics workshop, it may appear noisy and “busy” to the untrained eye. However, if you look deeper, its consistent architecture between

grade levels is organized, structured, and predictable. It will look active, with students engaged in small groups, partnerships, or independently. It will sound like a hum of activity: students conferring with teachers or partners, asking questions, singing, chanting, and self-monitoring. You might find students sorting words by their word parts, working to decode new words using everything they know about letters and sounds, or using a phonics chart to apply the new skills in their own writing. It will feel exciting, inspiring, and involve risk-taking, making mistakes, and learning.

The process has been enlightening and collaborative, and the hum of sharing of best practices continues with this great new resource. The model created by our K-2 team will serve as the model for the school as we move forward in refining and in some cases re-envisioning, our curricula into cohesive, vertically-aligned curriculum frameworks.

CURRICULUM REVIEW CYCLE: SPOTLIGHT ON SCIENCE

How do teachers restructure courses to better prepare students for success in the IBDP program? A case study.

For several months, the Upper School Science department immersed themselves in the curriculum review process. In a nutshell, a curriculum review is a structured process for evaluating, reviewing, and revising curricular areas. At AISZ, we use this time to investigate and consider new research, determine alignment to our adopted standards, identify gaps and areas for growth in our articulated curriculum, and ensure integration of the three main pillars of learning as outlined in our strategic plan: conceptual learning, competency learning, and character learning. The goal of this review is simply to optimize student learning, which is an integral part of our ever-evolving curriculum. The essential question emerged as one teacher stated, “How can we get students to fall in love with science?”

In the words of Ms. Kimes, “One of the aims is for the science program to become more holistic and relevant so we can help our students develop themselves as deep thinkers, questioners, innovators, and creative students with a strong engagement in science while ensuring our students remain competitive learners and contributors on the global stage.” The idea of world science competitions was discussed.

“Our goal is to become a center of excellence for science. The heart of our curriculum review is to bring balance and increase exposure to the differing sciences so students cannot only make an informed choice upon entering IB but more importantly, have the foundational skills that set students up for success,” Ms. Hawkins chimed in. We needed to design our new curriculum with the end in mind: How do we best prepare our students for the IB courses?

It was determined that offering an integrated science curriculum (where students will get units of the different domains of science each year Grades 6-10) will best prepare our students for a smooth transition into IB. This kind of Spiraling Curriculum (where skills and topics are revisited in increasing complexity throughout the years) will give our students exposure to a wider breadth of the sciences. An additional benefit is to close gaps that can occur in a transient international community.

Adhering to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in grades 6-10 will not only create a more seamless transition between Lower and Upper School, but also allow us to incorporate STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) into units of instruction, as opposed to offering STEAM as an elective course. NGSS encourages anchoring instruction in the study of phenomena. Mr. Mews says that using phenomena as a “hook” motivates students to figure out why or how something happens as opposed to just learning about a topic. Something as “simple” as figuring out how condensation appears on a water bottle ends up being

much more complex than IB Physics students initially realize. In short, studying phenomena exposes the misconceptions we all have and forces students to rethink what they thought they knew. Rethinking such as this leads to a deeper understanding. Ms. Amarna believes one of the most exciting components of the new curriculum will be the science electives. Elective sciences are experientially-based where students hone investigation skills. “Science is fascinating -- it is stranger than fiction!”

Ms. Amarna beams while explaining, “When kids learn the joy of working on a very difficult problem and they figure it out - the experiment worked, the “car” worked - they know whether they’ve done it right or not. There is nothing more satisfying!”

As the teachers moved around science standard cards to create a logical sequence of topics, discussions could be overheard: “Consistent review, reflection, and innovation in our program and practice are so important as we prepare our students for a future that we cannot predict today We are creating a world of more and more ‘black boxes’ that we don’t necessarily understand. We have to immerse students in science and inspire them to enjoy science so they can decipher those ‘black boxes.’ This understanding will help them become better decision-makers for all of our futures.”

During this process, the energy and excitement for science was palpable. New courses were designed, timelines for rollouts were determined, necessary supports and structures were identified, stumbling blocks were tackled, and our vision of science was revitalized by teachers who want to inspire students with a love of inquiry and a passion for discovery. Though AISZ completed curricular reviews on a smaller scale, this science review will serve as a model for us to use with other subject areas as we transition to a school wide approach. As Albert Einstein once said, “The measure of intelligence is the ability to change.”

BUILDING ON PREVIOUS YEARS CURRICULAR WORK:

Along with the above examples, we continue to build and refine our previous work:

- Refined power standards drawn from our adopted standards in all courses.
- Collaboratively created assessments to reflect these standards.
- Documented our taught curriculum into our Online Management systems: Atlas and Managebac.
- Implemented Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive education to our counseling programs schoolwide.
- Developed and implemented Wellness Curriculum, including Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, into homerooms in the LS and in the newly developed pastoral care Frisory classes in the Upper School.
- In the Lower School, implemented our newly adopted Everyday Math program and collaborated on refining our mathematical assessment practice.
- The Lower School utilized collaboration time to refine Units of Study in Reader’s and Writer’s workshops.
- In the Upper School, developed comprehensive measures for more accurately determining our IBDP predicted grades.
- Increased Outdoor Education excursions and Unity Treks and Trips outside of the school campus.
- Introduced an Interdisciplinary Garden Project in partnership with local businesses to create a butterfly and “kitchen garden”.







Athletics & Extra Curricular Activities in 2020/21

Although the past school year has been challenging in planning and predicting sports events and activities, our school found ways to be part of the local and international events.

In two virtual meetings, students learned about the selected French-speaking countries, Switzerland and Morocco, and had a chance to ask questions about the countries as well as about the life and personal preferences of the two ambassadors.

Although not part of the Croatian national system, AISZ tries to expose the students also to competitive national academic challenges in different areas. French students participated in the national French-language competition, for which students in grades 8, 10 and 11 take the same test on the same day and are, under code names, scored against each other. Although programs differ in some aspects, our students

usually do very well and in the past, we had some county and state champions.

AISZ students participated in the Chapter Invitational Mathcounts Competition. All across the world, students virtually tested their mathematical abilities during a 24 hour period. As our top-placed mathlete in the Chapter round, one of the students was invited to the next stage of the competition.

Our high school students participated in the first-ever CEESA Virtual Knowledge Bowl Tournament. Thirteen schools from the region participated with a total of 21 teams. The competition consisted of team rounds as well as an individual bee. AISZ's two teams made up of grade 9 and grade 10 students competed against seasoned Knowledge Bowlers from grades 11 and 12 in the other schools. The questions were very difficult and covered

mostly IB curricular content. With this in mind, AISZ's students held their own and managed to offer some pretty steep competition for the other schools.

AISZ is one of the 16 international schools chosen to participate and has been co-chairing the AERO Model World Languages Curriculum project.

Several AISZ Middle School students, High School students, and staff members participated in a Body-Mind-Soul challenge. We competed against other schools in the CEESA region to promote positive self-care habits in what has been a challenging year for us all. Participants measured their steps, water intake, mindfulness minutes, sleep, and acts of kindness for others. Students could also submit artwork for extra points. AISZ clinched FIRST place for both our High School and Staff cohorts and second place in the Middle School.

AISZ received recognition for participation in the Online International School Chess Tournament. Elementary student from Grade 3 took 4th place in his category (among 52 players from 12 countries) and showed the highest abilities such as problem-solving, abstract reasoning, calmness under pressure, patience, sportsmanship, creative thinking, pattern recognition, and strategic thinking.

AISZ joined 30 other schools participating in the "Bike to School" project. This project promotes biking as an activity for a healthy lifestyle, developing awareness of the bicycle as an ideal and optimal means of transport from an early age, raising the level of safety in cycling, and promoting traffic culture.

Additionally, the High School and Middle School Student Council teams organized table tennis tournaments for their classmates. One of the highlights of the year was the Dance competition between MS students, HS students, and teachers teams.

Students of the AISZ demonstrated a high level of perseverance and passion when participating in extracurricular activities. For the Virtual Cross Country competition, they were tracking their progress and kept improving their performance. The virtual 3 points competition was so contagious that several teachers from school joined the event and practiced few days shooting hoops at the gym after school. MS Knowledge Bowl team gave up two days of the Spring break to represent our school in the best possible way.

The Athletic Department worked on a new sports logo and the school's characteristic bear mascot to increase the school spirit. The new design was created and is featured on a number of new cheer equipment.



Outdoor Education

Outdoor Education students utilize the great outdoors as a classroom and incorporate several skills to learn how to live an active and healthy lifestyle. Students build leadership skills, excursion and trip planning skills, wilderness, navigation, survival and camping skills. The aims of Outdoor Education are to provide an opportunity to discover new interests and talents, a tool to develop essential skills for life and work, improve self-esteem and build confidence, and most importantly, to have a fun time with friends, at a safe distance of course during the pandemic. We encourage young people to participate in sport and other physical recreation for the improvement of health and fitness and to instill a love of the outdoors as a lifelong pursuit.

The activities undertaken during the 2020-2021 school year included the creation of a butterfly garden, the combined effort between Outdoor Education and JUMP Leadership students with hopes of attracting and increasing the butterfly population in our community. The butterfly garden has several purposes, including educational, sustainability, recreational gardening, and increasing the butterfly population that drives pollination efforts. Plans for the future include creating a vegetable and herb garden utilizing an aqua/hydroponic designed watering system.

In a joint venture with the Zagreb Association of Technical Activities on Water (ZATDV), students were able to try several activities including stand-up paddling, windsurfing, kayaking, land-sailing, land-kiting, and the basics of sailing with optimists and lasers. The students were introduced to several new outdoor water sports to instill a love of water-related activities.

Using survival scenario games, students displayed creative and critical thinking skills to create a climate for survival during a “situation” at sea and on the frozen tundra. Students collaborated in teams to discuss and list the hierarchy of needs in a survival situation.

The students were introduced to the new fitness trend of Nordic walking that utilizes walking poles to increase the pace, activate the use of one’s upper body, and general cardio fitness. Nordic walking offers the additional benefit of engaging in a social activity aimed to create physically literate individuals.

Having the luxury of a climbing wall and an experienced instructor, all students were given the opportunity to engage in wall climbing on a regular basis. Students were encouraged to conquer their fear of heights while using mental and physical energy. Wall climbing is an activity where students honed their focus skills, particularly while belaying their classmates, entrusting one another to keep them safe.

AISZ students participated in the Ski Unity Trips. Teachers supervised students on the ski slopes and hiking trails. This was an amazing opportunity to enrich outdoor education with some new skills and closer bonding between students and teachers.





MS and HS classes enjoyed some winter fun on the skating rink. Those who wished to play a bit of hockey grabbed sticks, a puck, and set up the goals for some shooting practice and an informal game.

Connecting animals and outdoor activities, students participated in an unforgettable experience where they rode, fed, and brushed horses at an equestrian club. They were able to watch champion riders and were introduced to the daily meticulous care of the horses. The goal of instilling a love of lifelong outdoor activities was evidenced by the smiles, laughter, and excitement of the students and their parents.

Utilizing our neighborhood park, students enjoyed building a campfire, making a meal, pitching tents, and stringing up hammocks and shelters. Creating a real life scenario, teachers shared their experiences with students as they searched for the best parcel to set up their tents and shelters, and advised how to ignite and sustain their campfires under time constraints and possible inclement weather. By reconnecting with nature, students disconnected from technology and revitalized relationships with their classmates.

Students Testaments

"...the camping trip to Bundek was one of the best experiences I've had in 2021 so far. I enjoyed it a lot because I got to learn new skills, such as how to build a complex tent, how to prepare meat on a fire, and how to collaboratively work together with my classmates. I got to inhale fresh air on a nice, breezy morning and I got some physical exercise as well. This experience was also amazing because I got to see and work with my friends, which really lifted my spirits. Also, I'm not a natural born leader, but these experiences encouraged me to try and become one. In the end, I've grown intellectually, physically and mentally... Our lunch wasn't only edible, but also very delicious (we had burgers)!"

When we asked students for their feedback on Ski Unity Trips, their response was, "can we do it again?"



Alumni

Alumni Interview with Matea Mandarić, Class of 2020

Q: So, what have you been up to since you graduated? How's life?

A: Since graduation, I have been able to take some much needed "me time". I spent some time relaxing and then got ready to pack up and head to Scotland. Moving in the middle of the pandemic was a bit of a challenge, but once I got there it was great, despite all the COVID restrictions. Living on my own has given me a lot of responsibility, but a lot of freedom too.

Q: What is your favorite subject at university?

A: There are so many new things I've learned at university, but my favorite has got to be when I get to go into the workshop for Garment Construction. My uni has some of the best sewing facilities in Europe, and being able to use them has been an amazing experience! Coming in for Garment Construction is really the best. From clothing patterns, textiles and fabrics, to all the sewing machines, the workshop is definitely the most fun.

Q: What is the greatest skill you learned at AISZ to help you today?

A: Obviously, the academic skills I perfected at AISZ are an essential part of my education, but what I really appreciate is how well AISZ prepared me for other challenges. I feel like I am able to overcome most difficulties by thinking out of the box. I wouldn't be able to do this without being confident in my abilities, and AISZ has helped shape the person I am today, throughout my 13 years at the school.

Q: How has being a student in a pandemic shaped your view of the world?

A: The pandemic started in the last semester of my high school career and it came as quite a shock to everyone. Understanding that we live in very uncertain times has made me realize the constants in my life and I've come to truly appreciate them. It has made me value myself more as well since living abroad has taught me

that you, yourself, are the biggest constant in your own life. Being a student in a pandemic means that you might feel isolated at times, but I've been trying to remember and appreciate all that I have accomplished since COVID started.

Q: What do you miss most about Croatia and what do you love about where you are now?

A: Although I am back in Croatia at the moment due to the pandemic situation being worse in Scotland, I did miss some things about my home country while I was gone. I missed the relaxed way of life at the Mediterranean and the coffee shops. I missed bakeries and pastry shops since they don't seem to be as popular in Scotland. I also missed the sunshine and warm weather but didn't mind the rain and snow at all. However, what I missed most was my family and friends, especially my younger brother. Despite not being able to explore as much as I would have liked in Scotland, I was able to appreciate the beautiful landscapes and hiking trails near my university, as well as the gorgeous city of Edinburgh.

Q: What advice do you have for graduating Seniors?

A: Your first year of university will be one of the first times that you are truly on your own, so before you head off, make sure that your best relationship is the one you have with yourself. You don't have to be sure of what you want for the future, or how you're going to get there, just be sure of yourself, who you are, and who you're going to be.

Q: If you could help AISZ design one thing to prepare students better for their futures, what would it be?

A: I think students really need to be in charge of their own learning, and AISZ does an amazing job in supporting them, but sometimes students need a little push in order to find their passions. For myself, the Personal Project in Grade 10 pushed me to choose fashion as a path for my future. I'm hoping students are still able to discover themselves and their passions, and I think similar classes/programs would be an excellent way to prepare students for their futures.

Arriving Faculty

We welcome our new Faculty, arriving in August 2021.



Adam Strelec
Upper Elementary



Megan Kite
US Science & Mathematics



Anastasiya Kharytonova
US Language B / EAL



Frederic Gibault
US French & IDBP French A



Cynthia Campbell
LS Music / US Performing Arts



Julia Davis
Upper Elementary



Anthony Anamelechi
US Mathematics



David Voltz
Upper Elementary



Laurie Lavis
Lower School Learning Support



Ines Babić
US Croatian



Ann Marie Montgomery
US Science

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.



2 years
Catherine Gallagher
US Language B / EAL



18 years
Jasna Kobalt
US French



3 years
Zoe Rafferty
Grade 4 Teacher



36 years
Adrienne Marchich
US Mathematics



4 years
Chadley Despault
US Language &
Literature / Humanities



1 years
Lisa Bovay
US Mathematics / Science



4 years
Jesse Douma
Grade 5 Teacher



2 years
Nicky Sandmann
LS Music / US Performing Arts



1 years
Pavla Paić-Karega
Educational Assistant



3 years
Katie Hammond
Lower School Learning Support



2 months
Hana Ruklić
US Croatian

AISZ social media



#aiszagreb



@aiszagreb



AISZ ZAGREB



@AISZagreb

Božica Jelaković

(1949 - 2021)



Our esteemed Croatian Language and Literature teacher Božica Jelaković passed away on Wednesday, May 12, 2021 after a short illness. Božica was held in the highest regard by us all and was an immensely kind, talented and dedicated teacher who loved her students and AISZ. She retired a few weeks ago due to health reasons and sadly did not recover from complications.

Božica worked at AISZ from 2014 until recently in April 2021. She also taught for the school during 2006-2012. Prior to joining AISZ, Božica taught at MIOC.

Her daughter wanted to let our community know of their loss and to pass on to us all, how much her mother loved the school and her students. Božica believed in all of her students and wanted the very best for them. AISZ has lost an important part of our story and all who worked with her will carry the memory of a grand lady of education.

Our hearts go out to her family and friends; Božica Jelaković will be greatly missed.

With deepest sadness and immense appreciation.

Email from a former student

I just got the sad news that Mrs. Jelaković passed away. I am deeply saddened by this and wanted to just say a few words about how much she meant to me.

Mrs. Jelakovic was, and will remain, one of the biggest influences from my time at AISZ. She was supportive of my ideas and had a way of guiding me without me even noticing. She taught me so much, and not just Croatian language, literature analysis and grammar. She taught me to stand up for my ideas even when they are challenged by my peers, and she helped me become the person I am today by inspiring confidence and self reliance in me.

I can only thank her for every piece of advice she has ever given me. And I will always remember her last words to me in a letter she wrote to congratulate me on my graduation. "Mnogo je želja prenijeto, ali uvijek ima mjesta za srdačnost i prijateljstvo, savjet za tvoj uspjeh i zadovoljstvo." (In translation "Many wishes have been conveyed, but there is always room for heartiness/cordiality and friendship, a piece of advice for your success and contentment.").

It is so hard to say goodbye to such an important and wise figure in my life and she will be greatly missed, not just by her students, but by the entire AISZ community as well.

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