

# INSPIRE

BIS MAGAZINE 2023





**+  
Special**  
AI &  
Education



Bavarian  
International  
School

Believe. Inspire. Succeed.

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# More than just a school

**Dear BIS Community, friends,  
 supporters and partners of BIS,**

Bavarian International School (BIS) is more than just a school. For many families, especially international expats, it is a home away from home and a lifeline community. Not only is the school a place for children to learn, flourish and grow, but new friendships, networks and ideas are formed between members of our community on a daily basis.

At BIS we never stand still, we always have the future in mind and do everything we can to continuously improve education for our children. Thinking big, being bold and persistent were the guidelines for the Creativity & Innovation Centre (CIC) – now we are turning the vision into a reality and developing a gamechanger for the learning of the future.

**Gamechanger & frontrunner**

Meanwhile, the support from the community goes beyond donations to the CIC: as the only international school in Germany offering scholarships, BIS is proud to announce that we can now provide three fully funded scholarships: “Believe”, “Inspire” and, from 2024-25, “Succeed”.

We are more than a school also because we have the courage to take responsibility and tackle issues that need to be optimised: we are working on improving our internal communications and launching a professional alumni concept, to name just two examples from my field.



All that makes BIS what it is – what our students and teachers live, experience, and learn every day – and a little more, has been packed into this magazine: a colorful wonder box full of stories and pictures. The first edition also includes a 12-page special on ‘AI & Education’.

We hope you enjoy reading the printed and digital versions of our media flagship, which is also intended to make a valuable contribution to internal communications and will reach the top stakeholders in Munich.

Thank you for all the support and donations so far. I am confident that we will also reach additional milestones with the power of this unique community, for the future of BIS and our children.

Warm regards,

**Marko Mädge**  
 Head of Communications & Advancement





# Future skills for a new world

**Dr Chrissie Sorenson has been Head of School and Executive Board of the Bavarian International School since 2014. Her previous positions included Executive Director of the International School of Monterey (also founder) and Director of Dresden International School. The mother of three is the volunteer Board President of the Academy for International School Heads (AISH). In this interview, Dr Sorenson talks about education in turbulent, rapidly changing times, new skills and the school of the future.**

**Dr Sorenson, these are not easy times to run a school. First the COVID-19 pandemic, then Russia's war against Ukraine and, in October 2023, the terrible terrorist attack on Israel by Hamas. All of these events have an impact on learning, social interaction and mental well-being. How do you deal with this personally and how do you deal with these sensitive issues at BIS?**

"It does indeed seem that one crisis has been following another since the 2019-20 school year. And the way we react to such

occurrences certainly have an impact on student learning as well as the overall well-being of our community. There are two values I hold firmly to when faced with any sensitive issues: empathy and integrity. People and relationships are complex and usually have more layers of what is being dealt with, both at and outside of school, than the actions/reactions we see on the surface. So taking the time to listen and seek understanding for behaviours is critical. Just as important is making decisions based on our core values and retaining our integrity."

**What are the biggest lessons that our students will take away from these difficult times?**

"Our students, as well as our staff and community, will learn the power of resilience and adaptability, and to keep an open mind and growth mindset. Especially when confronted with viewpoints, which may seem to directly contradict our personal, family or community values, it is critical to continue to seek dialogue and understanding as opposed to getting stuck in an 'I'm right, you are wrong' mental space."

**At the same time, a digital revolution is underway that will change a huge number of things in business, society and education: Artificial intelligence (AI). How is BIS prepared for this?**

"The short answer is that BIS is prepared, and continues to prepare, for the 'predictable unpredictability' (as quoted in The Economist). While it is true that AI is rapidly evolving, many of the challenges, e.g. safety, relevance, time, capacity, professional growth opportunities, and (social) media literacy have been a focus at BIS for many years. Digitally literate schools such as BIS are already well-positioned to meet the challenges generative AI is currently presenting, and will continue to present to us."

**What opportunities and risks do you see in the use of AI in schools?**

"The opportunities are very exciting and include more personalised learning, including for students with identified learning challenges. This makes us a far more inclusive school. AI can help analyse student performance data and recognise learning patterns, which teachers can use to better inform their teaching strategies. And finally, the automation of routine and time-consuming tasks, can free up teachers' time to focus even more upon student learning. There are also risks, which must be minimised, such as data protection concerns, bias in AI algorithms, and a lack of social-emotional learning. By approaching AI with a balanced and thoughtful strategy, as well as continuously monitoring and evaluating the impact of AI on our educational outcomes, BIS has a healthy approach to the use of AI in our school."

**Learning of the future will change and BIS has just announced that the Creativity & Innovation Centre (CIC) is being built. Can you describe how learning will look differently in this new building?**

"Thank goodness the way students are learning is changing – the world we live and work in today is also very different than when the school system many of us are familiar with was developed approximately 150 years ago! Our children in the Primary

Years Programme (PYP) experience an interdisciplinary curriculum, which helps them make connections across subjects as well as understand the relevance of what they are learning. Secondary School can still be quite siloed in its subject teaching approaches and, despite at least one Interdisciplinary Unit (IDU) throughout each year of the Middle Years Programme (MYP), making more room for students to make connections across subjects in Secondary will prepare them better for the 'Predictable unpredictability' described above. In our new CIC, dedicated labs and studios in addition to flexible learning spaces will allow for authentic collaboration between students (and teachers) as they have direct access to the learning going on in different grade levels as well as the various disciplines. Making the learning visible assists in making connections and identifying the relevance of their learning."



Dr Chrissie Sorenson is also the swimming coach at BIS. Four times a week she is on the pool deck very early in the morning, either coaching the LIONS swim team or teaching swimming and lifesaving courses.



20 awardees for  
"The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award"

Silver:

Miguel Alonso-Hernandez, Sophia Schwind, Ines Oliveira, Aneska van Rensburg, Genaro Damiani Rovarella, Andreas von Vequel-Westernach, Phoenie Chen, Mick Hofmann



Bronze:

Maksim Zaitcev, Zoe Cassidy, Sofia Papadimitriou, Aaron Selz, Ferris Hofmann, Franz Hemmerich, Leo Caddy, Dirk Sorenson, Lena Hofmockel, Nicolás Hartmann Otero, Henry Munteanu, Alexander Heelan



Germany 26%

USA 13%

United Kingdom 9%

Spain 8%

India 5%

Japan 3%

Italy 3%

South Korea 3%

Russia 3%

France 2%

China 2%

Mexico 2%



Top 12  
Nationalities



Academic facts

IB DP* students	82
IB DP pass rate at BIS	95%
IB DP pass rate worldwide	80%
IB DP average score at BIS**	35.1 points
IB DP average score worldwide	30.2 points
BIS highest IB DP score	45 points
BIS students with 40 pts or more	18%
BIS students with bilingual diplomas	51%
IB CP*** students	3
IB CP pass rate	100%



\* International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB DP)

\*\* Equivalent to the Abitur grade of 2.17 in the German state system

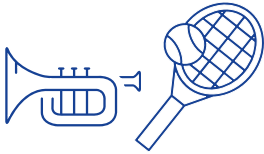
\*\*\* International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme (IB CP)



3rd largest international school in Germany  
Only international school in Germany offering all 4 programmes of the International Baccalaureate Organization (PYP, MYP, DP, CP)



1 of 5,700 accredited  
IB World Schools in 160 countries



After School Activities

approx. 80 per week with more than 400 participants

Languages

5 modern native languages are taught at BIS: English, German, French, Spanish, Mandarin

17 languages in the Home Language Programme

BIS Awards  
2022-23



Theory of Knowledge (ToK) Award:  
Kyle Varner (CAN)

Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) Award:  
Adam Schmitt (GB)

Service Award:  
Axel van den Ancker (NED)

Community Award:  
William March-Kramer (USA)

ECIS Award:  
Mariia Zaitceva (RUS)

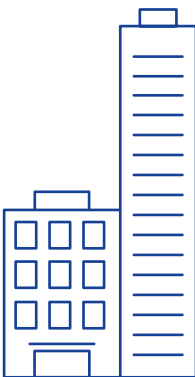
Academic Excellence Award:  
Phoenie Chen (GER)

Career-related Programme (CP) Award:  
Ava Bauer (USA)

BIS Students  
1st choice  
of universities

(examples 2022-23)

- King's College London (UK)
- Imperial College London (UK)
- Florida Institute of Technology (USA)
- University of Michigan (USA)
- University of Columbia (USA)
- Technical University Munich (GER)
- Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich (GER)
- IE University Madrid (ESP)
- Delft University of Technology (NED)
- Brussels School of Governance (BEL)
- Erasmus University Rotterdam (NED)
- Keio University (JAP)



Top companies whose employees send the most children to BIS:

Eurofighter	Microsoft	Eur. Patent Office	Audi
BMW	Siemens	Eur. Space Observation	Allianz
Airbus	Amazon	Infineon	Essity
Samsung	Google	Huawei	MAN
Sandoz	Linde	Nokia	Denso





## Academic excellence

Approximately five points above the global average and nearly one in five students with more than 40 points: With an average score of 35 points in the IB DP, the Class of 2023 has once again underlined the strong academic record of Bavarian International School (BIS). We wish the Class of 2024 all the best for the upcoming exams – such as the 18-year-old Egyptian Sama Mishreki from Grade 12, pictured here.





# Resilient growth in challenging times

**In an evolving educational landscape, the Bavarian International School exemplifies resilience and growth. After three challenging years, the 2022/23 academic year marks a significant upturn, with a 6.7% increase in student enrolment.**

The budget, reflecting this growth, accommodated for lower student departures and full capacity in some grades, resulting in conservative new student intake and staffing adjustments. The operational budget, approved in the June 2022 shareholder meeting, anticipated a regular on-site school year, adjusting for inflation impacts. The start of the school year saw enrolment figures surpass expectations, with 1,199 students on the first day and an average of 1,219 students overall, a 2.9% increase above projections.

In a testament to its strategic financial management, BIS not only achieved a positive operational result for the year but also adeptly addressed and caught up on various measures that had been backlogged from previous years. These figures and results underline BIS's ability to thrive in adversity, reinforcing its status as a leading educational institution in Bavaria.

## Strategic renovations and expansions

BIS is proactively preparing for future growth with strategic renovations and expansions.

The recent revenue upturn enabled an extensive summer maintenance program, addressing previously budget-restricted areas. Key projects included upgrading the Haimhausen Auditorium's lighting and audio, Haimhausen Cafeteria upgrades, improvements for accessibility, and enhancing sports facilities with new individual changing rooms and a regenerated sports field.

New initiatives include expanding classroom spaces, creating additional recreational areas, upgrading IT infrastructure, and incorporating eco-friendly solutions. These developments are not just meeting current demands but are part of a broader strategy for BIS's anticipated growth and evolution.



**"Reinforcing the status of BIS as a leading educational institution."**

**Marco Dahl**

## Dedication and passion

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to BIS's administrative staff, the unsung heroes ensuring the institution's success. The teams in Accounting, Admissions, Communication and Marketing, Fundraising, Human Resources and Payroll, Facility Management, Purchasing, Nursing, Transportation, IT, and Reception have shown outstanding dedication and passion. Their collective efforts have been instrumental in shaping BIS into an exceptional educational environment.

## Internationally-recognized education

Through these endeavors, BIS continues to play a crucial role in enhancing the attractiveness of Bavaria as a business location, offering high-quality, internationally-recognized education crucial for families of global professionals. This promotes cultural diversity and international understanding, preparing students for an interconnected world and fostering cultural exchange in the region.

Warm regards,

**Marco Dahl**  
Business Director & Executive Board



# A great vision becomes reality



**A key milestone in the history and development of the Bavarian International School: the Creativity & Innovation Centre (CIC). A great vision becomes reality.**

After extensive efforts and a fundraising campaign in extremely difficult times – the Coronavirus pandemic, economic crises due to wars, uncertainty and inflation – the green light has now been given to proceed with this forward-thinking major project. A brief summary of the key points for all families and readers who are not yet familiar with the CIC project: a state-of-the-art building for the learning of the future, total cost of €25 million, three floors with over 6,200 square metres of space for over 750 students and teachers, many open, flexible, interdisciplinary learning areas, STEAM philosophy (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics). The CIC will be built on the site of the old sports hall, which will be demolished after Easter 2024\* in Haimhausen. After a con-

struction period of approximately two years, the new heart of the Secondary School will be officially opened in August 2026.

## A big thank you to all donors

For the final planning phase, BIS needed €1.5 million from its own funds – this sum was achieved through donations from the BIS community, state subsidies and good business results. “We are extremely grateful to all donors and we very much hope that their commitment to the future development of our school will continue,” says Marco Dahl, BIS Executive Board Member and Business Director. The budget and schedule can be maintained, bank financing has been secured. “We are still looking to raise a further €1.0 million for the future ready equipment and interior fittings.”

\*During the demolition and construction phase of the CIC, consideration will of course be given to upcoming IB DP or IB CP exams.



**Support BIS & donate now!**

## Collaboration meets creativity

The structure of the CIC includes ten flexible learning studios, ten science labs, three design technology labs, three art rooms, two music rooms and a multifunctional black box. “The world is changing at a rapid pace and education is changing with it. To continue to be a frontrunner in modern education, we need this Creativity & Innovation Centre. The CIC acts as a catalyst for our learning of the future – this is where older students learn with younger students, where we combine different subjects, and where special projects can flourish, e.g. the Infinity Programme, robotics,” explains Marco Dahl. The BIS Business Director is always thinking one step ahead and is already working on linking the CIC project with an energy masterplan for the future (e.g. with a heat pump and photovoltaic system).

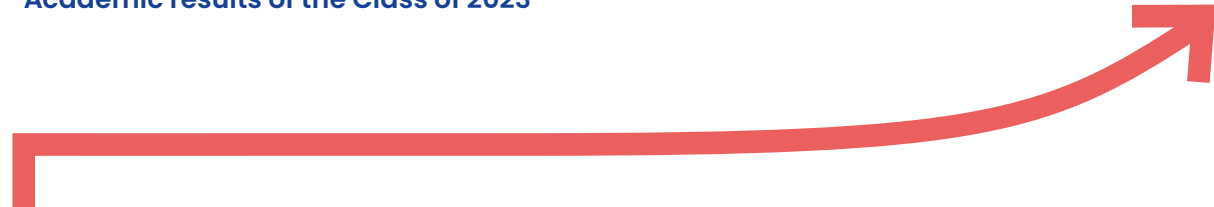
## Believe. Inspire. Succeed.

Major projects such as these cannot be financed from the Bavarian International School’s operating budget. The school is therefore working on fundraising campaigns within the BIS community, building relationships with corporate partners and acquiring subsidies. BIS is also the only international school in Germany that offers three full scholarships for grades 9–12 thanks to our generous partners. “We work with partners at all levels and are very grateful for any kind of support: some can donate money, others offer material resources as sponsorship, others open doors for us,” says Dahl. Generally speaking, the more donations that are collected, the better it is for the CIC’s financing costs and the financial flexibility in the coming school years. Marco Dahl: “Believe. Inspire. Succeed. – Our school motto also applies to our idea of continuously developing BIS!”

Visualisations of the future CIC: Open, flexible learning spaces and specific studios for robotics & Co.







# Strong academic record

BIS is very proud of being the only international school in Germany to offer all four programmes of the International Baccalaureate Organization (PYP, MYP, DP, CP). With its strong academic record, BIS is one of the leading IB World Schools in Europe. The class of 2023 achieved a grade point average in the IB DP of 35.1 points, which is once again approx. five points above the global

average. Other notable academic facts: Almost a fifth of students scored more than 40 points (comparable to a 1.3 in the state Abitur system) and more than 50% completed a bilingual diploma. With a future-orientated set of academic knowledge, values and future skills, our graduates take a variety of paths. 69% decide to study at university, of which 75% get their first choice.

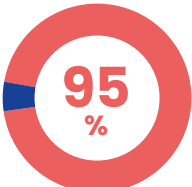
## IB DP results:

82

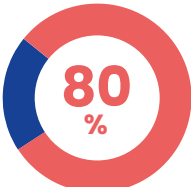
IB DP students

35.1

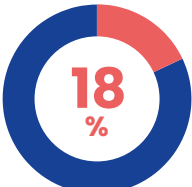
IB DP average points at BIS (worldwide average score 30.2)



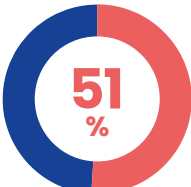
IB DP pass rate of BIS



IB DP pass rate worldwide



BIS students with 40 points or above



BIS students with bilingual diplomas

45

Maximum points achieved by one student

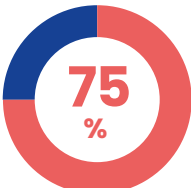
## IB CP results:

3

IB CP students



IB CP pass rate



IB CP pass rate worldwide

# Stability & development

## Dear Members of the BIS Community,

In these times of global uncertainty, the role of international education and a supportive community is more crucial than ever. We, at BIS, stand as a beacon of hope and progress, offering a diverse environment where understanding and resilience are nurtured. Our commitment to fostering a global mindset in our students is not just an educational goal but a necessity in today's interconnected world.

## Recent achievements at BIS further highlight our dedication to excellence and innovation.

- The Class of 2023 has excelled in the IB Diploma Programme, with an average score of 35 points, approx. five points above the global average. This is a testament to the hard work of our students and the support of our faculty.
- The establishment of the Creativity and Innovation Centre (CIC) is a milestone for BIS, promising to make our school even more attractive and modern. Despite global economic challenges, we have managed to keep tuition fee increases below the rate of inflation, emphasizing our commitment to our strategic priorities: financial stability, quality education, and academic excellence.
- Over the past years, BIS has not only been recognized through increasing enrollment numbers but also through the quality of our educational offerings and the creation of an excellent learning environment. This development is a clear indication that BIS is recognized as a leading educational institution. However, this success also brings the challenge that we are unable to offer a place to all applicants. Therefore we encourage companies to engage early with our admissions and finance department to collaboratively find solutions that meet both the needs of their employees and the requirements of our school.



**The BIS Supervisory Board 2022-23:**  
Photographed from left to right: Marc Aghili, Marija Vuksan Delić, Kai Klicker-Brunner, Leonardo Peruzzi, Philipp Härle and Manuel Cubero. Not photographed: Marcus Fischbacher, Roger Hamada and Ralph Panzer.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our leadership team, the teachers, and administrative staff for their extraordinary work and to all board members for their unwavering commitment. A special acknowledgment goes to Philipp Härle, who has provided four years of invaluable service on the board and decided not to run for re-election.

As we look forward to the coming year, we are filled with optimism for the continued growth and success of the BIS community. Together, we will navigate the challenges of an ever-changing world and continue to provide an outstanding educational experience for our students.

Warm regards,

**Marc Aghili**  
Supervisory Board Chair

**Kai Klicker-Brunner**  
Supervisory Board Vice Chair



# Team of rock stars

Owen Murphy, Principal of the BIS City Campus, on the roof of the Schwabing campus.

**Owen Murphy has been the new Principal of the BIS City Campus in Munich-Schwabing since 2022, which is now attended by more than 320 students. The British-German came to BIS from the International School of Stuttgart, where he was Assistant Principal of the Primary School and Coordinator for the Primary Years Programme (PYP). In this interview, Owen Murphy talks about rock stars on campus, teaching future skills and how he uses his experience as a radio host and football referee in his role as an educator.**

**Mr. Murphy, in preparing for this job, you repeatedly heard about City Campus teachers as a “team of rock stars.” Has this expectation been confirmed?**

“Totally and absolutely! I am sure the students and parents would join me in agreeing that we have an amazing team of teachers, teaching assistants and support staff at City Campus. This team of people is absolutely dedicated to high-quality learning and teaching, and to the “whole-person” success of our learners. They bring an

impressive balance of great experience and passion to their roles, and we all benefit from this daily. Since arriving here, I’ve found out how driven the team is to contribute to our strategic improvements as a school, and the contribution they make to our organisational growth is also impressive.”

**How did you experience your first year as City Campus Principal: what were the priorities and what are you most proud of having achieved?**

“When I look back on conversations we had before I joined City Campus, there was a clear focus on ensuring our community spirit was strong and engaging the collective ability of the whole team. I am proud of the data that shows we have been successful, because I firmly believe that this is the basis for an effective school. As a result, the whole team has identified the methods we use to support student behaviour, our drive for academic excellence, and our transdisciplinary programme as priorities. We have detailed and collaborative strategic plans for each of these areas, which means we are well-placed to continue to improve.

Our pilot programme in the arts (incorporating both music and visual arts) also makes me proud, because it represents an even broader offering in the interests of our students.”

**BIS has two campuses, but it is one school. Nevertheless, each school division has a bit of its own spirit: How would you describe the magic at the Schwabing campus?**

“I am a firm believer, especially in our busy world, that we stop to reflect and recognise the fact that BIS (and of course City Campus!) is – by all possible indicators – a high-performing, excellent school. The magic behind it all is definitely the people. We know that the community members all want this school to be successful and are willing to make great personal contributions in order to ensure it is. We benefit when we show belief and trust in each other, and work in partnership. Being in the middle of the magic of City Campus each day, it is evident that the way we interact – demonstrating belief, inspiration and support of each other – is central to what is special here. The fact that I know so many people support me, and that everybody else experiences the same, is part of the special feeling here.”

**What are the next topics you want to develop further?**

“I feel we can be very positive and optimistic about the future of this school. We want to be at the forefront of best practices in transdisciplinary learning and student support. We are putting together a detailed plan, in 90-day increments, focused on academic excellence, specifically assessment and differentiation, as well as positive discipline. With this level of planning, and the expertise of this team, we can be excited about how this will develop. I also look forward to reflecting on how we can stay ahead in terms of the most meaningful and effective learning of languages.

**Speaking of further development: The world is changing at lightning speed. First came digitization, and now we have Artificial Intelligence. How does a school have to adapt to this, in your case referring to a Primary School?**

“The question is a fundamental one for education and society. There are enough examples from history that show us that those who move with development are those who thrive in the new future. There is simply no way around these tools now, and they will be even more embedded in our lives in the future. I believe the most effective schools will be those who respond to technological change by embracing it, preparing students with the skills and knowledge they need to continue to be successful. Critical thinking will be at the forefront of the skills our students need in the future, and our strong Primary Years Programme (PYP) offering is well-placed to develop these skills in our students.”

**Communication is key**

**In the past, you worked as a radio host in Canada and were a volunteer football referee as a hobby. What experience from both backgrounds can you use for your role as an educator?**

“Great question! Both of those jobs really rely on communication, especially under pressure. In radio, it is about getting a message across in a succinct, yet engaging way, with a good sense of who the audience



**“The magic behind it all is definitely the people.”**

**Owen Murphy**

is. When refereeing a football match, you have to communicate to win trust, belief and support, even in challenging situations. There have been some very ‘interesting’ experiences as a result of both roles! As an educator, it is interesting to reflect on how all of our experiences form us into the people we are today. We can reflect on this when thinking about how the children we care for will grow to be effective and valuable members of our society in the future as a result of their experiences, mistakes and growth mindset.”





## AI meets robotics

**Preparing our students in the best possible way for a rapidly changing future also means connecting them with the real world of business at an early stage. This direct exchange of experience and inspiration takes place at various levels, e.g. via company visits.**

At the beginning of 2023, 25 BIS students had the chance to get to know the Agile Robots AG and learn about the development of advanced technologies that bring robots closer to humans. "The BIS students had the experience to see the next generation of intelligent robots, how they are part of our lives and how they will be even more present in our future," said Natasha Li Vieira Wiltsche, Product Manager at the Munich-based high-tech company. Their mission is to bridge the gap between Artificial Intelligence and robotics by developing systems that combine state-of-the-art force-moment sensing and world-leading image processing technology.

On different demonstration stations the BIS students experienced the calibration procedure, an industrial application of a robot arm picking and organising phone chargers, an educational web app where users are introduced to coding concepts and easily learn how to program a robot arm in a 3D simulation.

### Shift of thinking boundaries

Agile Robots also developed the educational programme "Aini" with the goal of offering a complete framework and integrated platform for anyone to learn how to program and operate real robots. "Our students were surprised by two aspects of Aini: firstly, how truly agile the robot was and secondly that even they as students were capable of programming its actions. This real life, accessible interaction has provided a fascinating learning experience for our students which has shifted their thinking boundaries", said Ruth Buckley, Educational Technology Integrator in the Secondary School of BIS.

These are some very good reasons to strengthen the strong cooperation between Agile Robots and the Bavarian International School...

[www.agile-robots.com](http://www.agile-robots.com)



## Future skills meet retro gaming

**The way our students combine interdisciplinary skills to realise outstanding projects is always impressive. In the arcade machine project, the mix of creativity, collaboration, innovation, problem solving and design technology is a prime example of the idea behind the International Baccalaureate Programme.**

A Grade 10 design class of Bavarian International School has realised a self-built, two-player retro gaming machine. 14 students had to solve complex challenges like the emulator, sound system, console configuration, power supply, monitor, cabinet material, coin system - and last but not least plan the material and budget (costs: 650 Euro) and develop the design. In the manufacturing process, the students used laser cutters and CAD software, among other things.

### Teamwork and perseverance

The result is spectacular and is a very popular diversion during the breaks. The project was largely student-led, but it was overseen by BIS teacher Phil Sartor and technical assistant Rochus Möchel. "After an extensive research phase, this massive task was broken down into manageable



stages. The students sorted themselves into focus groups, based upon their strengths and interests and tackled each problem with perseverance. They learned a lot about teamwork, cabinet building and electronics. The machine contains thousands of games but I haven't played them all yet," said BIS teacher Phil Sartor.

Cudos to the great team of BIS students (the project started in 2022, the students are now in Grade 12): Kei A., Carolina Brandis, Alexandra Christozova, Jakob-Alexander Henggeler, Alen Krivdic, Oliver Lenicek, Naoki M., Daniel Peters, Florian Probst, Cecilia Ramsauer, Andrew T., Emma W. and Masaharu Yamazaki.





## A powerhouse of the green movement

**“We simply cannot afford another generation treating the earth as if the plane were an ‘all-you-can-eat, self-service, running sushi’.” It is pointed, even shocking sentences like these that Andi Pichler dictates precisely into this journalist’s notebook when the topic is environmental protection.**

The 60-year-old Austrian is one of the driving forces behind the Eco-Schools programme at BIS, Teacher Assistant in Grade 2 and Sustainability Development Officer. His passion for the big topic “There is no planet B” has a literally natural background. His family lives in the countryside of Salzburg and runs an organic vegetable farm. He studied biology at the University of Vienna and together with other activists from Austrian NGOs he protested at power construction sites to prevent the destruction of some of the last intact habitats in Europe – today these areas are national parks. In 1992 he participated in a biological oceanography

course at the Bermuda Biological Station for Research where he first came across time series data indicating sea level rise. That’s when he realized that climate change was not a problem of the future.

### Establishing an ecological mindset

“When I was working for an engineering company doing groundwater analysis and environmental monitoring, I experienced cause-effect relationships of human impact first hand. What are the consequences if you spray pesticides on corn fields? How long do residues of these chemicals linger in the groundwater, what happens

to biodiversity, the food web and the drinking water supply?” asks Andi Pichler, who invests every free minute, even outside of working hours, to maintain the gardens, flower beds, meadows and habitats on the Haimhausen Campus.

“Passing on this knowledge to the next generations is what drives me. At BIS in Haimhausen we have the best conditions for this because the forest, meadows and the Amper river offer countless opportunities for experiential learning. This gives BIS a truly unique selling point,” says Pichler, who is in

**“Passing on the knowledge to the next generations is what drives me.”**

Andi Pichler



Andi Pichler leads the Eco Agents as an After School Activity with Primary School students in Haimhausen – also offered at City Campus

his 15th year working for BIS and collaborates very closely with the other Eco-school coordinators Emma Morris (Secondary School) and Mónica Godoy Hidalgo (City Campus).

### A whole school initiative

The fact that 27 Primary School students are involved as Eco-Agents in the “After School Activities” programme and 15 students have chosen the topic of environmental protection in the “Enrichment Programme” (a curriculum topic chosen by the child) is also due to the dedication of Andi Pichler. The work with the youngest children again forms the basis for the projects of the numerous Green Teams

in the Secondary School. Four times in a row, BIS was awarded the highest distinction, the European Eco-Schools Award with three stars.

Despite the first signs of improvement at BIS, Andi Pichler still sees many opportunities for everyone to get involved in a topic such as biodiversity, waste avoidance, carbon zero or healthy living. “We do not have the time anymore to just do what we can without leaving our comfort zone, but to do what needs to be done, and the enthusiasm and engagement of my students is a continuous source of motivation to keep going in that direction.”





# BIS International Festival 2023

## The power of creativity

**In the school year 2022-23, the Secondary School tried out a new idea: the Personal Project exhibition, the art exhibition and drama performances as a joint event – the Secondary School Exhibition.**

“The idea was to have one event in which we could celebrate student’s creativity, and their individual achievements as they reach a milestone in their educational journey”, said Isabel Moraes, Head of the Visual & Performing Arts Department of BIS.

The event started with over 100 Grade 10 students and their Personal Projects. Then, 13 BIS student visual artists shared their works in painting, mixed media, photography, film, installation, sculpture and textiles. Finally, four BIS student actors took over the stage to share special performances. Congratulations to all students and their teachers for an impressive showing of what it means to live our motto: Believe. Inspire. Succeed.



**Bavarian  
International  
School**

**Believe. Inspire. Succeed.**





# Embracing unity and joy

**School events for the whole community are an important key at BIS to celebrate unity, mutual support and friendship – and simply to have fun. To kick off each school year, there is the BIS Grill & Chill at the beginning of September – above all a wonderful opportunity for new families to network – and the grand finale always takes place in June at the BIS International Festival.**

2,000 beaming faces came together at the BIS International Festival in June 2023. What an incredible event that brought our community even closer together. The vibes were relaxed, the atmosphere was buzzing with fun, and memories were made. This festival marked the perfect finale to our school year, leaving students, alumni, parents, faculty, and staff with unforgettable moments.

“Bringing our community together is at the heart of our school’s mission, fostering a sense of belonging and unity among all,” said BIS Head of School Dr Chrissie Sorenson.

The highlights included the now traditional, colorful international flag parade, led by our Primary School community, as well as the stellar music performances by our devoted students and teachers.

## **A festival for everyone**

Our youngest guests enjoyed numerous yard games, soap bubble art and face painting, while others cheered the alumni football games. As an Eco-school, our students, led by Mr Andi Pichler and Ms Emma Morris sold second-hand items at a flea market.

The highlight? A live concert by “Edu Latin Beat”, featuring our very own Fredi Mußler on the keyboard, Head of Human Resources at BIS. Cheerful guests danced well into the sunset.

We express our gratitude to the facilities team, our music teachers, the Primary School leadership team, BIS Alumni Matt Willis for organising the alumni football matches, and all other team members who made this event a success. Special thanks to our sponsors FAMIGOS (Financial Services for Expats), Tosca Bio Wine and Schloss Apotheke Haimhausen (anti-mosquito spray).













## The scientific search for the game changer



**“Mechanisms of nitric oxide reactions with globins using mammalian myoglobin as a model system” is the title of a significant review article that BIS Science teacher and Middle Years Programme (MYP) coordinator Dr Erin Foley published in the prestigious, peer-reviewed “Journal of Inorganic Biochemistry (JIB)” as the first author (together with Angela N. Hvitved, Raymund F. Eich and John S. Olson).**

As not every reader has studied Biological Sciences (University of Notre Dame) and written a doctoral thesis on chemical reactions involving myoglobin and hemoglobin (Rice University) like Dr Erin Foley, she simply has to explain the task to us: “Our lab at Rice University in Houston studied hemoglobin (which is the protein in red blood cells that delivers oxygen from the lungs to the tissues) and myoglobin (which stores oxygen in the muscles), in order to understand how these proteins interact not only with oxygen, but with other gases. The key application for this would be to produce a cell-free, hemoglobin-based blood substitute that could be stored long term, and given to anyone regardless of blood type. This would be a game-changer for on-site accident treatment,” explains Dr Foley.

And she also summarises the results of the scientific research: “We were trying to alter the structure of the protein so that it would still pick up and deliver oxygen effectively, but wouldn’t react with nitric

oxide, which is an important signalling molecule that is always found throughout the body. We learned a great deal about how hemoglobin interacts with gases in the blood stream.”

### Guiding students to find their passions

The American joined Bavarian International School ten years ago, but has been a member of the BIS community since her eldest daughter started school in 2009. Shannon completed her IB DP in 2020 and is studying International Relations at Amsterdam University College. Daughter Megan graduated in the Class of 2023 and is aiming to study Theatre Arts. “In summary, while I am currently 0-for-2 on convincing my kids to become scientists, BIS is definitely 2-for-2 on guiding my children as students to find their passions and dive in,” says Dr Erin Foley, who is also the Girls Varsity basketball coach of the BIS Lions. Let’s see what individual paths her third daughter will take – Leah is currently in Grade 10 at BIS.



# Three decades of transportation with a soul

**In the busy corridors of Bavarian International School, one name echoes through the decades, leaving a lasting mark on the hearts of students, parents, and staff alike – Ms. Alrun Bauer.**

As we bid farewell to our beloved Transportation Manager in December 2023, after an impressive 30-year career, it's time to reflect on the extraordinary journey of a woman who transformed the simple act of getting from point A to point B into a caring experience.

Alrun's story at BIS began in 1993 when she first took the wheel as a bus driver, commuting over 150 kilometers daily from the Landshut area. Juggling the demands of motherhood with the responsibilities of her role, she reflects on those early days with a humble smile, saying, "I don't know how I did it." Little did she know that her journey was just beginning.

Over the years, Alrun witnessed the transportation fleet grow from 10 buses to an impressive 60, ferrying over 600 students daily to and from our campuses. Yet, her focus was not solely on the logistics of the operation; it was about the lives she touched and the connections she forged.

**Cultivating relationships**

What sets Alrun apart is her genuine connection with the students. She fondly recalls the names of those she drove in 1993 and cherished encounters with alumni during BIS's 30-year celebrations. Her pride lies not just in the number of buses she managed but in the relationships she cultivated. Alrun emphasizes

the importance of mutual respect within the community, a sentiment echoed by the countless families who found solace in her compassionate approach.

**"I will miss the students and their stories."**

**Alrun Bauer**

For many families, particularly those without an extended support system here in Bavaria, the transportation office became a lifeline. Alrun's ability to prioritize not only the safety of the children but also often their social needs turned the transportation service into more than just a means of commuting. In her capable hands, playdates, complex

family situations, and the challenges of daily life became opportunities to make a difference.

Alrun's journey was not without personal challenges. The sudden loss of her husband profoundly shaped her perspective, leading her to reevaluate life's priorities. Her resilience and newfound lightness of being became a guiding force, influencing her approach to work and emphasizing the importance of choosing battles wisely.

**Unwavering dedication**

As she embarks on a well-deserved retirement, Alrun looks forward to caring for her four grandchildren and exploring the world. The BIS community extends heartfelt gratitude to Ms. Alrun Bauer for dedicating three decades of her life to a calling that

went beyond the mundane. Her legacy, built on compassion and unwavering dedication, has left a lasting mark on the transportation at BIS.

We are extremely fortunate to have hired Christian Rössner as our new Transportation Manager and we cannot wait to see the personal touch he will add to our community. Welcome Christian!



Passing the baton -  
Ms Alrun Bauer and  
Mr Christian Rössner





# Diversity rocks

"Diversity rocks" written in large graffiti letters by Munich artist Johannes Brechter adorns the school yard of the BIS City Campus – and could also have been the slogan of the first ever BIS City BBQ.



Despite the chilly temperatures on 12 May 2023, the event's debut warmed the hearts of the diverse community. Students from all grades delivered impressive performances on the expansive stage, showcasing talents in music (both solo and choir), theatre, Bollywood, and karate. A special acknowledgement is due to music teachers Debbie Bull and Katherine Disney for their contributions. The catering partner, ORGANIC GARDEN, provided an authentic barbecue experience, while the younger attendees enjoyed face painting and glitter tattoos. The Parent Community Council (PCC) showed remarkable dedication by hosting an indulgent coffee, cake, and cookie bar – with items swiftly marked as "sold out."



## "A strong sense of community"

Rebecca Weissenborn, Grade 1 teacher, City Campus

**"Bavarian International School is a special place because of its strong sense of community. The school fosters a close-knit environment where staff, students, and parents come together to create a supportive and inclusive atmosphere. This sense of togetherness not only enhances the overall educational experience but also makes BIS a unique and welcoming school where everyone plays a vital role in the success and growth of the school and its students."**

When a magazine author receives such a strong statement from an interview partner, you simply have to highlight it and put it right at the beginning. This striking quote is from Rebecca Weissenborn. The South African is a teacher in her third year at the BIS City Campus in Schwabing and has a first grade class. Every day is an adventure, no two days are the same. "The joy of being a teacher lies in the daily mix of challenges and those 'lightbulb moments' when you see a child making the connection, or reaching their goal. But what is truly special about Grade 1 is the pure joy and happiness you witness in those little faces when they come to school," says Rebecca Weissenborn, the mother of two and guardian of two dogs, who values family quality time, loves exploring new places and having a "Braai" (BBQ) in all weathers.



### Growth mindset

She loves her job at BIS, is impressed by the development of the school and values the lasting connections with hundreds of students and families along the way. She puts great emphasis on developing a growth mindset ("showing students that they are capable of achieving anything they set in their minds") and wants to integrate even more real-life situations into their learning. "Learning is meant to be fun and meaningful!"





“Sometimes just be unplugged”

Felix Auld, Grade 3 teacher, City Campus

A classroom on the second floor of the BIS City Campus with a view of Leopoldstraße is his living room: the British-German has been a Grade 3 Homeroom Teacher at the Schwabing Campus since August 2022.

Despite his young age of 39, he has already seen a lot of the academic world, having been a teacher at the Peak School in Hong Kong, Workshop Leader at the English Schools Foundation (ESF) and Team Leader at the Berlin Metropolitan School. “This is my sixth year teaching Grade 3 in an international setting. In my experience, students make a huge leap in the course of the year: they really mature as authors, readers and mathematicians, and become more aware of the world around them,” says Felix Auld, who graduated with a Master of Education

from the University of Cambridge. He has also experienced and helped shape the increased use of technology and tools in PrimarySchools for many years and knows the benefits and risks. “By using digital devices, children can learn much more independently and parents have more participation in their children’s learning journey, for example through Seesaw. Our students are so familiar with digital devices that they can often figure out how to use an app faster than I can. The challenge these days is to do unplugged and analogue assignments, you can’t be online 24/7.”

Caring world citizens

His goal for his students is to develop into caring, reflective world citizens and to learn the future skills that are necessary in a modern working world. Because: “Everyone and everything is interconnected.”

Felix Auld also allows himself sufficient offline time for personal wellbeing, he loves hiking, sings in an English-speaking choir (“Also great for socializing and meeting new people”) and loves reading books about history or listening to podcasts from this field.

What four words come to mind about the BIS City Campus? “Dynamic, energetic, adaptable, efficient.”

“Leading with Impact: six pillars of excellence”

Niko Lewman, Vice Principal of the Primary School, Haimhausen Campus

It is rather rare for someone to make such a remarkable contribution and impact on our school in just one year. Yet, we are fortunate to have Niko Lewman as our Primary School Vice Principal and Primary Years Programme (PYP) Coordinator at the Haimhausen campus.

Mr. Lewman is a Finnish and American citizen, born in Turku, Finland. He holds a Master of Education degree and has worked at international schools across the world, most recently in Thailand and China.

It’s a family affair – Niko’s wife Tiia, an English Language Acquisition teacher in Secondary School and his eighth grader son Benjamin, are also part of his everyday life at BIS.

His leadership philosophy at BIS is clear.

**Holistic:** Niko prioritises academic and professional growth, as well as the team members’ well-being.

**Inquiry-based:** He inspires his team members to ask questions, explore possibilities, and seek innovative solutions to challenges.

**International-minded:** PYP leaders have a global perspective and foster an appreciation for different cultures and viewpoints.

**Student-centered:** Just as PYP teachers focus on students’ individual needs and interests, Niko values his team members’ unique strengths and aspirations.

**Self-efficacy:** The key is to empower team members to have confidence, belief in their abilities and take responsibility for their tasks and projects.

**Game-based learning:** This is Niko’s signature superpower. He incorporates game-based learning strategies into his leadership approach to make the learning and development process engaging and fun for his team. Mr Lewman even has his own YouTube channel about Minecraft (live every Sunday morning) and runs an After School Activity for students “Minecraft: Education Edition”.







“It’s like witnessing magic unfold”

Monica Letts-Folger, English as an Additional Language (EAL) Teacher

Introducing another remarkable educator you need to know: Monica Letts-Folger. Born in Lima, Peru, she’s been a part of our teaching family for 25 years, guiding students from the early years through Grade 3 and lending her expertise in teaching English to non-native speakers.

Her journey is full of diverse experiences – from a brief time at the United Nations to teaching across different countries. However, her heart found its home here at BIS, where she cherishes each moment of growth and discovery in her students.

Some of Monica’s proudest moments? The little victories in her classroom – the sparkle in a child’s eyes when they crack the code of reading and writing – it’s like witnessing magic unfold! “I love languages and speak many different ones so I understand the process of learning a new language and can better help students with their English learning journey”.

This caring educator believes critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and digital literacy are the key skills for the 21st century, which is why she is passionate about embracing and integrating technology into the learning process. She is also a big advocate for the IB curriculum, having experienced it as a parent with her daughter who graduated in 2021.

Beyond the classroom, Monica channels her creativity into crafting colourful cards, painting with watercolours, and even creating digital children’s books. Monica is more than just a teacher – she’s an advocate for learning, a nurturing guide, and a creative soul. Her presence at BIS continues to inspire students and enrich our learning community.

“Being able to see the connections students make when learning a new language until it all makes sense, is an amazing experience.”



“It’s not just work. It’s love!”

Nadine Ibrahim, Secondary School Mathematics teacher & Head of Department

Even while in the midst of her mathematics studies, she never envisioned herself as a teacher. However, upon graduating at the age of 20, life steered her towards the classroom. By the age of 21, she found herself teaching Secondary School students.

Nadine Ibrahim, an Egyptian and British national, with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Masters in Secondary Education-Mathematics celebrated her tenth year at BIS in 2022-23. And she hasn’t been alone, but with her family – her daughters and husband Loay Malek, Vice Principal of the Secondary School, who play a significant role in her working life. “My children, my husband, and I have been walking into this building day in and day out. School has always been our second home. It’s my life. The best part? It’s not just work; it’s love, and I feel deeply connected.”

When asked about what she found special about BIS, Nadine Ibrahim responded, “Teachers at BIS are extraordinary. I have never witnessed dedication like this before.

What’s best for the student is at the heart of every conversation, and witnessing this, both as a teacher and a BIS parent, has been extremely reassuring.”

The educator believes that anyone can enjoy mathematics once they understand it; it ceases to be intimidating. The biggest challenge is breaking down the walls of limiting beliefs. No one should walk away from her class thinking, “I am not good at maths.” Her superpower lies in being approachable, making students feel comfortable enough to ask questions.

In her free time, she enjoys yoga, reading, and walking. A walk with her daughters signifies a fulfilling day for her. Additionally, she enjoys travelling with her family, viewing it as an investment in her children’s growth. “I hope my children are as fortunate as I am in finding their calling.”



## "Students love being creative"

**Robert Clements, IB DP Coordinator & Design Technology teacher**

**"I was blown away by the sense of community and how much more important school is to people when you live and work internationally," remembers Rob Clements when he started at BIS in 2015.**

The Brit, who was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, has now been a valued member of BIS for almost ten years – first as a Design and Design Technology teacher, then Head of the Design Department and later IB CP and IB DP Coordinator. In a particular way, BIS is much more than a school for him. His wife Judith teaches music in Primary School and all three of their children (aged 9, 11 and 13) attend the Haimhausen Campus. "It's very special when you can see your children during the school day."

Rob Clements holds a Bachelor's degree in Technological Education from the University of Glasgow. He graduated in 2007, at the age of 22, when neither 3D printers nor smartphones existed. As fast as the world has changed, so has the subject of Design Technology. "Since then I have had to develop new skills to keep up with technology and keep the subject fresh and relevant. Students love being creative and building things with their hands. Design Technology gives them the opportunity to solve real problems in a systematic way and for me it's always amazing to see the weird and wonderful things they come up



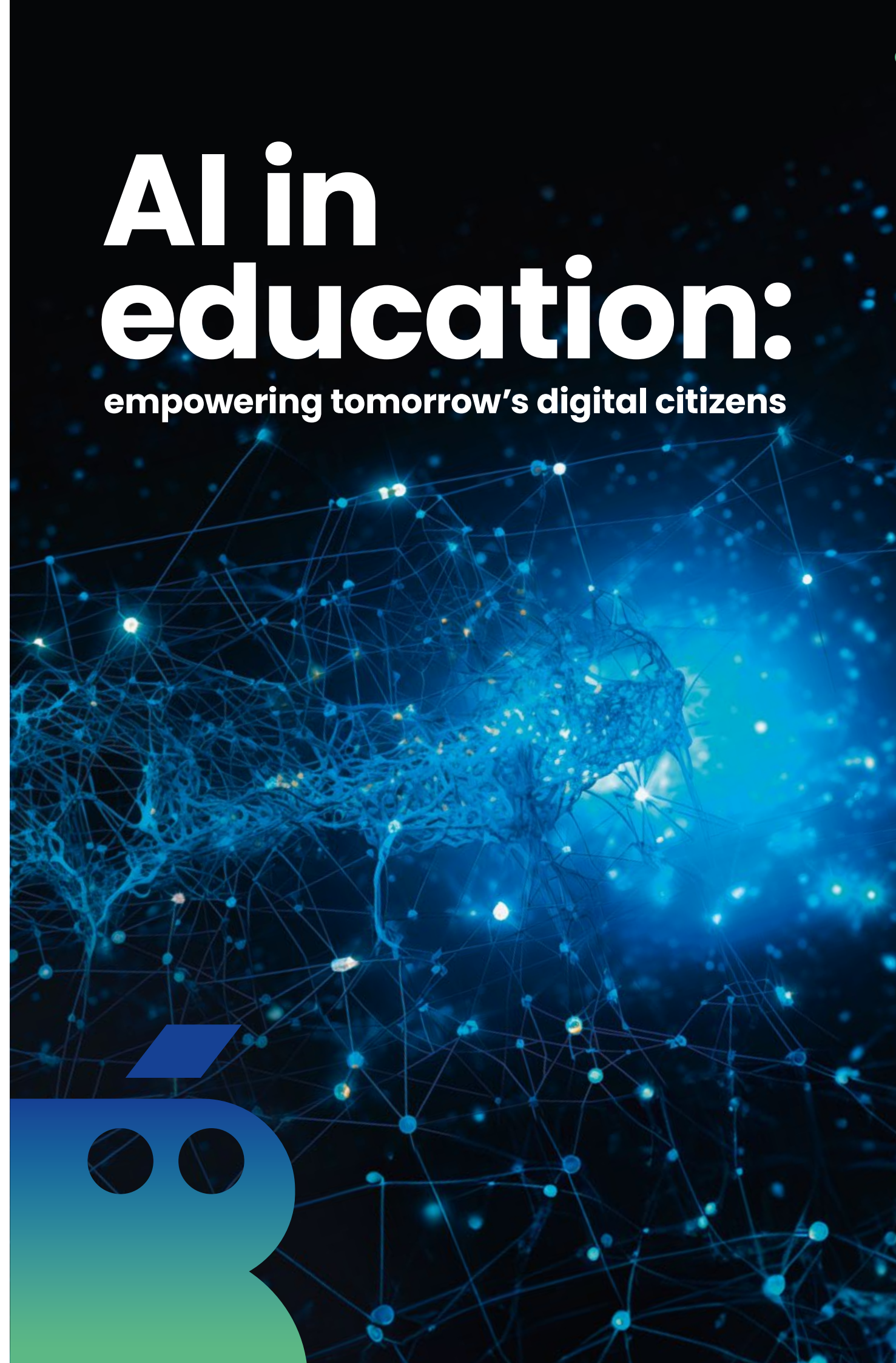
with", says the camping and caravan fan, who has also served the BIS Ski Programme for eight years.

After leading the IB Career-related Programme ("a great alternative for students who want to pursue a different academic pathway"), he took on the role of IB DP Coordinator in 2023-24. "I feel a great sense of responsibility for the students at this pivotal moment in their academic careers."

When you meet Rob Clements in the hallowed halls of BIS, you see a fashionably dressed "people person" who always has a joke at the ready and doesn't seem to be getting any older. On certain occasions, however, he wears the Scottish national clothing. "I'm a true 'third culture kid' and calling myself Scottish doesn't always feel natural, even though I grew up there. But I always wear my kilt at school events and love haggis (a typical Scottish speciality) so maybe I'm more Scottish than I think I am..."

# AI in education:

## empowering tomorrow's digital citizens





# Navigating the AI evolution: empowering education in the digital age



**Since the debut of ChatGPT in November 2022, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become significantly more accessible, marking its profound influence in various sectors.**

While AI plays an increasingly important role in our world, no invention in recent years has made such waves as ChatGPT, the ingenious Artificial Intelligence from OpenAI. The internet is flooded with ChatGPT and its many possible applications! We have seen the impact that AI has had on many areas of our lives, and education is undoubtedly one of those.

The use of AI in the classroom has raised a myriad of questions and certainly it requires a well-informed and balanced perspective. On the one hand, AI applications such as ChatGPT offer teachers and students valuable tools. For example, AI can support the creation of teaching materials, creative lesson plans, and the differentiation of content to address the individual learning needs of

students. On the other hand, the challenge is to ensure the authenticity and personal performance of students, especially when it comes to homework and written exams.

## Chance and challenge

Treating AI as the enemy and trying to block it is a losing battle. What is necessary is to teach students early on about both the benefits and risks of this technology. The aim is to create a learning environment in which young people not only use AI for tasks, but also understand the underlying principles and their impact on society. They should learn to see AI as a tool that supports them in their learning process and not as a complete solution or substitute for their own critical thinking and problem solving.

## Integrity and ethics

What does this all mean for the role of teachers? They will certainly be key to helping students not only understand the technical aspects of AI, but also the social, ethical, and critical-thinking processes involved in using it responsibly. In order

to properly do so, teachers themselves need access to training and information around this ever-evolving technology. It is important that schools and educational institutions create structures that enable teachers to access training and resources to constantly expand and update their knowledge of AI. This will enable teachers to integrate AI topics into curricula and teaching methods to ensure that students are prepared for an increasingly digital future.

Perhaps we at fobizz are a bit biased, as we focus day in and day out on just that: helping teachers stay up-to-date on developments of AI and other technologies used in the classroom. At the same time, we are not the only ones on this mission and the feedback we get from teachers daily, validates the need for this continuous education.

## No future without AI!

So what's next? One thing is clear: there will be no future without AI! The future with AI may be challenging, but we are certain that it holds infinite possibilities. To ensure that the learning journey around AI tools does not begin with AI-based social media apps, we strongly encourage and support the use and integration of Artificial Intelligence in the classroom. It's all about incorporating the topic of AI into everyday teaching in a way that not only arouses curiosity, but also promotes the ability to distinguish between useful applications and potential misuse. We should all be committed to building a bridge between technology and education that empowers both teachers and students to actively and safely shape the digital world of tomorrow.



## About Dr Diana Knodel

Dr Diana Knodel is the founder of two EdTech companies: App Camps and fobizz, Germany's largest platform for professional development for teachers and schools, offering a wide range of digital tools and AI solutions to enhance the learning experience. Diana has a background in computer science, psychology and educational research. With a passion for education, she wants to bring digital skills into the classroom and support schools in their digital transformation. Diana has been recognized as one of the top 25 women shaping Germany's digital future by Business Insider in 2023 and is regularly a featured speaker on AI and Education at prestigious national and international conferences.



## Register now! BIS City Talk 2024 "AI in education: empowering tomorrow's digital citizens"

The 6th BIS City Talk on Thursday, 29 February 2024 (18:00) will be a highlight! Host Dr Chrissie Sorenson welcomes top-class guests Dr Diana Knodel (Ed Tech Founder fobizz & App Campus), Dr Laura Crompton (AI Ethics Expert, byte – Bayerische Agentur für Digitales) and Tristan Post (former Senior AI Strategist at appliedAI, AI Expert at AI Founders, University Lecturer at TUM). Moderation: Nina Eichinger.

**Entry is free,  
registration  
is mandatory!**





# AI impacts how we live, learn and interact as a society

With Tristan Post, BIS was able to attract one of the most exciting Artificial Intelligence (AI) experts as a guest author for the BIS Magazine and also as a keynote speaker at the BIS City Talk on 29 February 2024. The Lecturer for AI at the Technical University of Munich, AI Lead at of Europe's largest startup incubators "A Founders", entrepreneur and former Senior AI Strategist at appliedAI presents his three theses on the influence and development of AI.



Tristan Post during his lecture "AI for Innovation and Entrepreneurship" at TUM: he started with 40 students in 2022, now 1,000 students come to his classes in the large Audimax.



## About Tristan Post

The 33-years-old Tristan Post from Munich is one of those people who makes you wonder how he has more than 24 hours in a day. For one and a half years, he has been building and managing one of Europe's leading AI-focused startup incubators, called AI Founders. Before this, he worked as a Senior AI Strategist at appliedAI, one of Europe's most significant initiatives for AI application. Parallel to this, Tristan Post is still actively involved in Academia, teaching AI for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the Technical University of Munich and Munich Business School.

Furthermore he is a yoga teacher. The founder of the start-up "Yoga Cat", a company that brings sustainable products to the yoga and wellness market, completed his Bachelor's degree in Economics and Management at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano and his Master of Science in Economics and Philosophy (double degree) at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

### Thesis 1: "Artificial Intelligence: Shaping our present and future"

Artificial Intelligence is not a fleeting trend but a fixture of our current and future reality. It's crucial to recognize that the version of AI, exemplified by tools like ChatGPT, we see today is the most basic it will ever be; it will continuously evolve and improve. AI's influence extends beyond technology, impacting how we live and interact as a society. This brings forth immense opportunities and challenges, many of which are not purely technical. The future shaped by AI is ours to define, but it's imperative that this journey is a collective effort, involving diverse perspectives and inclusive decision-making.

### Thesis 2: "AI in the workforce: enhancing human potential"

The role of AI in the workforce is not about replacing humans, but enhancing our capabilities and potential. By automating repetitive and mundane tasks, or tasks

that are undesirable, AI affords us the opportunity to engage more in work that is intrinsically human – creative, strategic, and empathetic endeavors. It's important to understand that AI targets tasks, not jobs, transforming the nature of work rather than eliminating it outright. This shift underscores the increasing value of AI literacy in the modern job market. Those who master the synergy of human creativity and AI efficiency will find themselves at a distinct advantage, leading the way in a more humane and productive workforce. This evolution in our work environment invites us to redefine what it means to work meaningfully, leveraging AI to augment our human experience.

### Thesis 3: "Revolutionizing education through personalized learning with AI"

One of the most exciting prospects of AI is its potential to personalize education. Im-

### "Those who master the synergy of human creativity and AI efficiency will find themselves at a distinct advantage."

Tristan Post

agine a learning environment tailored like the Netflix recommendation system, where each student receives challenges and materials suited to their unique pace and level. In traditional classrooms, students often progress at a uniform pace, leading to some feeling overwhelmed and others under-challenged. AI can transform this by providing individualized learning paths in subjects like mathematics, ensuring each student is adequately challenged and engaged, thereby maximizing their learning potential.





## Keeping the balance

**With Ruth Buckley, one of three Educational Technology Integrators at BIS, we talk about the ever-evolving landscape of Artificial Intelligence (AI). We embark on a journey to explore not only the innovative strides our school has taken but also the broader implications and opportunities AI presents in the global educational arena.**

**Ms Buckley, AI is evolving exponentially around us. How has AI become a significant aspect of your responsibilities within the field of education?**

"Well, in the last year AI has certainly kept educators awake at night, we have undoubtedly entered the 'AI Era'! AI had been gradually appearing in educational software tools. For example, BIS has been working with Century Tech, founded in 2015 and powered by AI, for learner personalisation. With the launch of Generative Pretrained Transformers (GPT) chat bots, suddenly overnight, AI was available to

write poems, solve complex coding problems or critique dissertations. It is the 'Ed Techs' responsibility to navigate digital innovation on behalf of the school community. I'm confident we can support our students through this new digital frontier."

**BIS is an IB World School, so how does the IB philosophy influence the approach to using AI?**

"The IB has navigated over 50 years of education so they understand the need to move with innovation and not against it. The IB released a guiding statement about using Chat GPT and other AI tools in line with academic integrity and with proper accreditation: BIS followed suit. We currently offer our students learning experiences through AI, growing clarity on usage guidelines, teacher collaboration and shared understanding of risks and consequences when using AI wrongly, for example, to generate and submit work that isn't our own."

**This year, a Grade 8 student at BIS has already written a book and created the cover using the photo-AI "DALL-E". In what ways have you observed AI positively impacting teaching and learning at BIS?**

"The purpose of Ed Tech is based on enablement: how can technology remove barriers and enable us to do something better than we could on our own? At BIS, we have many 'small focus' AI tools (like speech to text for example) that enable: student access, expression, communication, collaboration, personalisation.

We use two AI powered learning platforms at BIS: Century Tech and Aleks, which provide (in seconds!) individualized, dynamic assessment and subsequent learning pathways. In collaboration with the teacher, these platforms enable powerful assessment knowledge and extension of student learning.

Welcoming Chat GPT into the classroom at BIS has brought interviews with Shakespeare, rap battles with historical figures, heated debates with music legends and endless other incredible enhancements to the learner experience. There is a great impact on learner engagement and the opportunity for 'teachable moments' around the use and ethics of AI. The challenge is always in keeping the balance - when is a good time to use AI and when are we better alone? When is AI enabling and when is it overpowering? When is it plagiarism? This is why we are designing a course for our senior students with lessons in AI use cases, ethics, security and futures."

**What are BIS's plans for the use of AI in the future?**

"The plan is: continuation. At BIS, we have three dedicated Educational Technology Integrators. We will continue to use this team and the wide ranging expertise of our colleagues to identify areas of opportunity to incorporate developmental AI experiences into our school. We will continue our partnerships with industry leaders, including Century Tech, Aleks, and Toddle. Toddle in particular is a pioneering partner, a learning management system. BIS are gradually adopting the use of Toddle across all three

school sections. And we will continue to actively develop a comprehensive program to support our senior students and upcoming Middle schoolers in navigating key AI themes. Our goal is to empower students with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in an AI-driven world."

**In conclusion, do you see more opportunities or more risks in education through the use of AI?**

"The greatest risk would be to not acknowledge the transformative power of AI or educate towards it. There are endless opportunities for enablement: our learners can be instantly supported and fast tracked, barriers can be removed and replaced with creativity. If you ask teachers worldwide what resource they really need it's always 'time'. AI can alleviate time-consuming tasks, allowing teachers to focus on what matters most - guiding students. With AI as a partner to teachers and students, the educational experience is enhanced without diminishing the invaluable human connection that defines teaching and learning."

**What's the real story behind AI and education?**

**Scan the QR code to learn more!**



Our highly skilled and passionate Ed Tech team (from left): Verena Zimmer (City Campus), Ruth Buckley (Secondary School) and Heather Prekop (Primary School Haimhausen).





# “If we give AI too much power, it can take over the world”

**What impact does AI have on students of BIS? Three of our Secondary School students Laia Bonafe Mercader, Tara Delic (Grade 8), and Alan Smith (Grade 11), have formed clear opinions about the use, and effects of AI.**

**As we are humans, it's natural that we do something wrong but so does AI. Do you think that this is purposefully occurring just to make it seem more natural?**

Laia: “I have watched a lot of movies where AI takes over the world and the director makes AI appear to be perfect. The fact that AI makes mistakes is slowly getting fixed. However, humans will always make mistakes, but AI will get fixed eventually to be perfect. I think the only difference that humans have from AI are emotions such as their feelings of love but the fact that we are the same because we both make mistakes is going to change real soon.”

**Do you think AI could have emotions based on its new developments in the future?**

Laia: “Emotions are not really what we think they are. They are chemicals released around the body by the brain or the brain thinking that you are supposed to feel a specific way. I think that if anyone would ever develop a code for that, machines could experience emotions. However, it would be more robotic.”

**Alan, do you agree? What are your thoughts on this?**

Alan: “I will have to disagree. Personally, as a programmer there are a lot of challenges created by AI. They are very difficult to

overcome. In programs for example, there are various variables, but eventually it can be overcome.”

**What challenges are you facing?**

Alan: “I have written an AI chatbot, and that involves an interface as the way AI language models work is that it is created using a large sample set of text that previously exists. It is a bit like the text prediction on your phone. For example if you say ‘hello’ it will predict what you will say next. It works very similar to that. People often think that the tool is thinking but actually, it is calculating predictions.”

**Do you think AI can take over the world? Although it is a very broad question, there are multiple perspectives. What is yours?**

Tara: “If we give AI too much power, it could take over the world. With power, I am referring to knowing too much personal information. For example, I find it scary that when I want to text my friends on Whatsapp, their name automatically comes up. Why are you

tracking me? By knowing everything that I do, it can be dangerous by sharing information to other people as well. For now, I don't think AI would be able to take over the world, as robots are not that advanced yet.”

**If you are feeling uncomfortable using AI how could you change that? For example, if you access a website and you accept “cookies”, then are you aware that it can access some of your information? If yes, would you change websites or just accept it?**

Tara: “I always pay attention to which websites I am using. Sometimes I can accept or reject everything. If a problem is occurring, and I feel uncomfortable using the website, like feeling tracked from one, I visit the IT office, and they solve it for me.”

**Do you think AI can take over the world?**

Tara: “Yes, I am scared of the developments of AI. Companies are advertising AI, to use it in our daily lives, such as solving our math homework. However, AI is tracking everything, including this conversation. For

example, Whatsapp, if there isn't a security setting activated, it can save all of your conversations. Generally, AI collects data about you such as cookies.”

**Thank you very much**

Tara (second from left in the photo), Laia and Alan!

**Interview:** Marilia Chiladaki, School News Editor & VP Editor of the Lions' Chronicle (on the left)

Did you know that BIS has its own (digital) school newspaper? The Lions' Chronicle! Every month, the team of 26 works on topics from around the school and the world under the leadership of Editor-in-Chief James Copping (Grade 12) and the supervision of BIS teacher Tia Martin. A BIS student podcast is a novelty.





# Preparing students for a globalised world

How well or poorly the Generative Pre-trained Transformer (ChatGPT) works was something we simply tested using our own example. The “prompt” instructed the AI to write a text about BIS that would be published on an internet platform for expats. We are publishing the very first result of ChatGPT here, only slightly shortened.



Embarking on an international journey often means navigating the complexities of finding the perfect school for your children. Bavarian International School (BIS), based in Haimhausen and Munich, emerges as a beacon of academic brilliance for expat families. This institution transcends conventional boundaries, embodying a unique blend of cultural diversity, academic excellence, and a nurturing environment.

### 1. International ambiance

BIS’s hallmark is its dynamic international community. A melting pot of nationalities creates a rich learning environment, preparing students for a globalised world. The school’s inclusive culture extends beyond classrooms, fostering a mosaic of perspectives that enriches daily interactions.



ChatGPT is a large language model trained by OpenAI to answer questions and have general conversations. More than 100 million people worldwide are using it.

### 2. Academic excellence

At its core, BIS upholds a commitment to academic excellence through the renowned International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum. Experienced educators ensure personalized attention in small class sizes, fostering critical thinking and individual talent development.

### 3. Holistic development

The school champions holistic development through robust extracurriculars, encompassing sports, arts, and community service. This emphasis extends to character education, instilling values like empathy and resilience, laying the groundwork for responsible global citizenship.

### 4. State-of-the-art facilities

BIS’s campuses in Haimhausen and Munich boast state-of-the-art facilities, enhancing the overall educational experience. From advanced science labs to expansive sports facilities, the school’s commitment to providing top-notch resources further distinguishes it as a hub for academic and personal growth.

In essence, BIS transcends conventional education, fostering a global community that propels students towards a future marked by excellence and intercultural understanding.

# There is an AI for almost everything



With so many AI products developing at lightning speed, a selection can of course only be purely subjective. Together with AI experts, we offer a ranking of AI tools for everyone. Caution: The result is only as good as how you feed the AI ...

- 1. ChatGPT, Google Bard, Bing Chat & Co.**  
Voice and text-based chatbots (texts, codes, ideas, concepts, etc.)
- 2. DeepL & DeepL Write**  
Translator and AI writing assistance
- 3. Midjourney, DALL-E, Craiyon, Stable Diffusion & Co.**  
Image generator
- 4. AI integrations in popular products**  
e.g. Microsoft Co-Pilot, Canva Magic Design etc.
- 5. Thereisanaiforthat.com**  
a huge collection of AI tools
- 6. Decktopus AI, Gamma & Co.**  
Presentation generator
- 7. Beautiful.ai**  
AI presentation software
- 8. Copy.ai**  
AI-powered copywriter (marketing, content etc.)
- 9. Upscayl**  
Photo upscaling tool (better resolution)
- 10. Latte Socia Synthesia & Steve.ai**  
AI video generation
- 11. Audiopen**  
Conversion of voice notes into text
- 12. StyleAI (usestyle.ai)**  
AI-driven SEO and web building
- 13. Murf**  
AI voice generator
- 14. AIVA, Sounddraw & Co.**  
AI music generator
- 15. Julius AI, Rows & Co.**  
AI data analyst



**"AI won't replace humans – but humans with AI will replace humans without AI."**

Harvard Business Review (hbr.org)

**"AI is the most important technological advance in decades – but we must make sure it is used for good."**

Bill Gates, Microsoft founder

**"AI will probably lead to the end of the world, but in the meantime there will be big companies."**

Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI



**"Artificial Intelligence will not take over the world, but it will change it. How we shape these changes is our responsibility."**

Barack Obama, former President of the United States of America (2009 – 2017)

**"I'll be back."**

Terminator, film role, played by Arnold Schwarzenegger (1984)

**"The teacher becomes the architect of knowledge transfer and ChatGPT a personal learning companion for everyone."**

Prof Christoph Schommer, Professor in AI at the University of Luxemburg

**"Artificial Intelligence cannot do the thinking for us."**

Thomas Ramge, Non-fiction author and tech journalist



**"Artificial Intelligence is only as good as the data it is trained on."**

Fei-Fei Li, US-American computer scientist and professor at Stanford University

**"The biggest threat from Artificial Intelligence is that people will stop thinking critically."**

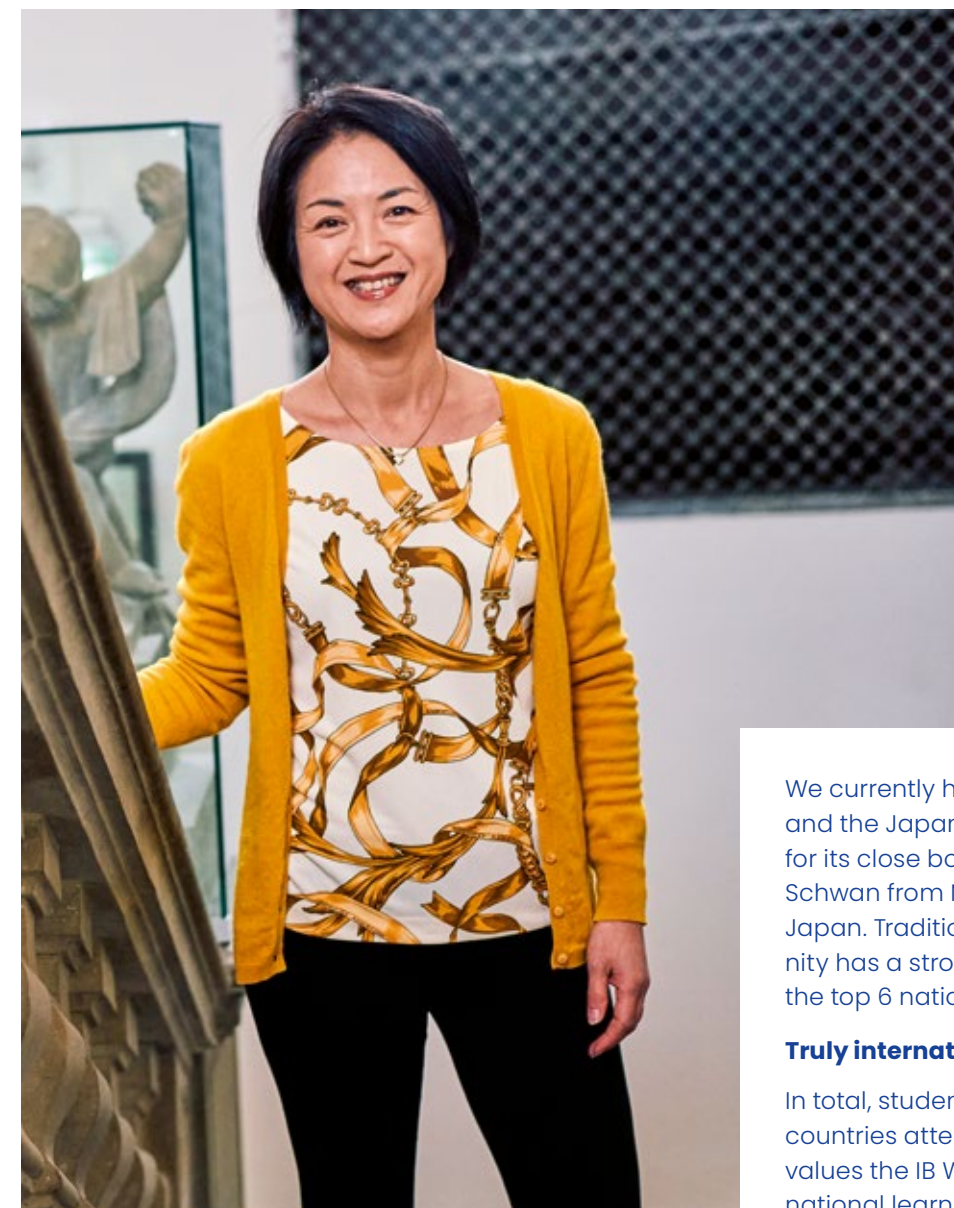
Pedro Domingos, Professor Emeritus of Computer Science and Engineering at the University of Washington

**"AI changes the framework under which teaching and learning takes place, very, very significantly."**

Prof Dr Doris Weißels, Professor for Business Information Systems, University of Applied Sciences Kiel

**"AI is a nightmare for me. It is inhuman. There is nothing more inhuman than Artificial Intelligence."**

Nicolas Cage, actor



## "A very close bond"

Aki Schwan, Japanese teacher, Haimhausen Campus

**For almost ten years, Aki Schwan has been teaching at the Bavarian International School. Thanks to her dedication (and her BIS colleague Michiyo Yamamoto, who has recently retired), BIS is the only international school in the Munich region offering Japanese.**

"We have a strong tie with the Japanese international school in Munich (only offers Grades 1-9) from where we have several transferring students every year.

We currently have 43 Japanese students and the Japanese community is well known for its close bond," says 53-years-old Aki Schwan from Matsuyama in the south of Japan. Traditionally, the Japanese community has a strong percentage and is one of the top 6 nationalities at the school.

### Truly international

In total, students from almost 70 different countries attend BIS. This is why Aki Schwan values the IB World School as a truly international learning community characterised by inspiration, trust and respect. "This is a special place where every single individual can grow into a better person every day by interacting with passionate and kind people."

Aki Schwan, who recharges her batteries with sports (badminton, jogging, cycling), dining out and spending time with friends and family, is not only a teacher of Japanese and English as an Additional Language (EAL), but also a Grade 9 Bike Trip leader. Together with Marianella Muelle, she organises the legendary school trip, which was once established by BIS legend Sigi Joseph (see alumni story on page 58). "I will do my best to protect this tradition for the BIS students in the future," promises Aki Schwan.



# “Inspiring a love of reading”

Melissa van den Ancker,  
Secondary School Librarian & Extended  
Essay Coordinator

Melissa van den Ancker is much more than the Secondary School Librarian at BIS. The American is a mentor and inspirational resource for all students from Grade 6 to 12. “I love to help students to find books that spark their love of reading and imagination.”

The library is a centrepiece of the Haimhausen Campus, a warm, bright, cosy place of tranquility and concentration on the first floor above the cafeteria. 18,000 physical books in 33 languages are on the shelves here, along with many millions of publications in digital form. “Our most popular section is our fantastic graphic novel and manga collection. For many students, the unique storytelling techniques, relevant themes and beautiful artwork of graphic novels are very appealing,” says Melissa van den Ancker.

She has been a close part of the BIS community with her family since 2008. Her sons Axel (Class of 2023, studying Medicine at the University of St. Andrews) and Maarten (Class of 2020, working on a PhD in genetics at the University of Edinburgh) have already completed their IB Diploma at BIS, and daughter Grace is currently in Grade 10, so she knows from an internal perspective as an employee and an external perspective as a parent what makes BIS a special place. “I am really impressed by the exceptional teaching methods and caring nature of my colleagues, and am equally inspired by our amazing students.



Their creativity, cultural awareness, multilingualism, curiosity, perseverance and kindness is just what this world needs.”

## Critical thinking skills

Ms. van den Ancker is also the Extended Essay Coordinator at BIS. This is a long-term independent research project that students must complete as part of the IB Diploma Programme. It provides students with the opportunity to pursue research on a topic of interest and to refine their academic writing skills. She believes that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will have dramatic consequences for the way students conduct research, and it is very important that they are supported to practice academic integrity when using it. However, she also sees AI as an opportunity to offer personalised learning for the individual needs of each student. “I see AI as a chance for students to further develop their critical thinking skills by questioning sources, evaluating information, and learning how to use AI as a tool, not a replacement for independent thinking.”

# Inspiring global citizens

“Believe. Inspire. Succeed.” This slogan is what we live and breathe every day at both BIS campuses. Students from over 60 different nations learn together, develop and flourish. This chapter “Success Stories” offers just a glimpse of the many exciting events and projects from everyday school life.



## Thunderous applause for “Annie”

When passion and professionalism meet talent and hard work, the results are as wonderful as the theatre and musical production “Annie” at BIS City Campus. The 30 young actors from Grades 3 to 5 received thunderous applause after the premiere. The BIS teachers responsible for the fabulous production also received great praise: Birgit Hauke-Swain (director), Katherine Disney (musical director), Emily Godfrey (choreographer) and Alex dos Santos (assistant to director). “It worked so well because students, teachers and parents gave their very best to succeed,” said director Birgit Hauke-Swain.

The entire production was a model of creativity and collaboration. A big thank you goes to all the helping hands, including volunteering teachers and parents, such as Ghenet Bayer (costume design), Liliana Resendiz (parent coordinator and costumes), Makiko Hiyoshi and Hiroko Hirose (props and costumes), Lisa Wilhelmsson and Poulami Das (costumes), Sônia De Barros Alves, designer Alexander Zöbisch and Natalie Beisswanger (set design) and Friedrich and Margarete Kunath for their generous donations.





## Passion and teamwork

BIS student Philipp Funk (10) participated in the 'Olympic Games for Children,' representing Germany with his basketball club TS Jahn München (U10) at the United World Games in Klagenfurt, Austria. More than 8,000 athletes from over 30 nations competed in this event, held under the patronage of UNESCO. The team reached the tournament's semi-finals, achieving an impressive fourth place. Notably, the top three positions were secured by Chinese junior national teams specially flown in from Beijing. Philipp, who dedicates two hours, three times a week to training and counts LeBron James and the Braunschweig world champion Dennis Schröder as role models, showcased success in other tournaments during the 2022-23 school year. With TS Jahn München, he claimed victory in a major international basketball tournament in Berlin, featuring 137 teams from 30 countries. Philipp Funk's achievements underscore the importance of teamwork, highlighting that a strong team transcends a mere collection of talented individual players.

## The Hour of Code

At BIS Primary Schools in München and Haimhausen, computational thinking and coding seamlessly integrate into the curriculum from Grade 1 to 5, emphasizing their significance in primary education. Annually, in December, students actively participate in the Hour of Code initiative, immersing themselves in coding projects that foster problem-solving skills, logical thinking, and creativity. These coding activities not only equip students with valuable future-ready skills but also nurture resilience and perseverance.

Empowering students to understand and shape the digital world, coding prepares them to navigate an increasingly technology-driven society.

The Hour of Code serves as an annual w, cultivating a generation proficient in the language of innovation and adaptability. "I believe, coding in Primary School opens doors to critical thinking, problem-solving, and unleashes creative potential, empowering students to shape a tech-savvy future," says Verena Zimmer, Educational Technology Integration Specialist at BIS City Campus.



## Ready for Secondary School

"In one word: amazing! In two words: extremely proud! In a sentence: We are blown away by how knowledgeable, articulate, and enthusiastic our students were during the Grade 5 exhibition, as well as by their meaningful and thoughtful actions in the community. They are undoubtedly ready for Secondary School", said Maria Tullberg and Eriks Kronitis, Grade 5 teachers at BIS City Campus. The Grade 5 Exhibition, a significant milestone marking the end of Primary School and the transition to the Middle Years Programme (MYP) starting

in Grade 6, saw nearly 50 students present their work. Commencing with musical performances, the students showcased presentations, artworks, process journals on iPads, research notes, and visual representations of their learning journey in the sports hall. The topics spanned the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, encompassing themes from environmental protection and sustainability to equal rights, peace and conflict resolution, stress management, physical health, and wellbeing.



## Voice acting for a film

10-year-old BIS student Alexandre De Barros Alves E Lopes has mastered a special challenge with excellence. He provided English language voice acting support for the Munich-based Olé Film & TV production for an upcoming international family animation series based on a German bestseller. Following the recordings, the producers left the studio beaming with satisfaction – and so did Alex from Portugal, Grade 4 student at BIS City Campus.





## A pioneering project for Grade 5

In 2022–23 BIS introduced Learning Lab 5 (LL5), a pioneering project for Grade 5 students at the Haimhausen Campus, a collaboration between teachers and students aiming to break traditional barriers in education. LL5 focuses on creating a self-directed learning environment where students have a say in shaping their academic journeys within the grade level curriculum.

LL5 is based on self-assessment, letting students evaluate their progress and set goals using the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills, tailored to their strengths and aspirations. They do so by aligning learning goals with their teacher every Monday and then attending specific workshops with their homeroom and specialist teachers throughout the week. They employ the MoSCoW method (Must-haves, Should-haves, Could-haves, and Won't-haves) to prioritize tasks and ensure students take responsibility for their learning journey and goals. Accountability is key in LL5, every Friday students review and reflect on their weekly achievements.



**“I’m excited to finally make this happen. The students are so motivated by having autonomy over their learning, and it gives us as teachers the chance to support each student in their learning needs”**

Kimberly House, Grade 5 teacher

LL5 is an innovative platform designed to unleash students’ full potential, reshaping the future of education. Inspired by psychologist Albert Bandura’s self-efficacy theory, LL5 aims to cultivate knowledgeable and confident learners equipped to navigate the modern world.

## Giants in the sky

In the enchanting world of the Haimhausen Primary School’s theatre productions, the 2022–23 school year stood out with the mesmerizing play “Giants in the Sky.” A total of 35 talented students from Grades 4 and 5 captivated the audience with a performance that not only brought tears of joy but also invoked goosebumps. Under the creative guidance of Director and BIS Teacher Jennifer Orzag, the production unfolded a magical narrative exploring the realm of giants residing above the clouds. As Orzag describes, these celestial beings have dedicated themselves to maintaining the beauty of the sky, undertaking tasks such as polishing stars, coaxing clouds to release rain, and painting breathtaking sunsets. The storyline takes a fascinating turn, with a curious giant stealing a key to a locked “beanstalk” and embarking on an adventurous journey to discover life on earth. The success of this production is not



only attributed to the students and Jennifer Orzag, but also extends to the collaborative efforts of Judith Clements, the Music Director, Guncha Bhan, who contributed to choreography, as well as the invaluable support from other teachers, the facilities team, and the ever-enthusiastic parents. Their collective dedication and creativity truly made “Giants in the Sky” a soaring triumph for the Primary School in Haimhausen, leaving a lasting impression on the hearts of all who witnessed this theatrical masterpiece.

## Milestones and masterpieces

What a phenomenal experience for our Grade 5 students at the Haimhausen campus! They showcased their masterpieces, as part of their IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) exhibition, marking a significant milestone at the end of Primary School and the transition to the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) beginning in Grade 6.

Their exhibits included visual displays, presentations, and engaging live talks on stage. Their topics were chosen within the framework of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. The children delved into environmental protection and sustainability by exploring themes such as gender equality in the context of climate change, animal rights, water pollution, overfishing, health and wellbeing, plastic pollution and many more. Moreover, they challenged their peers, teachers and parents to commit to taking action. A special thanks to the teachers Kimberly House, Liam McDermott, and Judith Page for their instrumental roles in making this event such a tremendous success.



## World champion in dancing

A BIS student can proudly call herself a world champion: Anna Tonn from Grade 10 (now in Grade 11). As a member of the youth dance formation “Next Generation” of TSA Dance Gallery Echting, the 16-year-old German secured gold at World of Dance, the largest International Urban Dance Competition, focusing on street dancing and contemporary choreography. “Every competition is a different experience but this one was filled with incredible talents and unique judges exuding positive vibes, I thoroughly enjoyed being part of it,” said Anna Tonn.

As a part of “Next Generation”, Anna and her team won the 2019 Juniors World and National Championship in Modern Dance, the 2019 Juniors German Championship in Show Dance, and secured third place at the 2021 Juniors World Championship for Modern Dance. Additionally, as a solo artist, Anna has won the 2018 German Juniors Championship in Jazz, came second at the 2018 German Juniors Championship in Modern Dance, and third at the 2019 German Junior Championship in Solo Jazz.





# The BIS LIONS – fostering teamwork

Each school year, over 20 teams represent the BIS LIONS in various sports including football, volleyball, basketball, swimming, track & field, badminton, rugby, cross country, and skiing. The U14 Teams (Grade 6–8) engage in multiple games against other international schools in the region. They participate in a mid-season tournament with other international schools in Bavaria and conclude the season with the German International School Sport tournament (GISST).

The Varsity teams of BIS (Grade 9–12) follow a similar structure, participating in the end-of-season GISST tournament and representing BIS at European Sports Conference (ESC) tournaments. Even our youngest athletes, from Grade 3 to 5, actively compete in local competitions in football, basketball, and swimming.



“At BIS, we take pride in our efforts to build positive students, foster teamwork, and shape character. Our sports programs empower students for lifelong learning and success, both on and off the pitch, court, and pool,” says BIS Athletics Director Phil Drake.



## Empowering connections – our Parent Community Council

The Parent Community Council (PCC) serves as a vital bridge, fostering connections between parents, teachers, and the broader school community. The PCC plays a key role in enhancing the educational experience for students, while nurturing a vibrant and supportive community spirit.

The dedicated volunteers have been instrumental in creating memorable experiences

for students, teachers, and families. From the enchanting Spooky Day to the cozy warmth of Hot Chocolate Day, Wine & Cheese evenings, and the legendary BIS Quiz Night, these hard-working volunteers have orchestrated a range of events. Moreover, the fundraisers have extended their impact beyond benefiting BIS students, reaching into our extended communities to support meaningful causes.

“These initiatives not only strengthen ties within the BIS community but also significantly contribute to the school’s overall atmosphere. A sincere thank you to all contributors – your support shapes BIS,” express Joanne Giesen and Martin Strutz, two of many PCC Representatives.

Looking forward, the PCC warmly invites both new and existing families to join in shaping the ongoing story of BIS. “Your support and active involvement are key in maintaining the warmth and unity that define our exceptional school!”



## Global Dignity Day



## Trick or treat

Spooky Day is one of the most enjoyable traditions at BIS. Students, teachers and parents transform themselves into superheroes, witches, wizards, ghosts, Star Wars heroes and much more. The creativity and attention to detail in many of the costumes are outstanding. Equally remarkable is the support on that day from the members of the Parent Community Council (PCC), who provide decorations, fun activities, games and sweets stations. In Haimhausen, the Primary School students gather in the castle courtyard for “Trunk & Treat”, while the older students traditionally celebrate an enthusiastically celebrated costume competition.

The Bavarian International School made history as the first school in Germany ever to take part in Global Dignity Day. In 2019, Crown Prince Haakon of Norway, co-founder of the international non-profit organisation Global Dignity, personally addressed the BIS students through a video message. Since then, Global Dignity Day has become a significant annual event. Last year, Grade 6 students orchestrated a ‘Dignity Dance’ and arranged for an aerial photo to advocate for more equality, justice, and human dignity worldwide. Nevertheless, BIS consistently integrates these essential topics of equality, justice, and human rights into its everyday curriculum, showing that these values are fundamental to the school’s ethos.



## Prepared for the future

BIS Interview Day is a great example of how BIS students are prepared for the future through real-life experiences. 15 leaders from diverse fields such as business, science, media and education, representing organisations like BMW, AIRBUS, Microsoft and European Patent Office, dedicated an entire morning to interview over 100 Grade 11 students at the Haimhausen Campus. The event was much more than just the job interviews, as the experienced personalities always pass on valuable tips – from the best preparation of the verbal “CV”, to eye contact and attire. This was the 11th edition of the BIS Interview Day, which was followed by the equally high-profile BIS Careers Day in March 2023 (read more on page 61).





### There is no planet B

For the fourth consecutive year, BIS hosted the Sustainability Summit. Initially, approximately 100 Grade 9 students attended three keynote speeches by Prof Dr Dr Peter Höppe (“Climate change and the dual climate injustice”), Günes Seyfarth (“Being the founder of the Community Kitchen”), and Aline Pronnet (“ZERO WASTE for businesses, educational institutions, and families”). Following these speeches, the students were challenged to create innovative environmental campaigns focusing on themes such as waste, biodiversity, carbon neutrality, or healthy living.

They formed teams of six individuals each, aiming to inspire change, and were allotted 2.5 hours to develop their ideas. Subsequently, they presented their concepts in a concise three-minute elevator pitch to a ‘Bill Gates character.’ During the final presentations in the school’s chapel, the team ‘Systematic Seaweed’ from class 9D (Grace, Kiki, Marilia, Zoe, Marie, and Alex) captivated the judges with their impressive presentation. All students demonstrated exceptional commitment, innovation, creativity, and teamwork.



### Two teachers, one passion: touch rugby

BIS is very proud of its international team of top teachers and employees. It is always fascinating to see the other areas in which our staff are engaged and thus continue to develop as personalities; some make music, others art or work in social volunteering. Two of our teachers have found an additional passion in touch rugby: Dasha Kozlova, Grade 9 Pastoral Leader and Drama Teacher, and Matt Dang, Physical Education Teacher.

Both play touch rugby for the Rugby Club Unterföhring and the German Women’s Open Team and the German Men’s Open Team, respectively. In August, they participated in the European Championships in Vichy, France.

“For me touch rugby is more than a sport, it’s a community of people who are active, passionate and strong. When we go away on tournaments together it feels like spending a weekend with your best friends doing something you truly love,” said Dasha Kozlova. New Zealander Matt Dang also sees his team as family and an opportunity to develop his intercultural understanding and growth as a person. He also tries to pass on his passion at BIS and leads the BIS LIONS team in rugby.

### Book author at thirteen

BIS student Sophie McWhirter, has written her first book titled “Pferdeliebe – Das Handbuch für leidenschaftliche Reitanfänger” (A Love of Horses – The Handbook for Passionate Riding Beginners). With its 115 pages, it’s an informative guidebook on basic knowledge, care, keeping, equipment, rules and riding.

The eighth-grader (now in Grade 9 and 15 years old) devoted seven months to creating her book. “I love writing, and when it’s also about my greatest passion, horses, that’s even better. In the future, I would also love to work with horses – or become a pilot,” says Sophie McWhirter, whose parents come from Germany and South Africa. The young lady can be seen at the Laurent riding centre in Munich five times a week, where she looks after the riding instructor’s pony Charly and Sophie’s riding partner, the 13-year-old Hanoverian mare Diana.

The book’s title “A Love of Horses” perfectly reflects her own relationship with animals. “My passion for riding started when I was six years



old and has grown even stronger over the years. I can no longer imagine a day without horses,” says the BIS student.

Sophie McWhirter is planning to release a limited print edition through a private publishing house, which will then be sold in a cross-regional pet shop.



### “The Tuesdays” often play on Saturdays

How cool is it that BIS has its own teacher band (as well as various student bands, of course)? “The Tuesdays” is the name of the international combo that has already played live at the BIS International Festival 2022, the school staff Christmas party and many other events. Next time, “The Tuesdays” will be the musical headliner of the BIS International Festival on 22 June 2024.

The Tuesdays” are a colorful mix of experienced musicians from all over the world, who formed in the original line-up in 2005. “The latest band name simply comes from the fact that we rehearse on Tuesdays. Our style changes somewhat with the change of musicians but it’s been based around rock, blues, indie, alternative, and soul,” explains Phil Sartor, the band leader and drummer. The band also includes vocalists Kim House (also tambourine), Lydia Nova (also keyboard), Jennifer Orszag (just for one year), Duncan Bradshaw (guitar) and Tim Salter (bass). New members of the band are Kathleen Konzett (vocals) and Thomas Murray (vocals and drums). “We love performing wherever a great party band is needed and that’s just about everywhere because a great party band is always needed.” Fans can expect cover songs from Kings of Leon, Fleetwood Mac, R.E.M., Simple Minds, Bruce Springsteen, Kim Wilde, ZZ Top and many more. BIS rocks!



## “Gold asset to any classroom”

Giulia Pomponi won the Bronze BTEC Award for her outstanding performances during her final school years (2021-22), surpassing competitors from across Europe. But it was not only her with an outstanding performance, 70% of the BIS students in the BTEC class achieved the highest possible grade (distinction star)!

BTEC's (Business and Technology Education Council) are high-quality, career-focused qualifications rooted in the real world of work. Students are immersed in learning about the business environment, types of business entities, starting their own small business, and much more.

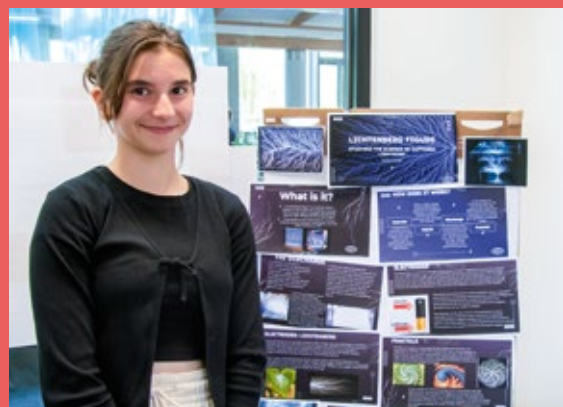
“With every project that I did for BTEC I always had the natural instinct to go above what was required. So, I was really happy to find out



that all that love, passion, and effort didn't go unnoticed and that all my hard work paid off,” explained the 20 years old BIS Alumni Giulia Pomponi, who is now studying Game Art and 3D Animation at the SAE Institute in Munich. “She was a gold asset to any classroom and BIS helped support such a talented, caring and kind human!” said BIS teacher Lisa Gill.

At Bavarian International School, BTEC is integrated in the IB Careers-related Programme (IB CP), a reputable certificate from an IB World School.

## BIS Infinity Programme Expo



In 2022-23, Dr Alissa Carter started the Infinity Programme at BIS. This programme is designed to further stretch students, with a variety of abilities, to dive deeper into subjects that excite them, while further developing their abilities and knowledge in a way that is appropriate to their learning speed. The offerings include writer's workshop, science projects, and other passion projects.

In May 2023, more than 40 students from Grades 6-10 showcased their work to the community as part of the Infinity Programme Expo. For instance, students passionate about science had the opportunity to work with teachers outside of the regular science class and try out various experiments before embarking on their own science project. In Grade 9, Chaewon P. created an infinity mirror and Jeany K. grew her own crystals. Milan L. and Emma O. in Grade 6 co-wrote a story that is now part of the published BIS Infinity Anthology 2023, an annual publication of BIS students' short stories or poetry.

Congratulations to our inspiring BIS students and thanks so much to Dr Alissa Carter as passionate leader of that fabulous initiative.

Scan the QR code to learn more!



## Pure passion for American Football

A special game took place in Munich's Allianz Arena in November 2022. Not football, but American football – the Tampa Bay Buccaneers with superstar Tom Brady won 21:16 against the Seattle Seahawks. Two BIS students watched the first NFL game in Germany with particular interest: German-American Luca Aghili and England native Leopold Szewald.

The two 14-year-olds became Bavarian U16 champions along with their American football team, the Munich Rangers. Following a perfect season, led by head coach Max Feruga, the team won the final game in Ingolstadt against the Ingolstadt Dukes, 30:0. “That was a commanding victory, which we earned with a lot of effort,” said defensive player Luca Aghili (linebacker, cornerback).

We wish both students much fun and success in their sporting passion, which is also becoming increasingly popular in Germany.

## Classical music meets visual arts



Creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking are the four big C's that are considered future skills. And it was exactly these future skills that the eight Grade 11 students demonstrated in a joint performance of contemporary classical music and visual arts. Giorgio Agnès on the piano and seven art students transformed the auditorium into an atmospherically impressive scene of sound, installation and drama.

“It was wonderful to witness the auditorium coming alive with the beautiful installations and music! I am very proud that we managed to create an original and unique experience for the audience, blending music with visual arts and creating a kind of performance art, something that has never been done at this school before,” said the 16-year-old Giorgio Agnès from Italy.



## “I want to be an entrepreneur”

The example of student Salla Rex demonstrates the importance of creativity, well-being and entrepreneurship at BIS. The eleventh grader wrote a book “I love who I am”, that playfully teaches children aged 6 to 10 the importance of self-love and self-development.

The work was created in a 50-hour service learning project. The success of her idea is remarkable: In the renowned “STARTUP TEENS” competition, she came third in the Bavarian state contest finals. At the national competition in June 2023 in Berlin, the German BIS student also came third in the education category – out of a total of 4,500 students with 912 projects!

“I knew from an early age that I wanted to be an entrepreneur and have a positive impact on the world. My biggest goal is to change the German school system to an extent and implement a whole class of self-development in the curriculum,” said Salla Rex, who founded the start-up “Rex Education”.

Salla Rex has chosen the International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme (IB CP), which includes a large practical component and real-world approaches to learning in the final Grades 11 and 12.





## A quarter century of dedication

**Siegfried Joseph's 25-year journey at Bavarian International School is more than mere employment; it is a story of profound influence and lasting inspiration. From 1997 until his retirement in 2022, Joseph dedicated himself to shaping the school, motivating countless students, and pioneering innovative ideas.**

A native of Baden-Württemberg, Sigi Joseph began his journey at BIS teaching German, in August 1997, a significant year marking the graduation of the inaugural cohort of International Baccalaureate Diploma students and the subsequent relocation to Haimhausen Castle. With an educational background in German, English, Romance Studies, and Education, acquired in Heidelberg and Albuquerque, New Mexico, he had a lot to offer. He assumed the role of Head of Modern Languages, introduced Spanish as an additional language, and became

the school's first Alumni Coordinator. He initiated a remarkable tradition, the Grade 9 cycling tour spanning approximately 400 km from Passau to Vienna, aptly named the "Rite of Passage" in the school's history. For 17 years, "Mr. Joseph" poured his heart and soul into organising this cycling adventure, creating a lasting tradition.

### Popular mentor

Among his cherished BIS memories, the cycling tour stands prominently. But equally dear are his directorial contributions to



Siegfried Joseph with the graduating Class of 2009.



**"Being a teacher is simply the greatest thing!"**

Sigi Joseph

German and Spanish theatre productions and, above all, his deep engagement with students. "Being a teacher – the direct immediate exchange with the students – is simply the greatest thing. I have always understood teaching as a dialogue that also enriches the teacher," states the now 71-year-old Freisinger. His passion for teaching, coupled with his innate empathy, friendliness, and international perspective, has made him a beloved colleague and popular mentor to generations of students.

### Uncovering hidden talents

"Sigi is particularly gifted in discovering and unfolding the students hidden talents, appreciating and fostering their unique personalities and awakening their sensitivity for German culture in an international context," the German team praised his work in the BIS Yearbook 2022. Joseph's appreciation for the international, open-minded environment stems from his previous professional experiences in Great Britain, Hungary, and Singapore. "I think the International Baccalaureate programme is extremely far-sighted, compelling all involved in the educational process to actively participate," says Sigi Joseph, who is deeply impressed by BIS's growth as an institution and its unwavering commitment to academic excellence. His parting advice is a reminder that we should never rest on our laurels but continuously strive for development and innovation together.

### The global citizen continues the journey

Retirement, for someone as dynamic as Sigi Joseph, is an understatement for the next chapter in life. "I have now travelled intensively for a year – I want to continue that. My health also demands constant movement. Apart from that, many things are on the table – voluntary work, political engagement, let's see..." On his wish list are a trip with his daughter and retracing the literary settings integral to his teaching journey: In Siddhartha's footsteps through India, to Marjane Satrapi's Persepolis or to the Norwegian Preikestolen by Igor Bauersima. "Only in my dreams: cycling through Africa!"

A heartfelt thank you for dedicating a quarter of a century of passion for teaching and learning at BIS. May your future endeavors and dreams continue to be as enriching and inspiring as your legacy at the school, dear Sigi Joseph!





A BIS student, Daniel Peters, in the midst of a high-calibre panel: Claudia Nerger (BMW, left), Prof Dr Claudia Peus (TUM, 2nd left) and moderator Nina Eichinger.



A unique lineup for exceptional real life learnings for our students in Grade 10 and 11.

# Values, resilience, and change

The BIS City Talk 2023 at the Schwabing Campus delved into the theme of “Next generation leadership”. Industry experts from BMW, Technical University of Munich (TUM), and BIS explored the evolving landscape, emphasizing the imperative for tomorrow’s leaders to master change, embody resilience, maintain a stable value system, and commit to lifelong learning.

Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are reshaping work environments, while globalization, geopolitics, and climate change add complexity to daily life. The discussion considered the implications for the future skills of children and the characteristics of next-generation leaders. Claudia Nerger of BMW highlighted the importance of a “growth mindset” for adapting to constant

change. Resilience, crucial in a VUCA world (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous), involves navigating change positively. “Meta-skills” such as digital proficiency, intercultural awareness, and the ‘four big C’s’ – communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking – are essential, requiring dedicated attention throughout the education system.

## Psychological safety

Prof Dr Claudia Peus, TUM Vice President, stressed the need for a stable value system as a compass in rapidly changing times. Leadership authenticity, consistency, effective communication, active listening, and embodying values build trust and psychological safety. A noteworthy addition to the City Talk was BIS student Daniel Peters (17) emphasizing adaptability as a crucial skill for future leaders. BIS Head of School Dr Chrissie Sorenson underlined the school’s values “Believe. Inspire. Succeed.” Encouraging mistakes as part of the “failing forward” principle fosters resilience, perseverance, and the development of global citizens.

BIS City Talk serves as a public forum intersecting education, science, business, and politic and emphasising BIS’ role as front-runner in politics.

# Inspiring future changemakers

Never before has a BIS Careers Day been as high-calibre as in 2023. 18 first-class speakers from a wide range of industries enthused more than 200 Grade 10 and 11 students with information, inspiration and guidance for their future paths. The Careers Day is an important component of the University & Career Counselling programme at BIS.

The speakers for the 40 different panels were chosen very deliberately so that the students could get to know a variety of personalities, industries and jobs. The guests came from Microsoft, Audi, LinkedIn, Personio, Flixbus, B-ON, ams OSRAM, Klinikum Dritter Orden, United Nations World Food Programme, Leibniz Supercomputing Centre, Plastic Omnium, New Flag GmbH (Invisibobble), BERNARD Group, City of Munich and many more.

“I really liked that every speaker was different and no one had taken the same path,” said Grade 10 student Anna Tonn. Her schoolmate Daniel Peters (Grade 11) called the careers day an opportunity and experience. “Not every school offers something like this to students.” Lilian Nash (Grade 11) said: “Several speakers encouraged us to go against the current, step out of our comfort zones.”

André Schwämmlein, one of the founders and CEO of Flix Mobility, for example, told how his path led from a 10 sqm room with three people in just over 10 years to an international company that is now active in 40 countries.



“Entrepreneurship is not glamorous, it is hard work, a wild ride and failure is part of the job,” said André Schwämmlein

## The speakers

**Jama Askaryar** AUDI AG / **Nadine Beyreuther** Personio / **Dr Maria Bernard-Schwarz** BERNARD Group / **Reto F. Brunner** RETO CREATIVE GMBH / **Dr Franz Edler von Koch** Klinikum Dritter Orden / **Isabell Fries** Philoneos / **Selena Gabat** LinkedIn / **Jörg Hofmann** B-ON / **Dr Maryam Marquardt** ams OSRAM / **Pietro Motta** United Nations World Food Programme / **Aleksejs Plotnikovs** Microsoft / **Robert Schäfer** RTC Management & Sports GmbH / **Laura Schulz** Leibniz Supercomputing Centre - Leibniz-Rechenzentrum (LRZ) / **André Schwämmlein** Flix Mobility / **Thibaut Stern** Plastic Omnium / **Korinna Thielen** City of Munich, Universität Kassel (Germany) / **Sophie Trelles-Tvede** New Flag GmbH (Invisibobble) / **Prof Wolfram Winter** Thr3Winters GmbH

## BIS City Talk

### BIS City Talk over the years:

- 2017** Future learning
- 2018** Design thinking
- 2019** Positive education
- 2022** Educating for tomorrow: values + life skills = changemakers
- 2023** Next generation leadership
- 2024** 29 February (18:00): “AI in education: empowering tomorrow’s digital citizens”, with Dr Diana Knodel, Dr Laura Crompton, Tristan Post

BIS City Talk – register now!





# Reputation & relationships

**The 2022-23 school year was once again characterised by important milestones: Record student enrolment, new scholarships, community-connecting events and fundraising success.**

These are just some of the topics that the closely aligned Communications, Admissions and Fundraising team is working on, whose focus could also be described as the further development of BIS as the school of the future.

Through targeted, cross-media communication campaigns and strong word-of-mouth, the team was able to contribute to reaching the record number of students of 1,220 (grown to 1,260 in January 2024). The City Campus grew to over 300 students (now 320).

## Community is key

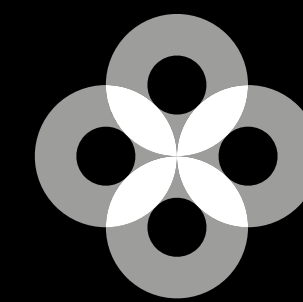
Because community is key at BIS, the team organised large whole-school events such as the BIS Grill & Chill, the BIS International Festival, the BIS Winter Warm-up and, for the first time, the BIS City BBQ at the Schwabing campus. The team is also responsible for attracting speakers for the BIS Careers Day, the BIS Interview Day and the BIS Sustainability Summit. "We will continue to expand our contacts in business, politics, science, the media and the like, because these

relationships are very important in three respects: to generate real-life experiences and top-class speakers for our students, to sensitise HR & relocation departments of companies to BIS as a school of choice and, thirdly, to ask for support for our future projects," explains Marko Mädge, Head of Communications & Advancement at BIS.

## Culture of philanthropy

Further steps have been taken on the long road to developing a culture of philanthropy at BIS. Around half a million euros in donations were collected for the CIC - the school just received the promise of a further major donation of €100,000 in October 2023. BIS can proudly say that it is the only international school in Germany that now offers three scholarships called "Believe", "Inspire" and "Succeed".

However, BIS never rests on its laurels, but always looks to the future. Work is continuing on the fundraising campaign as well as on improving internal communications and establishing professional alumni services.



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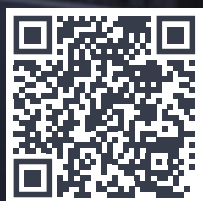


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