

DragonNews

☀ Summer 2025

Sun sets on the school year

We look back on an incredible year at HIS



REFLECTION ISSUE

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Reflection Issue

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"Can you spot me?"
Look for **5** hidden dragons





From the Superintendent

Dear HIS Community and Friends,

As we close out the 2024-25 school year, we take a moment to reflect on the incredible journey our school has taken over the past two decades.

Since 2002, our HIS community has grown from a humble beginning of just 9 students to over 1,000 students from more than 50 nationalities. Next school year, we are on target to host more than 1,100 students for 2025-26.

This remarkable growth has not only transformed our school into one of the most diverse and vibrant international communities in the region but has also provided a platform for students to thrive and achieve their fullest potential. In this edition of DragonNews, we are focused on 'Reflections' of the HIS 2024-25 school year.

This year has been nothing short of extraordinary, as our students embraced every opportunity to shine. Our IB PYP, TOK, Community Project, and Personal Project exhibitions showcased the depth of intellectual curiosity, creativity, and analytical thinking across the grade levels.

Meanwhile, our Performing Arts Night was nothing short of spectacular, as were our theater productions that ranged from *These Shining Lives* to *We Will Rock You*, and the fresh and funny *Rockin' Tale of Snow White*, each leaving an unforgettable mark on our stage.

HIS also proudly hosted the 5th Annual HIS Student Film Festival, where students pushed the boundaries of storytelling through film. Meanwhile, provocative visual arts exhibitions brought the school halls to life, demonstrating the creativity of our young artists.

Our students made history across multiple competitions, with award-winning debates, individual and team champions, personal bests, and new records in ACAMIS, SSL, SISAC, ISNAC, NSSL, and HISAC. We were overjoyed to celebrate our repeat victory as ACAMIS Boys Soccer Champions, a testament to our athletes' dedication and teamwork, but success was not limited to the Wave or the field!

Our Robotics and Drone Clubs achieved individual and team victories, further proving HIS's excellence in innovation and STEM fields. Our badminton and

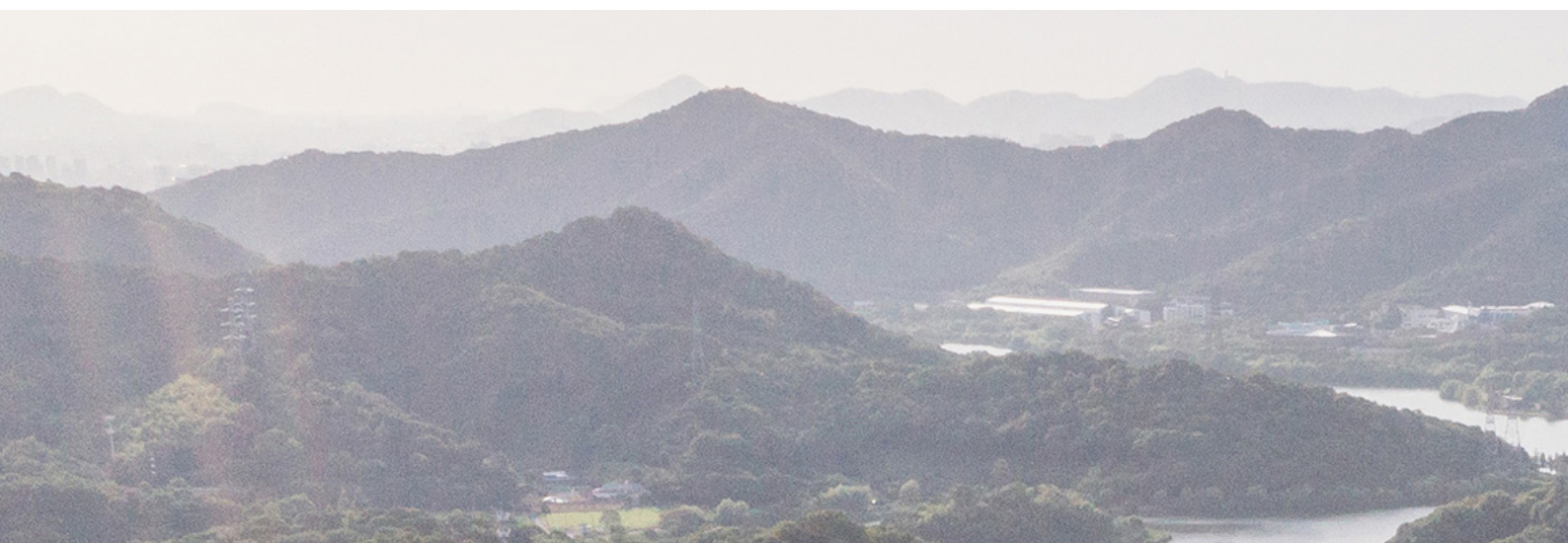


table tennis teams also had a phenomenal season, showcasing their skill and determination at various tournaments. Adding to our achievements, our DoE International Award program continued to grow, empowering students through skill-building, activity, voluntary service, and adventurous journeys. This global youth development initiative has inspired many Dragons to challenge themselves and reach new personal goals.

This incredible journey would not have been possible without the unwavering dedication of our parents. Your enthusiastic support, cheering at athletic events, proudly wearing PAFA Cheer Squad shirts, contributing to PAFA Cooking Classes and luncheons, and lending your voices to the HIS Community Choir, has been an inspiration.

This year, your commitment grew even stronger with the addition of PAFA Fitness, fostering wellness within our parent community. Whether attending Coffee Mornings, Afternoon Teas, curriculum nights, conferences, or student performances and exhibitions, you have developed and supported our learning environment in countless ways. Your energy and involvement have transformed HIS into something truly exceptional. Thank you for making this year unforgettable!

In this final edition of DragonNews for the 2024-25 school year, we will be sharing stories and reflections, as well as highlighting the many opportunities to

pursue excellence that HIS offers to our students, parents, and faculty. We will explore how our school community is working together to build a brighter future for all and how we are leveraging our diversity to create a more inclusive and caring environment.

Before we take a break for the summer, I want to congratulate all our graduating seniors of the Class of 2025 with best wishes, great happiness, and success in your next chapter of life. I also want to thank all our dedicated teachers, parents, and students for the many wonderful memories we created together.

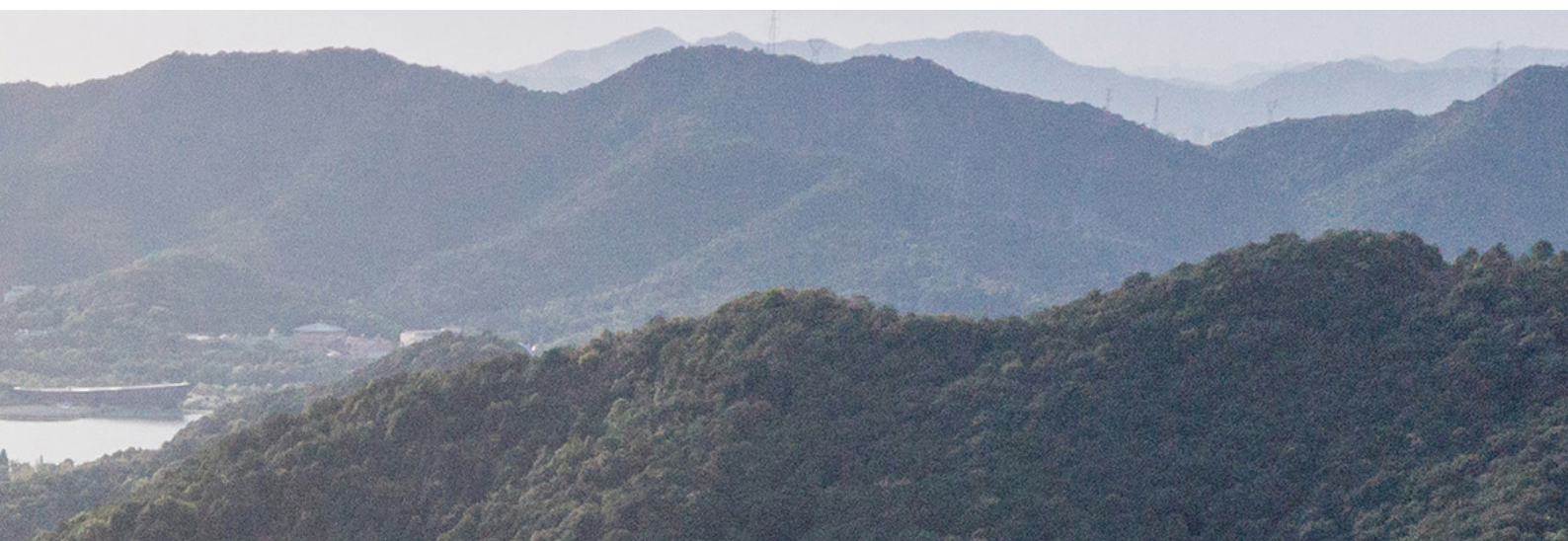
For those of you leaving us at the end of this year, I wish you all the best and hope you will find your new home as equally warm and caring as HIS. Remember: "Once a Dragon, Always a Dragon!"

We look forward to welcoming our returning students back in the fall, meeting all the new families, and building on the momentum of this exceptional year.

Goooooooo Gold Dragons!!!



Jeffrey R. Stubbs
Superintendent, Hangzhou International School





YALE MUN SINGAPORE

March 14-16

Seventeen of our high schoolers embarked on an incredible journey to Yale MUN Singapore 2025, where they showcased not just their debating skills, but also their collective growth.

From the very start of preparations, they supported one another; pushed boundaries, and embraced what it means to be part of a team—collaboration, resilience, and shared success. Their hard work paid off in diplomacy and beyond. One of our students earned their second 'Outstanding Delegate Award', marking another proud achievement for HIS at Yale conferences this year.

Beyond committee sessions, our students also explored the beauty of Singapore, from the breathtaking Gardens by the Bay to the unforgettable Night Safari—making memories as a team both in and out of the conference halls.



ACAMIS FOOTBALL AT HIS

March 20-22

HIS was proud to host the 2025 ACAMIS Green Division Football Tournament from 20-22 March. Altogether 150 student athletes and coaches from six international schools across China converged on HIS to compete in this year's divisional football tournament.

Our Boys Football Varsity Team were crowned back-to-back ACAMIS Football champions after an incredible comeback and championship match. Despite their injuries, our Girls Football Varsity Team also competed courageously and ultimately finished in 4th place overall.

Congratulations to all players and coaches on representing themselves and our school so impressively throughout the tournament, and a special mention to our ACAMIS All-Tournament players Rhema, Shauna, Ronan and Gaspard.

A special thanks also to our PAFA Cheer Squad who have developed a growing reputation (both home and away) for their hospitality and 'HIS Dragon Spirit'. Gooooooo Dragons!!!



IB DP VISUAL ARTS EXHIBITION

March 26

The DP Visual Arts Exhibition brought together students, faculty, and families to experience the powerful work of this year's Grade 12 artists. As guests entered the exhibition space, they were immersed in a world of bold ideas and diverse media that offered a journey into the complexities of the human experience. This year's DP Visual Arts cohort explored themes of mortality, identity, memory, family of origin, and the rebirth, crafting a collective narrative that was both personal and universal.

Students worked across a wide range of media and artmaking forms, from installation, photography, and painting to sculpture, digital collage, and textile art, demonstrating their commitment to material exploration. Guests responded to the visual and emotional impact of the artworks; the exhibition echoed with the voices of students explaining their processes, parents asking questions and peers admiring the work.

A celebration of inquiry, expression, and artistic maturity, the DP Visual Arts exhibition marked a meaningful chapter in each student's journey at HIS—celebrated and supported by the community that helped shape it.



COMMUNITY



LOWER SCHOOL MUSICAL

March 27

Our Lower School musical, "The Rockin'Tale of Snow White," was a smashing success this year, with our young performers rocking the stage—we couldn't be prouder of them.

This playful twist on the classic tale introduced new characters and comedic moments that lead to laughter and surprises, with the scene set by a mom reading the Brothers Grimm fairytales to her restless kids. The show was packed with catchy tunes, hilarious moments, and even a dance-off that had everyone on their feet.

It was amazing to see the creativity and effort everyone put in. A special thank you to the cast, directors, crew, and everyone who helped make this performance incredible.



PAFA GLITZ & GLAM NIGHT

April 11

Our parents looked absolutely stunning at their PAFA Glitz & Glam Night. This evening brought together over 80 parents for an unforgettable night of fun, music, and connection at the elegant Conrad Hangzhou Hotel. Our PAFA Social Committee team worked tirelessly all day to decorate the venue, and made sure every corner sparkled with creativity and care.

As parents arrived, dressed in their finest attire, they were welcomed into the beautifully decorated venue ready for an amazing night! It wasn't just a dinner and dance—it was a chance to unwind, reconnect, and strengthen the bonds within our school community.



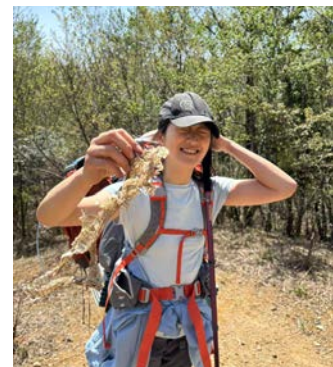
DUKE OF EDINBURGH JOURNEY 2

April 12-15

In mid-April, 19 of our students and five of our staff embarked on their Qualifying Journey for the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award — a significant milestone that emphasizes teamwork, resilience, and overcoming challenges.

Upon arrival, the students met their guides, who helped them with navigation and plotting their route on the map. Then, with compasses in hand, both groups faced challenging paths, climbing through steep mountains, navigating through areas flooded by rain, and battling fierce winds that even turned to hail momentarily, but supported each other to overcome all challenges.

The following day brought a beautiful change: the winds began to calm, and the sun shone brightly. In the end, our Bronze students tackled a 12km hike and our Silver students took on a 19km trek, all done with a smile and sense of accomplishment.



ISTA DRAMA FESTIVAL

April 18-20

HIS was proud to host the ISTA Drama Festival in April. With 60 students coming from Hangzhou, Nanjing, and Kobe, Japan, from across Middle School and High School (Grades 6 to 10), it was an incredible crosscultural experience shared across age groups.

The ISTA Drama Festival focuses on story-based inquiry, using story as a way to understand the world. In Hangzhou, this drew on the famous local story 'Legend of the White Snake', with students first embarking on a exploratory trip to the city's famed West Lake and Broken Bridge, where it is set. Returning to HIS, they spent the next two days exploring the space between reality and imagination, culminating in a Sunday performance in our Black Box theater.



WORLD BOOK DAY CELEBRATIONS

April 23

HIS Lower School celebrated World Book Day with our Day of Tales, a day filled with reading and story-related events and activities. It was a fun and engaging day as our community explored literacy through drama, storytelling, and reading.



This continued the next day when visiting British author Kev Payne met and presented to all the grades, sharing his work as an author, illustrator, and poet.

He encouraged our students to problem-solve, motivated their creativity and interest in writing, and brought a lot of laughter. It was also wonderful to have some parents join us for a couple of his presentations.

HANGZHOU STUDENT FILM FESTIVAL

April 25

HIS was thrilled to host the annual Hangzhou Student Film Festival awards night, showcasing the talent of Hangzhou student filmmakers in a red carpet Oscar's style gala event.

The evening began with a red-carpet photo opportunity for attendees, followed by an award ceremony featuring nominations and clips from the nominated films. This year, a special category on "Memory and Nostalgia" was introduced, adding an exciting challenge for the participants.

The night also featured film-themed performances by the Grade 7 & 9 Strings Ensemble, Grade 8 & 9 Jazz Band, and Grade 7 Dance students. Special recognition goes to our Upper School Student Council officers for hosting the award ceremony, and our Grade 8 actors for being the best dressed this evening and making us all laugh with their skit.





INTERNATIONAL DAY

April 26

At the end of April, HIS celebrated our most beloved and favorite school event of the year—International Day. It was a fantastic opportunity to honor our diverse HIS community, comprising students and families from over 50 different nationalities.

It was also made special by the incredible effort of our dedicated HIS parents, who prepared and shared homemade dishes from their countries.

Our community had the opportunity to try food from over 20 different booths organized by our fantastic HIS parents. The homemade laksa from the Singapore booth, the delicious chicken adobo from the Philippines booth, and fresh takoyaki from the Japan booth were especially popular amongst our community!

Throughout the day, we also had a variety of special performances from our students, parents, and staff. It was a wonderful day to enjoy the sunny weather, catch up with friends, and try out delicious food from around the world.





GOOD LUCK GRADE 12

April 28

On Friday 25 April, at our weekly Friday Food Market, our parents prepared a special gift for our seniors, as they prepared to take their IB Diploma exams.

Bringing in a Korean tradition, they prepared a sweet and sticky candy called yeot for every Grade 12 student. "The reason we use a 'yeot' is that we wish our seniors to 'stick' (be accepted to) the university where they want to go. We wish you all the best!", they said.

It was an amazing surprise to our Grade 12 seniors and hopefully brought them a lot of good luck in their IB DP exams.

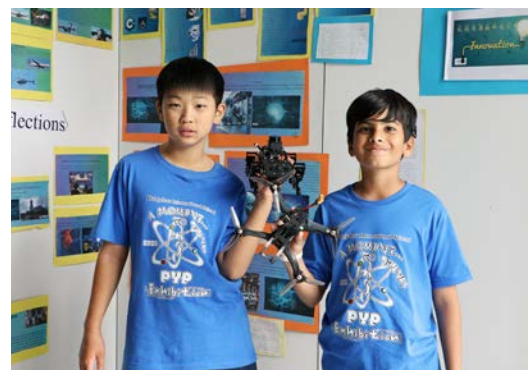
GRADE 5 PYP EXHIBITION

May 9

On May 9, we had our annual Grade 5 PYP Exhibition. This event was more than just a presentation; it represented a journey of inquiry, discovery, and deep learning that our Grade 5 students engaged in over the previous nine weeks.

Throughout this process, students identified issues they are passionate about, researched extensively, collaborated effectively, and took action to make a positive impact. The PYP Exhibition exemplifies the PYP philosophy in action, showcasing our students' ability to apply their knowledge and skills across various disciplines.

During the exhibition, each group presented their research outcomes through various modes of expression, including music, PE, math, English, Mandarin, art, and design technology. Well done to our Grade 5 students, and good luck in Grade 6!



ACAMIS ULTIMATE FRISBEE

May 8-10

Congratulations to our first-ever ACAMIS Ultimate Frisbee team, who brought the Gold Dragon spirit all the way to Shenyang and won the 'Spirit of the Game' award!

Our team of 14 girls and boys from Grades 9 to 11 was guided through their season by the experience and passion of Coaches Cool and Plotz.

With only 2 lead-up preparation games before the tournament, the team approached the event with a growth-mindset and goals to improve their skills and understanding of the game while having a great time, supporting each other, and making friends – all key characteristics of Ultimate Frisbee culture.

Our team obviously made a great impression on the tournament hosts and fellow competitors who nominated the HIS team as winners of the Spirit of ACAMIS Award for their attitude, sportsmanship, positive interaction with other teams, and general positive contributions to the tournament.



UPPER SCHOOL PERFORMING ARTS SHOWCASES

May 13-15

Our talented Middle School and High School musicians and dancers delivered yet another incredible performance, taking center stage and shining in their fabulous end-of-the-year performing arts showcase.

From jazz bands to string ensembles, choir singers to dancers, this year has been amazing for our performing arts program at HIS. We look forward to seeing our talented students continue to grow next year and captivate us with their talent.





FINAL IB DP EXAM FOR CLASS OF 2025

May 21

Well done to all our Grade 12 students who completed their IB DP exams!

Three full weeks of comprehensive exam taking is no small task. We are very proud of our students, their perseverance and Dragon spirit! Here is a photo of the students at the last exam, HL Math on Wednesday, May 21st. They couldn't look more excited.

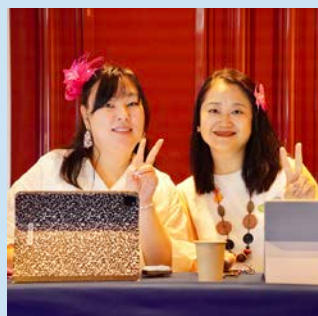
PAFA END OF THE YEAR PARTY

May 28

On a sunny Wednesday, our HIS parents gathered at the Grand Hyatt Hangzhou for the last PAFA lunch of the school year, themed "Aloha." The venue was beautifully decorated with tropical backdrops, fresh flowers, paper pineapples and colorful table settings that set the mood for a cheerful afternoon.

The event truly reflected the spirit of Hangzhou International School, bringing parents together to celebrate friendship and community. The Aloha theme brought out the best in everyone. Parents dressed in colorful floral outfits, while the PAFA social committee looked stunning in their white dresses with flower accessories.

It was the perfect way to end the school year, leaving everyone with smiles, laughter, and a sense of togetherness. This event wasn't just a celebration; it was a reminder of the friendships and connections the parents have built throughout the year at HIS. As we head into summer, they carry these wonderful memories with them.



HIS SUMMER SPLASH

May 30

On Friday 30 May, the school pool was filled with excitement during our final swim meet of the year, Summer Splash 2025. The afternoon opened with a stunning Artistic Swimming Showcase, followed by 58 heats featuring 179 entries from all swim levels—from Tadpoles to Dragons. Thank you to our parent and staff volunteers and supporters for making this such a memorable event.



DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL CELEBRATIONS

May 30- June 1

The HIS Dragon Boat Festival celebration was a delightful and vibrant experience that brought our entire HIS community together.

In the ECE classrooms, our youngest learners enjoyed exciting activities like crafting beautiful sachets and savoring delicious zongzi. The LS Gym also buzzed with energy as Grades 1 to 5 participated in engaging stations, featuring a thrilling dryland Long Boat team competition, traditional medicine sachet crafting, and fun games like sandbag throwing and arrow shooting. Meanwhile, the US celebrated with the LongYin Club, where students learned to make zongzi and crafted charming pendants and bracelets.

During the weekend, our HIS Dragon Wave Warriors also raced in the Xixi Wetland Dragon Boat Races, where they were interviewed on TV. Let's Gooooooo Dragons!!!



Compiled by
NATALIA STUBBS
PR & Communications Specialist



From Texas to the Global Stage, Meet Our Staff

TIA MOEN | Upper School Drama Teacher
JEREMY MOEN | Theater Manager



HI TIA AND JEREMY, THANK YOU FOR AGREEING TO THIS INTERVIEW. FIRST CAN YOU PLEASE INTRODUCE HOW LONG YOU'VE BEEN AT HIS, AND WHAT YOUR MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES ARE AT SCHOOL?

T: We arrived at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year. I was hired to be the MYP/DP Theatre Teacher and the lead Theatre Director.

J: I volunteered my technical skills for the first two years. I aided in the set, lights, and sound for the main stage productions.

WERE EITHER OF YOU INVOLVED IN THE PERFORMING ARTS AT SCHOOL GROWING UP?

T: I began working in theatre in high school. I was involved in on-stage and behind-the-scenes in G9 through G11. In G12, I was granted the opportunity to be the Senior

Class director for our fall production. The play was called *Dear Phoebe*, I remember many late rehearsals and making many new friends through it.

J: I was involved in the choir throughout school. I started singing competitively in G7 and continued through G12.

DID YOU STUDY PERFORMING ARTS AT UNIVERSITY? HOW DID YOU END UP IN TEACHING?

T: When I began university, I thought I wanted to be a writer. I wanted to work for travel magazines and travel the world one country at a time to experience and write about the many different cultures. I fell in love with professional theatre during my second year at university and went all in... acting, design, constructing, and then eventually teaching. I had an amazing role model at university. I decided that I wanted to influence kids in the arts just as she was influencing me.

J: Initially, my focus in university was to be a professional singer. When I met and married Tia, I decided family life was the way to go. I shifted my focus into business with my other passion of customizing and building cars. I worked my way up to Service Director for large automotive groups in Texas.

WHERE WERE YOU TEACHING BEFORE HANGZHOU? AND WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO MOVE TO CHINA?

T: I taught 20 years of upper school theatre in Texas when Jeremy and I realized that it was time for a change. I interviewed and got hired to teach theatre in Beijing for 2 years before moving to Hangzhou.

J: When we moved to China, I left the automotive business and decided to get back into the arts through voice acting in Beijing. I began a side career of voiceovers for international cartoons, video games, and movies.

WHAT WERE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF LIFE IN CHINA? WHAT DID YOUR CHILDREN THINK OF IT?

T: Well, we arrived in 2020; the peak of COVID. It was pretty intimidating, to say the least. We literally stepped from the plane and went straight into quarantine. After those 2 weeks though, we finally got to explore the culture of Beijing. I think the food was our favorite. There were so many new foods to try.

We have 3 kids. Our oldest daughter, Brianna, stayed in America as she was entering her second year of university in Texas. Our younger two kids were set to start grades 11 and 12.

Our youngest daughter, Alyssa, was excited for the adventure. She accelerated in the DP world and went on to study at Temple University in Tokyo. Our middle child, our son, Dylan, was upset at us for making him leave for his last year of school. That quickly changed as international school life opened his eyes to the world he never knew existed. He adapted quickly and thoroughly enjoyed his time in China. He's now addicted to travel and will do so at any chance he has.

DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST DAY AT HIS? WHAT WAS YOUR IMPRESSION OF THE STUDENTS?

T: My first day of HIS was exciting because it was everyone's first day at the new campus. Teachers and students alike were trying to find their way around. As far as the students go, I just loved them from the beginning. I was blessed with the role of the G10 GLL so I was able to get to know the current group of G12's pretty well early on.

I think my favorite memory from that year was directing *The Addams Family*. Watching all those kids sing and dance on a brand-new stage was exciting for everyone. Lots of nervous jitters ending with a theater full of applause and standing ovations. It made my heart just swell with pride.

J: *I volunteered my technical skills for the drama department for the first year. I met dozens of talented young actors and prospective technicians. They inspired me to want more. Last year, I was given the opportunity to also be a cover teacher. This allowed me to meet hundreds of inspiring*

students. Next year, I will be the full-time Theater Manager for the theater at HIS. I'm hoping to build a strong technical team of students in the upcoming years.

WITH TIA AS UPPER SCHOOL DRAMA TEACHER AND JEREMY AS THEATER MANAGER, YOU ARE VERY MUCH THE POWERHOUSE PERFORMING ARTS COUPLE AT HIS. HOW DID YOU END UP WORKING TOGETHER IN THIS FIELD?

T: Raising three kids in the theatre allowed Jeremy to come in to help work on productions in the evenings. His assistance in the behind-the-scenes world freed me up to focus more on the directing and producing of the many plays and musicals over our 20 years in Texas.

J: *She made me do it.*

HOW DO YOU THINK YOU BALANCE AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER WITH THIS WORK?

T: I couldn't do this work without him. He supported me when I had my first teaching gig 25 years ago, and he still supports me today. He's my biggest cheerleader for all my productions. He's also the best chef for late night rehearsals; I always come home to the most amazing meals. I'm so excited to finally be working side-by-side with him here at HIS.

J: *We're a team. We've been a team for 27 years, and I enjoy seeing her productions succeed.*

YOU'VE BEEN INVOLVED IN MANY PRODUCTIONS NOW AT HIS, OBVIOUSLY YOU ARE PROUD OF THEM ALL, BUT ARE THERE ANY THAT PARTICULARLY STAND OUT FOR SPECIAL REASONS?

T: I am extremely proud of all the stage productions at HIS, it really is hard to choose a favorite. It's like choosing a favorite child. I think I still stand by *The Addams Family* being most dear to my heart because it was our first musical on the new campus. I'm also proud that several of those students involved with that production were

still, most recently, involved in *We Will Rock You* this year. The kids not only act and build the productions together, but they also build life-long skills and make life-long friends.

J: *I would say that all the productions have been a bit of a challenge, but We Will Rock You was the most electrifying show we've done. It was very fulfilling to see so many actors and student technicians help create such an amazing show. I saw so much growth this year in many of the students and can't wait to see what next year brings.*

WE REALIZE YOU CAN'T REVEAL TOO MUCH, BUT ANY HINTS FOR READERS ABOUT NEXT YEAR'S SHOWS?

T: No real hints, but you're gonna wanna get up and dance again!

FOR ANY STUDENTS INTERESTED IN JOINING THE CAST OR CREW FOR NEXT YEAR, WHY SHOULD THEY JOIN? WHAT SKILLS DO THEY LEARN?

T and J: Theatre is a place to find your niche... on stage or behind the scenes. It's a place to try something you've never done before, to be a real risk-taker. You learn to act, to sing, to dance, to tell stories, to discover characters, to project your voice, to work as an ensemble, and to build your confidence.

It's also a place to learn life skills such as management, directing, creating, sewing, constructing, lighting, sound effects, publicity, and much more. There's literally a place for everyone.

LASTLY, FOR YOU TIA, AS A TEACHER AND DIRECTOR, WHAT MAKES THE PERFECT ACTOR?

T: A well rounded actor knows all parts of the stage. Once that actor takes a step back and understands what it takes to create, build, and execute all parts of the production, that's when they truly become the best.

Interview by
SIMON OSTHEIMER
Communications Manager





Wise Words to Live By

DICTATED BY YONGHUI

WRITTEN & TRANSLATED BY YUKO YANAGIMOTO | HIS Parents

My name is Yonghui (永慧) It used to be my Buddhist name and has been my pen name for the past 10 years since I left the monkhood. I just decided to continue using this name because most people who appreciated my artwork knew me in my monk robe, and it was my way to keep a relationship with Buddhism. When I left the temple, I promised to the head master, who tried to stop me, that I would still continue to share and spread the Buddha's wisdom through my calligraphy. Yonghui means: "Be wise forever." Here are some of the calligraphy texts that I have written most:

struggled in making my decisions. I believe that the decisions just came to me, and I accepted them. I saved myself from the pain of trying to make 'smart' decisions. I only waited for the waves in my mind to gradually settle down until I could see what was at the bottom. The answers were there. And I've always been happy and content with my decisions.



日日是好日

EACH DAY IS A GOOD DAY

I have written these words for a few very top athletes. One was for snooker player Ronnie O'Sullivan, who picked this particular phrase himself among many others. Another one was for swimmer Andrii Govorov, upon his visit to HIS, and he said he perfectly understood its deeper meaning besides its simple wish for a good day. The deeper interpretation, as we talked together, would be: it is up to us to make each day good and worthwhile. We should not focus on emotional ups and downs because each day is equal, not good or bad. It's true in life and sports, and it may be the required mindset for top athletes in order to keep challenging and winning.

順其自然

LET NATURE TAKE ITS COURSE

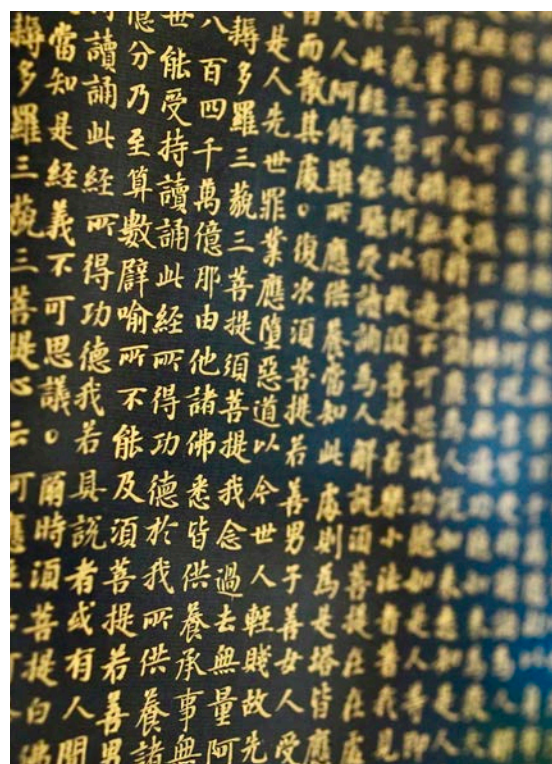
In my life, I have made some hard and unordinary decisions. Becoming a Buddhist monk is one; leaving was more complicated. Making a living as a calligraphy artist is another one. Marrying a foreigner and having an international family was something that I had not thought of before. But when I think about them now, I never

金剛經

THE DIAMOND SUTRA

I specialize in writing small regular script (小楷) In calligraphy, it is a style which focuses on the precision of each character, where the beginning and the end of every stroke are clearly shown. And I write, most of the time, Buddhist sutras, just like ancient monks used to do (before printing technology, it was the only way to spread and pass down the words of the Buddha). Even during my monkhood, I was never keen on meditating or chanting, which is what they do in temples every day, but I wrote the sutras instead, day and night.

The Diamond Sutra is the one I have written most. It takes about 20 days to write its approximately 5,200 characters. I could write faster, but I keep my pace.





While writing, I do not think of the meaning of the whole text, or even one paragraph, but rather I focus on each character, each stroke, and each instant where the brush is landing on or leaving the paper. During this process, all meanings of words disappear. After I finish and proofread quietly out loud, meanings start to come back. It's an unusual experience. But it has made me realize that the meanings do not exist in the text itself but in the person who reads it.

如出發必到達

IF YOU DEPART, YOU MUST ARRIVE

Is calligraphy something to read or something to look at? I think it's both. I like both sides of it, so that's how I came up with my 'line' pieces.

When I help other people learn



calligraphy, I recommend them to draw horizontal lines as basic practice. I do it myself from time to time to feel the control of the brush, mind and breathing. It's relaxing, but the slower you go the harder it is. One day, I realized that the lines looked interesting, as they express my state of mind at different moments. So I added some words which came to mind – If you depart, you must arrive. It is a famous quote by Genghis Khan, who is a special historical figure to me as I'm originally from Inner Mongolia.

And I loved the simplicity of the piece. When I look at my line piece, I realize that any complicated character is just made up of a number of strokes, and any stroke is made up of a start and an end. And what drives from the start to the end is the mind. So I look at each line and read my mind.

無事在懷為極樂， 有長可取不虛生

HAVING NO WORRIES IS MOST BLISSFUL; HAVING A TALENT IS MOST BENEFICIAL

What is the philosophy I want to tell my kids most? It's probably this one. But I think they may only realize much later what it means.

The first phrase is what I am every day. I make extra efforts not to carry a lot of things in my mind or in my possession, though many people do the other way around. It is because I believe my calm mind is the only thing worth keeping, and it makes myself, family and friends around happy. It is indeed like a natural spring,

and my responsibility is to keep the water clean and running. And I just feel it is as important as is to live.

What I can say about the second phrase is that, in my life, calligraphy has given me everything. It has used up so much of my time, but it has given me the life I have. And I know that my time was not wasted. As a father, my hope for my kids is that they can find this 'something' for themselves. It's more than a hobby or job, it's more like a source of life that they can breathe in every day and is like a knife that they can sharpen their wisdom with.

今日無事

TODAY IS ANOTHER ORDINARY DAY

This is my all-time hit. For many years, I had this simple piece displayed together with over 100 other pieces in a peaceful resort hotel, and every single guest and visitor used to take a picture in front of this particular one. Even Mr. Ban Ki-Moon was not an exception – he stopped in front of it for a few minutes, first quietly reading and then sharing his thoughts to his other guests. It was during a private visit after his retirement as the Secretary-General of the United Nations. He said he loves the feeling of peace it brings.

In reality, every day brings new challenges. When a day is ordinary, I think it's a gift. Not only because I feel peace but also because I feel freedom of mind. And this is my inspiration to write and design new pieces, both for myself and for people who appreciate them.

What's in Your School Bag?

Interviews by
GABBY HE
PR & Marketing Officer



Yangyang, G4

CCAs: Table Tennis, Flag Football, Jewelry Fun
Outside of School: Practices piano every day
Homework Routine: 1 hour

"It's going to be my birthday soon!"



Chloe, G5

CCAs: I don't have CCAs, but I practice swimming at school twice a week. My PB is 36 seconds for 50-meter freestyle.
Outside of School: I spend several hours reading my favorite books, such as Warriors, Spy School, and I play outdoors.
Homework Routine: 10 minutes each day

"I'm looking forward to attending the Grade 5 promotion ceremony, and I'm excited to spend a day with the 6th graders"



Bamboo, G1

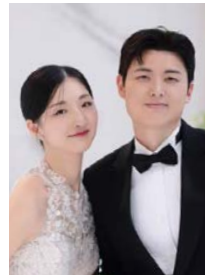
CCAs: Taekwondo, Mini Tennis
Homework Routine: I'm not sure, but I also do level reading and math, in addition to the homework from school.

"That's my new Chinese dictionary!"



How a Bowl of Beef Noodles Led to Long Distance Love

SUKI CHIU & SHANE SHIN | Class of 2016



WE'D LOVE TO START BY HEARING ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY AT HIS.

Our journey at HIS began in middle school. I transferred in during the second semester of 8th grade, while Shane had already been there for a semester. We ended up in the same class and continued our time together all the way through to graduation.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE MEMORIES FROM HIS?

Some of our favorite memories from HIS are definitely the unforgettable China trips, where each grade would travel to a different destination in China as a class.

One trip that stands out was to Inner Mongolia. It was far from your typical tourist experience—we had an amazing time riding camels across vast landscapes and staying in traditional Mongolian yurts.

Those trips were full of adventure, bonding, and experiences we still look back on fondly.

CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT WHAT HIS MEANS TO YOU?

High school was where I began to understand who I was and who I wanted to become. It wasn't just about academics—it was about friendships, challenges, and moments that shaped my values and confidence. At HIS, I had the freedom to explore, try new things, and learn what I liked or didn't like.

One of the most memorable experiences was doing IB Art in my last two years. I never thought I'd be interested in art, but it opened up



a whole new way of thinking and expressing myself. Even though I didn't major in art at university, that experience gave me the creative perspective I now use in the fashion industry. Without it, I don't think I could do what I do today.

“Before we started dating, I invited Shane to hang out by saying I could make a killer bowl of beef soup noodles. In reality, I had ordered the dish from the store next to our school!”

WHAT ACTIVITIES OR CLUBS WERE YOU INVOLVED IN HERE?

We were involved in very different activities. I wasn't much of a sports person, so I focused on clubs like the Community Outreach Club and Student Council. Shane, on the other hand, was all about sports—he played on all the major teams like basketball, soccer, and volleyball. We did share a love for community outreach and student council, so we got to work together on those projects.

HOW DID YOU FIRST MEET, WHAT DREW YOU TO EACH OTHER?

Looking back, we were pretty different in terms of personalities. I was outgoing and loud, while Shane was more on the shy



and quiet side. A lot of our friends didn't think we'd end up together because of our differences!

We didn't cross paths much early on, but we started getting to know each other during our junior year. We were both preparing for the ACT, and since it wasn't offered in mainland China at the time, we had to travel to Taiwan and Hong Kong to take the test. We spent those trips studying, traveling, and navigating the university application process together. Looking back, those trips played a huge role in strengthening our bond.

ARE THERE ANY DISTINCT MEMORIES FROM THOSE EARLY DATING YEARS?

Before we started dating, I invited Shane to hang out by saying I could make a killer bowl of beef soup noodles. In reality, I had ordered the dish from the store next to our school!

When Shane arrived, the delivery came right after, and in my nervousness, I quickly transferred everything into a bowl, hoping it looked homemade.

A couple of years later, when we were already dating, he told me he missed the noodles I'd "made" for him. I had to admit the truth—it was all takeout! It still makes us laugh every time we think about it.

WHERE DID YOU GO AFTER GRADUATION?

After high school, Shane and I went to different universities. Shane majored in economics at the University of Minnesota, and I went to New York University to study hospitality management.

Shane had always been strong in math—he was one of only two students in our class who took Math HL in the IB program. As for me, I've always had a passion for the travel industry, which led me to hospitality. Even though we chose different paths, we both followed what we loved, and it worked out for us.

HOW DO YOU THINK YOUR RELATIONSHIP HAS GROWN AND EVOLVED SINCE HIGH SCHOOL?

Our relationship began toward the end of our senior year. We knew it would be long-distance since we were going off to different universities.

A lot of our friends didn't think we'd make it, especially with the distance, but we made it work. It wasn't easy—we took trips whenever we could during long weekends and holidays.

After two years of college, Shane went into the military for a year and a half. I remember in January 2020, we started



talking about getting married on May 20th, 2020 (the day of my university graduation). The date is special in Chinese—it means "I love you."

But then COVID hit, and everything changed. We ended up getting legally married on June 8th, 2020, which was also the day of our high school graduation (June 8th, 2016). We finally had our wedding ceremony on June 8th, 2024.

WE HEAR A LOT OF YOUR CLASSMATES WERE ABLE TO ATTEND LAST YEAR?

The wedding was incredibly special—many of our friends from high school flew in from Hong Kong, Singapore, the UK, and the US to join us.

It was such a meaningful reunion, and we were so grateful to have our friends there to celebrate with us. It was a beautiful day full of love and friendship.

WHAT ARE YOU BOTH UP TO THESE DAYS?

These days, we're focused on running our pet brand, HiYeboo, which we started in 2020. Since then, we've both been fully involved in growing it.

The brand has since expanded into the Korean and Japanese markets, and we now have over 500 offline stores carrying our products internationally, including in two premium department stores.

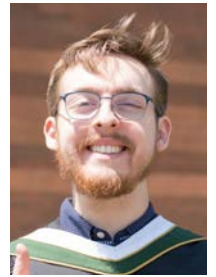
We also host pop-up stores in Japan and Korea every season. It's been incredible to see our business grow, and we're excited for what's ahead.

Interview by
NATALIA STUBBS
PR & Communications Specialist

FOLLOW HI YEBOO
Website: hi-yebboo.com
Instagram: [hi_yebboo_official](https://www.instagram.com/hi_yebboo_official)

Meet Our Real-life Rockstar Archaeologist Alum Isaac Bender

ISAAC BENDER | Class of 2014



An archeologist by day and rock guitarist by night, Isaac Bender is an HIS alum who can truly do it all! You might remember him as the drummer of HIS's coolest rock band—Gummistiefel. Today, Isaac has just finished his master's degree at Western University in archaeology, all while continuing to make rock music.

Isaac is also one of our many HIS alumni making a real change in the world. Working alongside local First Nations communities, his master's thesis contributed to national efforts to refine field methods to help inform the field operations of community-led investigations into missing children at Residential Schools in Canada. He is a stellar example of the kind of caring and open-minded students we are proud to have at HIS.

WHEN DID YOU ATTEND HIS?

I attended HIS from 2010 to 2014, grades 9 to 12.

CAN YOU SHARE MORE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES AND JOURNEY AT HIS?

Coming from smalltown Canada, the culture shock was immediate. I still remember having a bit of a meltdown shortly after arriving in China when I ordered what I was hoping would be a pepperoni pizza, only to have it arrive topped with corn and seafood. That moment aside, the HIS community was incredibly welcoming and made the transition, and ultimately the four years we spent there, so easy and enjoyable.

From all of the PAFA events, to the fact that everyone knew everyone, to

Mr Weinberg's attempts to trick us into thinking we like writing mathematical proofs; HIS played a huge role in shaping who I am today, and I wouldn't trade that experience for anything.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE MEMORIES FROM YOUR TIME AT HIS?

My favourite memories were when Jakob, Julius, Maddie, Maiti, Kathryn, and I would take over Ms Lapwing, Mr Grice and Mrs Hah's music room to practice with what I believe is probably the coolest rock band to ever come out of HIS—Gummistiefel.

Playing at Fanny's Pub in Binjiang with many teachers and parents in the crowd really cemented how supportive the HIS community was. That experience helped shape my passion for performing music.



Live At Fanny's Pub
Friday December 13th
12月13号星期五
21:30 to 1:00

Students get 12% discount with student card
优惠：凭学生证享受0.8折优惠

300 Dongxin Ave. Binjiang Hangzhou China
中国杭州滨江东信大道300号

Gummistiefel
IRISH PUB

ALUMNI

I also vividly remember one China Trip to Tai Shan in Shandong province, where we spent all day hiking up countless, steep, stone stairs, only to be forced awake at 4:30am the next morning by our teachers to see a beautiful mountain-top sunrise. I didn't really appreciate it at the time, but in hindsight I am so glad they made us do that.

WHAT KIND OF CCAS (CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES) DID YOU JOIN AT HIS?

I played varsity soccer and volleyball, but I would say I was most heavily involved in Model United Nations.

MUN played a pretty significant role in shaping my views on global and local politics and how I engage with social issues, policy and justice. I became a much more confident public speaker and presenter, which is crucial in academia.

I also spent a lot of time playing music with my bandmates in Gummistiefel, which ultimately led us to victory at the Booshkabaash Battle of the Bands in Shanghai!

AFTER GRADUATING, WHAT UNIVERSITY AND PROGRAMS DID YOU ATTEND?

I returned to Canada after graduating from HIS, and completed a bachelor's degree in geography and anthropology with a focus on geomatics and archaeology at Nipissing University.

After five years of working in commercial archaeology, I went back to school and I'm now just finishing a master's degree at Western University.

My master's thesis evaluates different geophysical and remote sensing techniques to see how effectively they identify unmarked graves at a test site in southwestern Ontario. The site was chosen because it has similar soil conditions to two nearby former Indian Residential Schools.



The goal is to determine which methods are most effective in this environment, so Indigenous communities conducting their own surveys at nearby Residential Schools can make informed decisions about what tools are most likely to produce the clearest results.

Residential Schools were government-funded boarding schools where Indigenous children were forcibly taken from their families to assimilate them into colonial European culture. Many children never

returned home.

DID YOU FEEL WELL PREPARED FOR UNIVERSITY?

My time at HIS definitely helped prepare me for the academic demands of university. I graduated under the AP program, before HIS became an IB school, and I'd say that experience gave me a strong foundation to succeed. That said, nothing quite prepares you for the reality of living on your own for the first time.

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY UP TO?

Currently I work as a “Remote Sensing Specialist” for a small archaeology consulting firm called TMHC Inc. in London, Ontario. I use geophysics and remote sensing to help inventory cemeteries and find unmarked graves, identify and protect archaeological sites, and map heritage buildings and infrastructure. Basically, I get paid to play around with a bunch of cool toys and advance archaeological practice in Ontario.

ANY CAREER HIGHLIGHTS SO FAR?

To be honest, many days at work are career highlights for me. A large part of the archaeological record in Canada is the material culture of Indigenous people, who have lived on the same land that I now live on (in Ontario), for over 11,000 years.

On the regular, I find artifacts that have been buried for literally hundreds to thousands of years, that help us better understand how we all got here. Finding sites where people camped, hunted, laughed, and lived so long ago, and being able to share that feeling with the descendant communities who often work alongside archaeology crews, makes my job both exciting and rewarding.

Archaeology, to many, is often seen as a niche study of old pots and arrowheads. While that's partly true, it's also a powerful tool for social justice, by reaffirming historical narratives and supporting modern claims to land and identity.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

Well, I am getting married to my amazing fiancée Megan in September 2025, and that's definitely the biggest thing on the horizon. Beyond that, I have a lot of stuff I'd like to do.

I have an idea for a book that I will probably spend too much time and money publishing despite the topic only

being of interest to about six people. I would like to ride my motorcycle across Canada and jump into all three oceans.

I also really want to come back and see how Hangzhou has changed in the last 11 years since I graduated. The real problem is I don't seem to have enough time.

LOOKING BACK ON YOUR TIME AT HIS, WHAT VALUES OR LESSONS DO YOU STILL CARRY WITH YOU TODAY?

One of the most important lessons I took from HIS is to recognize the shared humanity in everyone. In an increasingly divided world, it's easy to focus on what separates us, but HIS taught me that we have more in common than we like to think.

Being surrounded by so much cultural and linguistic diversity obviously directly influenced my career choice; but it also helped me develop the critical thinking and empathy needed to challenge assumptions about what is considered “normal.”

I didn't understand why anyone would put corn and seafood on a pizza when I first

arrived in China, but being around people from so many different backgrounds helped me become more open-minded and compassionate. That mindset continues to guide me, both personally and professionally.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO CURRENT HIS STUDENTS?

Don't take yourself too seriously. It is easy to be distracted by your academic or career goals and focus only on making it happen. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Laugh at yourself. Learn at your own pace. The opportunities you think you want, might not necessarily be the ones meant for you.

Also, be kind to people and they will be kind to you. This goes for your friends, colleagues, teachers, professors, TAs, managers at a job, everyone. Try to make a connection with the people in your life. You never know who might someday open a door for you at a time when you least expect it.

Interview by
NATALIA STUBBS
PR & Communications Specialist



Alumni: Letters of Advice

This year, our Class of 2025 graduates received letters from our beloved HIS Alumni, filled with university advice and life wisdom. The goal of this program is to connect alumni who live in the same area as our new graduates or studied similar programs, with our new graduates. Our alumni did a wonderful job, so we decided to share some of their advice here.



AMELIA TI
Class of 2013

Studied at New York University, Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics
Studied at Russell Sage College, Master of Science in Applied Nutrition

"Follow your dreams, take risks, and do what makes you happy because life is short and you don't want to have any regrets 10 or 20 years later in life. Put yourself out there, go to that event, and join clubs with like-minded people.

"Next, I believe that everything happens for a reason even though we may not know the reason at the time - reflect, learn, and move on. Keep working on and improving yourself. Don't hold grudges. Try not to stress - it's the worst thing for your physical and mental health.

"Lastly, don't forget your parents - as you get older, they're only getting older too; visit and talk to them often!"



TANAY BAPNA
Class of 2018

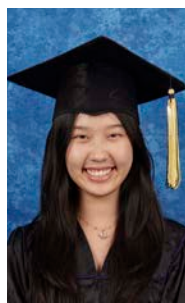
Studied at Monash University, Bachelor of Medical Science and Doctor of Medicine

"My tips for transitioning to studying abroad are that it will always be difficult at the start, which was my experience when I moved to a new

country and didn't know anyone.

"My advice is to put yourself out there as much as you can and meet new people until you find your group of people. My closest friends now are those I met in the first few months when I moved here.

"In general, I'd say at university it is helpful to stay organised, find out how you learn best, and make sure you find time to do the things outside of academics that you enjoy."



GRACE TAN
Class of 2021

Just graduated from New York University, Bachelor of Science in Media, Culture, and Communication

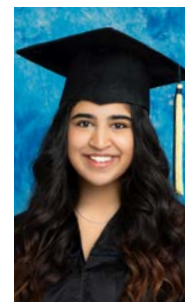
"My main piece of advice, especially for students going to university in the United States, is to get involved in clubs as quickly as possible. Many clubs and organizations prefer to recruit underclassmen. This is especially true for pre-professional organizations specializing in investment banking and consulting.

"These clubs are very helpful in providing connections for future jobs. Therefore, if you are even slightly interested in these industries, be sure to apply to these clubs early.

"Also, look into programs like BCG Advance, Goldman Sachs Future Insights, AmEx Discovery and so on. All

programs that aim to provide insights and connections to younger students. If you're interested in journalism and marketing, look into the Emma Bowen Foundation, T. Howard Foundation and the Multicultural Advertising Internship program. L'Oreal also has case competitions, which, if you win, can provide a direct pipeline into internships and jobs.

"Be sure to refine your interview skills since many clubs (even fun ones) require interviews; they mostly ask behavioral questions."



AANVI CHADHA
Class of 2022

Soon graduating from Queen Mary University London, LLB Law Program

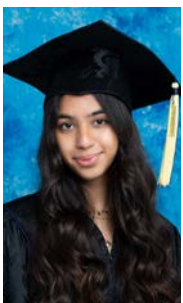
"First of all, I just want to say how proud you should be of yourselves. Leaving home to study in a whole new country is no small thing.

"When I first arrived in the UK, everything felt new. The buildings, the weather, the way people spoke, even the way classes were taught. But what I want to tell you is this: it's okay to feel a little out of place at first. Everyone does, whether they admit it or not. Moving across the world is a massive adjustment, and university runs differently from high school. You're expected to read a lot on your own, to think critically, and to challenge ideas rather than just

memorise them. So please, take your first year gently. Give yourself space to learn, to ask questions, and to adapt. Don't put pressure on yourself to have it all figured out from the start because nobody does and give yourself the time to adjust academically.

"There will be days when you miss home, when all you want is your favourite meal or the comfort of a familiar hug. On those days, remind yourself that you're building something you once only dreamed of: a life that is entirely your own. And to make those moments easier, seek out small pieces of home wherever you are. When I'm feeling homesick, I'll order my favourite Chinese food or call an old high school friend, just to feel that sense of familiarity, that reminder that I'm still connected to where I came from.

"Finally, be proud of where you've come from, and even more proud of the journey you're about to begin. This is your chance to grow, explore, and create something amazing. And for every bit as nervous as you are, be excited for the future you are going to create."



RIVA AGGARWAL
Class of 2022

Studying at the University of Hong Kong, Bachelor of Science in Marketing Analytics and Technology

"Something I really would have appreciated hearing while I was graduating is everything really does work out for a reason. If you're feeling a bit lost and nervous right now, just know that in the end it will all make sense.

"For Hong Kong specifically, I would say that always remember to do things at your own speed. The city and everyone



can be extremely career oriented and fast paced, but what I've learned is one of the best things that prevent you from getting caught up in it is taking a break. Enjoy what Hong Kong has to offer, it's one of the only places where you can go from being at the beach to city centre in less than an hour.

"University-wise, be prepared for lots of group projects – communication and time management will be key. If you have the chance, I really recommend joining a hall or residence. I'm currently at St. John's, and being part of the sports and cultural teams has given me countless opportunities to make friends, stay active, and feel connected. It's a great way to build a second family away from home.

"Wishing you all the best as you begin your journey at university – you've got this!"



IRIS HUANG
Class of 2025

Studying at the Laguna College of Art and Design, Entertainment Design Major

"To the graduating seniors, as you get ready for this new chapter of your life, here's some friendly advice from a fellow art school student!

"First, as I'm sure you already know, the educational structure of an art school is quite different from your average university. Studio classes will make up most of your schedule and these will be long and time consuming with all their projects so be ready to commit to long hours of creative work!

"Art schools are small, but they do have unique events and tons of chances for you to get to know your fellow students. Go to all the school events you can and make time with your friends to hangout outside of school too.

"Lastly, learn to take critique and provide constructive criticism. You're going to art school to learn and in most cases, you will not be the best in the room. A big part of the art industry is knowing that you can always improve and learn from others to up your skills and that means you need to know how to take critiques on your work as well as critique other people's work in a constructive manner.

"Reach out to others to get a second set of eyes on your creative work and don't be afraid to make changes! I know for a fact that other students and even professors are willing to take time out of their day to help you and your work be better."

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CLASS OF 2025!



We are happy to celebrate the following university acceptances



LOWER SCHOOL



Young Ninjas Ready to Take on All Obstacles

RACHEL FORD | Lower School Physical and Health Education Teacher
DAVID HATTON | Grade 2 Teacher and Grade Level Leader

Through the transdisciplinary theme 'How We Express Ourselves', Grade 2 students explore various artistic forms used to communicate beliefs, ideas, and emotions. While students often associate expression with art and music, they deepen their understanding by recognizing how movement and body language also convey meaning.

As part of our ongoing journey in Physical, Social, and Personal Education (PSPE), Grade 2 students have been participating in an exhilarating Ninja Training Camp this year. This program focuses on developing aesthetic movement skills, including ground movements, jumping, rolling, and balancing, all while exploring the theme of how we express ourselves.

Throughout this camp, students have been challenged to use their skills to overcome physical obstacles, allowing

them to build confidence and enhance their physical abilities. The process of navigating these obstacles has been a fantastic way for our young ninjas to demonstrate their growth and resilience with their courageous attitudes.

By integrating with PSPE classes, teachers created learning engagements with the movement skills students were developing, using physical theatre as a lens for exploration.

Students worked collaboratively to analyze how physical performances such as Charlie Chaplin, shadow theatre performers, and the Thousand Hand Bodhisattva dance engaged audiences through facial expressions and body language. This led to the creation of movement sequences incorporating ground movements, rolling, and balancing to express emotions.

We are thrilled to announce that all students successfully completed their Ninja Training Camp Graduation event. This special occasion provided our students the opportunity to showcase their impressive physical development and reflect on their journey through the obstacle course.

During the graduation, students demonstrated their newfound skills and shared their personal reflections on the experience. We believe this is a wonderful way for students to celebrate their achievements and recognize the hard work they have put into mastering the challenges.

Students reflected on how their PSPE skills supported their ability to express themselves in their Unit of Inquiry. These meaningful connections foster transdisciplinary learning, helping students see how skills transfer across disciplines and into the world beyond the classroom.



STUDENT REFLECTIONS

"I got better at performing different balances by myself and with my classmates" *Yicheng, 2B*

"I enjoyed Ninja Training Camp because I could choose which balances, jumps and movements to use for the obstacle course" *Chris, 2B*

"I got better at balancing during Ninja Training Camp" *Kiara, 2C*

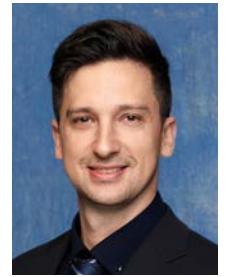
"I enjoyed that there were many obstacles and challenges" *Samuel, 2C*

"I think Ninja Training Camp gave me new skills to practice" *Jackie, 2C*



Walking the Path Together: In Our First Year at HIS

JASON SHAPIRO | Grade 1 Teacher



Starting my journey as a new Grade 1 teacher at Hangzhou International School has been a remarkable experience filled with growth, both for my students and myself.

Transitioning to a new school environment is never easy, and I have witnessed firsthand how my young learners—many of whom had moved up from Kindergarten this year—faced this challenge with courage and resilience.

Just as their surroundings were unfamiliar and required adaptation, I too had to navigate changes, learn new routines, and find my footing within this supportive community.

What stood out most to me was not just the academic progress my students made, but their social and emotional development.

Moving to a new school can be overwhelming for little ones—new faces, new rules, and a new rhythm to their day. Yet, they embraced these changes with

“Their willingness to face uncertainty inspired me deeply. It reminded me that growth often comes through perseverance, not perfection, and that the heart of education lies in nurturing the whole child, not just their test scores”

bravery, tackling every new concept with a growth mindset.

Their willingness to face uncertainty inspired me deeply. It reminded me that growth often comes through perseverance, not perfection, and that the heart of education lies in nurturing the whole child, not just their test scores.

This journey was not one I took alone. I learned so much from my colleagues, whose support and shared wisdom became a vital part of my growth. Whether it was a quick conversation in the hallway or exchanging strategies for the classroom, their encouragement helped me become a better teacher.

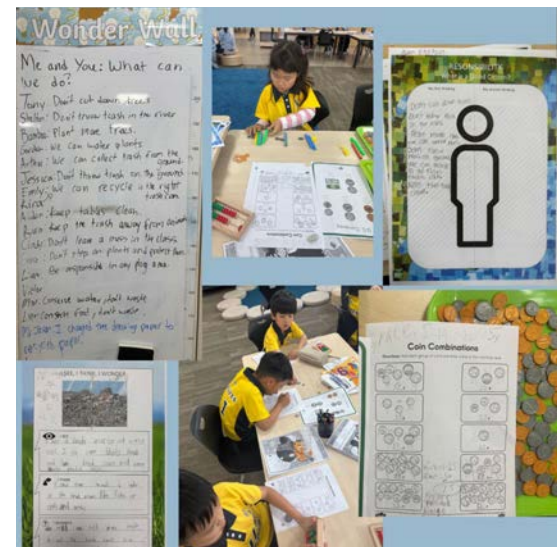
Like my students, I learned to accept feedback graciously, focusing on the message rather than the messenger, which allowed me to improve continuously—even on the toughest days. The path we walked together was sometimes challenging, but as the light at the end of the tunnel

grew brighter, it became clear how much we had all grown. The children and I moved through adversity side by side, emerging stronger, more principled, and more confident than before.

Some lessons can only be truly understood by living through them rather than avoiding them, and I applaud my students for their bravery in facing every new challenge. Their determination motivated me to meet every aspect of teaching with the same courage and open mind.

In the end, my first year at HIS has been about more than just teaching and learning—it has been about resilience, collaboration, and shared growth. I am proud of my students' achievements, especially in how they have developed socially and emotionally.

Their growth mindset did not just shape their learning; it shaped mine. Together, we have created a foundation that will support us in all the years to come.





Embracing a Collaborative Approach to Teaching

VANESSA KEARNS | Grade 2 Teacher
DAVID HATTON | Grade 2 Teacher

This year, we have been working on being more intentional with our collaborative approach to teaching and learning. Our two classes, 2A and 2B, have worked as one team to support students in a shared learning journey. Rather than working in isolation, teachers have moved fluidly between classrooms, collaborating and co-teaching to meet the needs of all learners.

This approach has been rooted in trust, flexibility, and a shared commitment to student growth. Teachers have supported each other during lessons, stepping in to scaffold small groups, facilitate inquiry, or guide reflection.

At times, we've swapped students between classes to allow for targeted instruction or peer learning opportunities, encouraging them to move freely between our rooms. By playing to each teacher's strengths, we've created a dynamic and responsive environment that puts learners at the center.

One of the most rewarding parts of this partnership has been the way it has supported teacher development. We model new strategies for one another, test out ideas in real time, and reflect on what works. This kind of ongoing, embedded professional learning has allowed us to improve our practice in meaningful ways.

From refining how we support questioning in inquiry, to experimenting with different approaches to small group work or student-led reflection, we've been able to grow together and build on each other's knowledge.

The benefits for students have been clear. They experience a wider range of teaching styles and strategies, become comfortable learning from different adults, and engage with a broader learning community. Our flexible groupings help us tailor instruction to students' needs and interests, whether we're building understanding of landforms or exploring the components of a healthy lifestyle.



Students also learn from each other, sharing ideas and knowledge to inspire and build one another up. Most importantly, they have thrived in classrooms where the atmosphere is cooperative, caring, and consistent.

This model of teaching has supported not only academic development, but also social and emotional wellbeing. Students see their teachers working together, valuing each other's contributions, and solving problems as a team. They learn that learning is a shared experience, and that different people bring different strengths to the process.

As we reflect on the year, we're proud of what this collaboration has made possible. The partnership between 2A and 2B has helped shape a learning culture built on curiosity, trust, and continuous growth for students and teachers alike.



HIS Votes for Panda Book Awards for the First Time

INGRID MAJOOS | Lower School Librarian



WHAT ARE THE PANDA BOOK AWARDS?

One of the first book orders I received, after joining Hangzhou International School as the Lower School Librarian in 2021, had books in it with this special sticker that said, "Panda Book Awards". I had not heard of the award before, but I started to investigate and find out more about it.

It turns out that the Panda Book Awards was started by the International School of Beijing, and is a "a multilingual literary award celebrating books from across the world with a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice and belonging". I make sure to purchase the Panda Book Awards books each year because it is such a great collection to have in the library.

This year has been very special though because HIS registered, not only to purchase the books, but to be part of the final voting, which decides which book nominee would ultimately receive the golden Panda Book Award! More than 60 schools and hundreds of students, staff and families around China took part in the voting this year (almost 13,000 votes were submitted)!

HOW ARE THE BOOKS NOMINATED?

The award is run by the International School of Beijing, and they recruit volunteer librarians who work at schools across China, to help with the nominations. There are four categories of books: Early Years Nominees, Younger Nominees, Middle Nominees – Novel, and Middle Nominees – Graphic Novel.

There is a selection process that occurs to ensure that the nominee books are well balanced and represent not only Asian authors but also the Asian community alongside important social and cultural topics. I am very lucky to have been part of the committee to help select the Younger Nominee books for the 2025-2026 school year (get ready for next semester because the books are amazing)!

HOW ARE THE PANDA BOOKS PROMOTED AT SCHOOL?

All the Panda Book Award nominee books can be checked out directly from the Lower School Library. There are displays around the library and a dedicated Panda Book Award display, which also includes past Panda Book Award nominees and winners. I also did Read Alouds, which I posted on Moments 365 for students to enjoy at home with their families.

Students, staff, and families who visit the Lower School Library are also able to listen to the book nominees in the library. There was also family communication in the weekly newsletter and on Moments 365 about the different books and how voting would be taking place.

HOW DOES VOTING HAPPEN?

For this year, during semester 2, we voted during class time so that everyone in class had a chance to vote for their favorite book. Great news, the book that the HIS students voted for the most, "Out of a Jar" by Deborah Marcero, is also the book that other schools loved, and it won the



Golden Panda Book Award! Have a look at the poster to see the other nominees and winners for 2024-2025.

HOW CAN WE PARTICIPATE IN THE NEXT PANDA BOOK AWARDS FOR 2025-2026?

Students will be introduced to the new nominees during semester 1 and then the voting will take place during the beginning of semester 2. More information to follow in the weekly newsletters and through family communications as the new semester starts.

I look forward to another great year ahead of amazing books and voting for our favorite stories. Happy reading!





Arts Collaboration Leads to Creative Inspiration

TARA TIDBURY | Lower School Visual Arts Teacher

The second-ever ACAMIS for the Arts Conference held in Tianjin from 12-13 April was a remarkable gathering of educators and artists dedicated to enhancing arts education.

As a visual art presenter, I had the privilege to share my insights on nurturing student agency and cultural expression at HIS through collaborative art education, while also highlighting the theme of creativity that permeated the event.

This year's conference theme, "Create," resonated deeply throughout the sessions. It emphasized the importance of fostering creativity in education, and encouraged participants to explore innovative approaches to teaching.

I was excited to integrate some of the creative skills I have already implemented in my lessons at HIS, demonstrating how these practices can empower students. In my session titled "Nurturing Agency and Cultural Expression through Collaborative Art Education," I focused on the following key areas:

I. EMPOWERING STUDENT AGENCY

I discussed the importance of nurturing student autonomy during the creative process, encouraging young artists to express their cultural identities through various art mediums. By providing opportunities for choice and self-expression, we can cultivate a sense of ownership over their artistic journeys. This

is linked directly to the culture unit "I am", fully integrated within Grade 4.

2. COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES IN UNITS OF INQUIRY (UOI)

I showcased how we have successfully implemented collaborative practices in our UOI. The partnership between homeroom and specialist teachers is essential in enhancing artistic skills and deepening students' understanding of cultural concepts. This teamwork allows us to integrate elements of art across the curriculum, making learning more holistic.

3. CREATIVE SKILLS IMPLEMENTATION

During my presentation, I highlighted specific creative skills I have integrated into my lessons, such as:

Pottery: Engaging students in hands-on experiences to explore textures and forms.

Mask-Making: Encouraging students to express cultural narratives through design.

Painting: Facilitating various techniques to enhance creative expression.

Attendees left with practical strategies, including:

- Collaboration Techniques: Methods to enhance cooperation between homeroom and specialist educators
- Empowering Student Tools: Techniques for encouraging students to express their cultural identities
- Culturally Responsive Frameworks: Insights into Zaretta Hammond's strategies for creating inclusive classrooms
- Art and Language Integration: Approaches to blend art with language analysis
- Actionable Ideas: Ready-to-use activities to boost student engagement and creativity

One of the most rewarding aspects of the conference was the opportunity to connect with fellow educators and artists from throughout China. Engaging in meaningful discussions about our shared passion for art education allowed me to exchange ideas and gain new perspectives that will enhance my teaching practice at HIS.

As I left the conference, I felt more empowered than ever to continue fostering creativity and cultural expression in my students. The collaborative spirit and innovative ideas shared during the sessions inspired me to develop my approach to art education further, ensuring that every student feels valued and motivated to share their artistic and cultural narratives.

I am excited to implement strategies from the conference in the classroom and look forward to continuing this journey with my colleagues and students.



Rhythm and Creativity Merge at ACAMIS Arts Conference

FARINA LIM | Lower School Music Teacher



For the second year running, the ACAMIS Arts Conference—hosted this year at Tianjin International School—became a vibrant celebration of creative teaching. As both presenter and participant, I reveled in the joyful collision of music, movement, and technology, witnessing firsthand how arts education continues to reinvent itself.



LEARNING THROUGH MOVEMENT AND JAZZ

The conference sparked fresh inspiration for my classroom. The 'Stories and Jazz Using Orff workshop reignited my belief in improvisation's magic—how a simple pentatonic scale can become an entire story when paired with student imagination. The 'Movement Theatre' session transformed how I view physicality in performance, showing how a single gesture can convey more than minutes of explanation. And through active engagement strategies, I rediscovered that the most powerful learning often happens when students are doing rather than just listening. These experiences all shared one truth: creativity flourishes when we engage the whole child—mind, body, and spirit.

PRESENTING SOUND DESIGN: WHERE TECH MEETS IMAGINATION

Leading my "Sound Design for Storytelling" workshop, I watched fellow educators become sound alchemists. Using just iMovie and GarageBand, teachers turned ordinary objects into extraordinary

narratives: crumpled paper became crackling fire, vocal whispers morphed into ghostly winds, and—in my favorite moment—a pianist's experimental scratching across strings created the perfect thunderstorm effect. The room buzzed with revelation as participants realized: transformative soundscapes require not expensive gear, but creative ears.

THE HEART OF ACAMIS: CREATIVITY

What stays with me most are the conversations—exchanging ideas with colleagues across schools, debating the role of technology in music education, and laughing over the creative chaos of our sound experiments. This conference reaffirmed that arts educators are alchemists, turning simple tools into golden learning moments.

Already, I'm plotting next year's return. Because in a world where the arts are often sidelined, ACAMIS reminds us why they're essential: they teach students to listen, to feel, and to imagine beyond the obvious.





Looking Back on the MYP Personal Project

AKIRA SUGATA | Upper School Social Studies Teacher

On Wednesday afternoon, April 23rd, the Grade 10 students welcomed the school community to their Personal Project Exhibitions.

The Middle Years Programme's Personal Project is a significant commitment for 10th graders, showcasing the cumulative 'Approaches to Learning' (ATL) skills they have honed throughout their schooling. This project is well integrated with their main interests, which is explored through their learning goals and learning products.

This year, Mr Vincent and I were very honored and proud to lead the MYP Personal Project alongside Liam O'Shea, the MYP Coordinator. Together, we supported the students through their report-writing process as well as their exhibition to bring it to life. The Grade 10 cohort, consisting of 50 students, is the largest cohort to have held the exhibition by far, with project themes ranging from fire-extinguishing robots to traditional Chinese calligraphy.

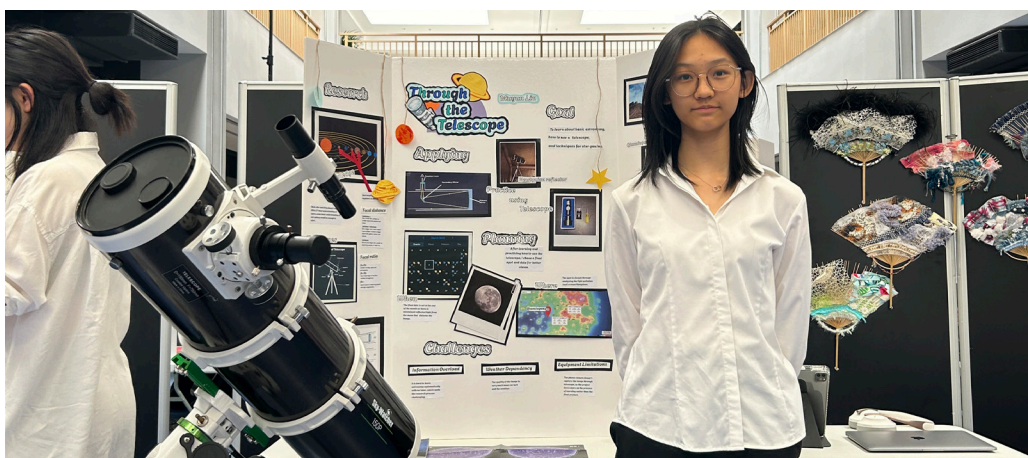
The MYP personal project had two main objectives. The first was the application of their ATL skills and integrating them into the project process itself. The entire process requires the use of ATL skills, with students beginning by researching their specific fields of interest.

They then evaluate and synthesize different perspectives on their research using critical thinking skills and transfer this into a creative process through the

creation of their learning product. Their communication skills in language were refined through the report writing process and through proactive communication with their supervisors via meetings and email.

“My biggest takeaway from the Personal Project was time management and planning. Sticking to success criteria and schedules you created yourself allows yourself to be managed in a way that is suitable to you and boundaries that can be comfortable for you”
-Jedidiah Y

“[People who walked by my product were] astonished by my artwork and I just feel like I've actually created something wonderful”
-Sylvie H



The second objective was for the students to explore their interests and work on a project that aligned with their passion—something they may not always be able to do at school.

For some, it was the start of developing a new hobby or gaining new insights into their future as they considered career options. For others, it was about polishing a skill they had been learning for years, such as robot creation, or transforming a simple daily hobby into a fully-fledged project, such as caring for their pet fish.

“I enjoyed the process of creating my product, as it was a completely new experience for me. [It was fun to] try doing something that you have never done before, but you’re truly passionate about”
-Joey L

“[My Project] helped me discover a possible path, sparking my own interest of education in the field of science”
-Anna L

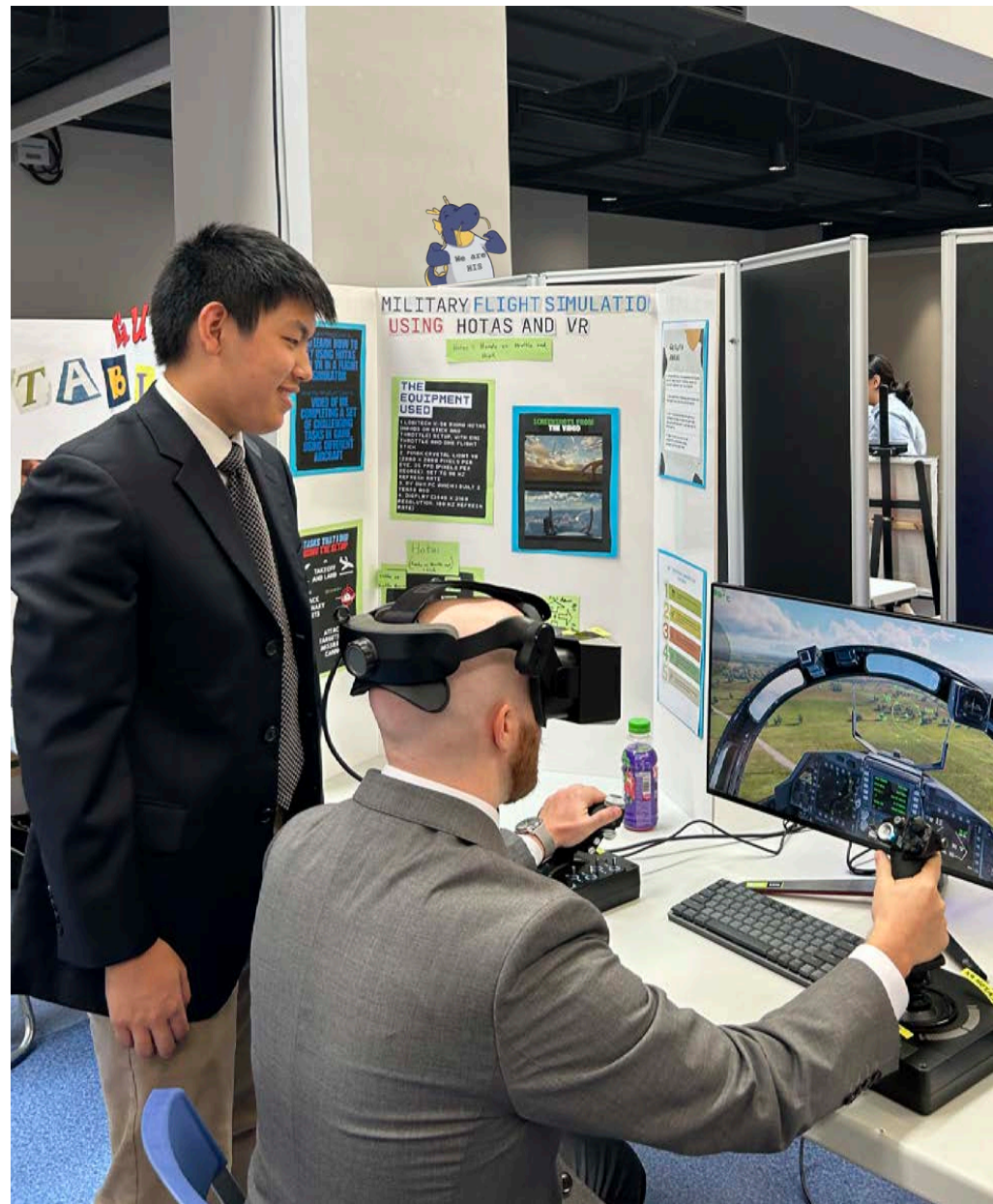
This entire process would not have been possible without our colleagues who volunteered as supervisors. Their role was vital in supporting students to submit their reports on time and providing advice on how they could move forward with their learning.

Additionally, we would like to thank the marketing team for creating posters and taking photographs, the IT team for setting up the technology and being flexible with last-minute requests, and Operations, who helped us set up the tables and chairs

for the exhibition. A huge thank you to everyone involved.

We look forward to next year’s Personal Project Exhibition with an even larger cohort of around 60 students. It is an integral event that brings the community together across grade levels.

As the current sophomores move into the DP program, we hope they will apply what they learned through the Personal Project to their next two years of schooling. Never forget the feeling of success and the pride you felt in all your hard work.





Student Council: Local Actions & Global Impact

ADELINE XIE | STUCO Coordinator
LEWIS BRAITHWAITE | STUCO Coordinator

The primary role of Student Council (STUCO) advisors is to actively guide and empower student leaders in planning events, making decisions, and representing their peers.

This year, the HIS STUCO officers have demonstrated leadership skills by consulting and collaborating with the wider student body, recognising that listening is as crucial as instructing when in a position of leadership.

One of the most remarkable and meaningful aspects of being an advisor is witnessing the growth and development of the students across the course of the year.

We're sure that the STUCO officers and reps will agree that they have made significant strides forward since our first event of the year, the Back-to-School Bingo Night. We don't doubt that this progress will be reflected in the success of the final STUCO events of the year.

Whether hosting events or volunteering in school-wide activities, our STUCO officers and reps have shown their passion and willingness to strive for positive change. It has been our privilege to oversee STUCO this year and we are confident that these students will continue to grow as individuals and as leaders.





HALLOWEEN HAUNTED HOUSE



BINGO NIGHT



A look back at the year from the STUCO Officers

ANGEL LI, CANDY ZOU, JOEY LEE, RHEMA HONG & TONYA LIU

This year, the STUCO at HIS has been dedicated to bringing the HIS community closer together by blending fun activities with meaningful and caring engagement.

One highlight in Semester 2 was our Pi Day celebration, which saw enthusiastic participation from both students and teachers in a friendly math competition. And, while the event was good fun, it also reflected our commitment to HIS's mission of fostering community appreciation. We are excited to keep this momentum going and look forward to hosting more lively events that gives everyone a chance to get involved and enjoy school life together.

Looking beyond our HIS community, one of our most significant achievements was raising over RMB10,000 in collaboration with Mr Plotz for "Wheels to Africa", an organisation dedicated to providing children in need with bicycles, so they can better access education and healthcare. This initiative highlights our desire to have a meaningful international impact that extends beyond our local community.

In these past months, STUCO officers have been proactive in scheduling more meetings with the STUCO representatives from each grade level to ensure wider-participation and greater accountability.

By working together, we can continue to build an inclusive and vibrant school where every student feels empowered. After all, it is our shared sense of community and international mindedness that unites us and drives us forward as we strive to make a positive impact both within—and beyond—our school.



Exploring Science Through the Lenses of the 5E Model

ANNA GALUSZKA | Upper School Science Teacher

This year, Grade 8 students engaged in a dynamic science class using the 5E model—Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate—designed to promote inquiry-based learning and knowledge construction through experience and reflection.

Each unit began with an Engage activity that sparked curiosity and drew on prior knowledge. For instance, when studying macromolecules in food, students brought in their favorite snacks, predicted their nutritional content, and then tested for macromolecules in the lab—without yet knowing how it linked to the unit's core concepts. After this experience, they interacted with and reflected upon the unit's statement of inquiry and tried to build connections to the lab experiment they'd just conducted.

Next came the Explore stage. In small groups, students conducted research, with each member focusing on a specific macromolecule, later combining their findings into a presentation. This led naturally into the Explain phase, where



the teacher clarified scientific principles and addressed any misconceptions from the student-led research.

In the Elaborate phase, students connected the human need for nutrients to how plants produce their own through photosynthesis. This transition helped deepen understanding and seamlessly introduced next subtopic of the unit. Once again, learning began with a new Engage task—collecting leaves for lab experiments “Imprint of the leaf”—continuing the cycle of inquiry.

Finally, the Evaluate stage included brief written assessments or reflective tasks, giving students and the teacher a checkpoint for learning progress helping refine the content if necessary and adjust according to students'

needs. Evaluation helped students to reflect upon their own learning techniques and make the necessary steps to improve.

Throughout the year, this model has empowered students to build knowledge actively, supported by timely teacher guidance and clear explanation. It has encouraged curiosity, independence, and a deeper appreciation of science as a connected and evolving discipline.

Ultimately, the “5 Es” helped to develop critical thinking, research, collaboration, and communication skills, which are essential approaches to learning (ATLs) and part of the 21st-century skills that prepare students for success in a modern and interconnected world.



It's Time to Shine with the MYP Clock Project

JOSH DAVIS | Upper School Design Teacher



Grade 9 students in MYP4 Design brought their creative skills to members of the HIS community with a recent opportunity to use their design skills beyond the classroom.

Invitations were sent out to all HIS teaching and support staff for those who would be interested in a clock for their teaching or office space. Students then had a full list of clients to work for, and it was time to begin the design process.

They conducted research, wrote a design brief, created numerous ideas and chose the direction that best suited their client's needs based on their design input.

To make the clocks they created files for the thin plywood to be cut and marked using bitmap (image) files and/or vector (draw/cut) files. Some students also incorporated 3D printing elements to ensure their product met their brief.

After applying the finishing touches and installing the analog clock mechanism they were presented to their clients. A total of 64 student-made clocks are now adorning the walls of HIS, from the Early Years to the Diploma Program learning spaces and administrative offices. Watch out for them as you make your way around campus!





Monologues in Monochrome: Grade 10 Explores Noir

RHIANNON JOHNSON | Upper School Visual Arts and Film Teacher

Grade 10 MYP Film and Drama students recently collaborated to produce noir-inspired short films. Drama students performed adapted monologues, while Film students used black-and-white cinematography and dramatic lighting to emphasize mood and tension.

The unit fostered cross-subject creativity, and the opportunity to develop ATL skills such as communication and organization. Students were open-minded inquirers, keen to learn from teammates from different disciplines.

"In the process of directing actors, I learned that you have to know your vision and have a plan for your shots and lighting," said Tonya Liu, Film student, "but you don't want to limit the actor's freedom of expression when they are performing."

"I also learned at the Shanghai Vancouver Film School workshop held at HIS earlier this year that the most important thing is to make your actors trust you, so I made sure to practice empathy and let my actor take the lead with the character."

Drama student Luupeeta Dhawan said,

"I was able to collaborate with my director with ideas for the scenes and the costume! I understood what was needed of me, but I like being able to add my own ideas and creativity to the experience and final outcome."

"Only by communicating and exchanging understandings of the characters could we make a better film," said Film student Adele Chen, "Every exchange brought different inspiration."

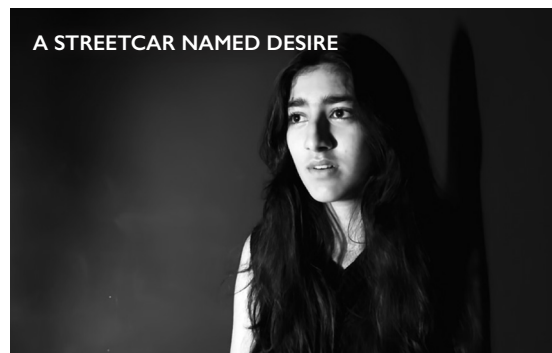
"The most rewarding part was when we collaborated and worked together. Everyone was friendly to each other. My director also showed a unique understanding of the character and film that enhanced my performance," recalled Drama student Joy Zuo.

This shared unit between MYP Film and Drama not only deepened students' understanding of performance and visual storytelling but also exemplified the power of interdisciplinary learning. It was an opportunity for students to enhance their ability to connect, collaborate, and create with empathy—hallmarks of an IB learner.

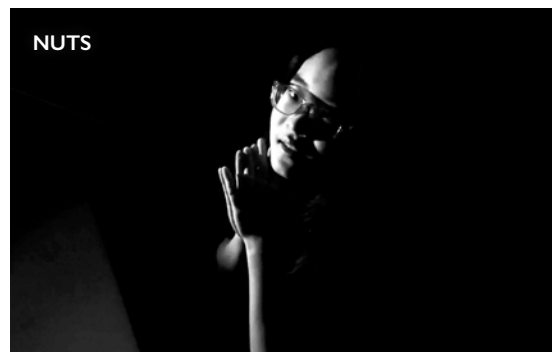
THE CARE AND FEEDING OF BABY BIRDS



A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE



NUTS



LIKE DREAMING, BACKWARDS



A Singing Journey: Joining 200 Voices at AMIS Honor Choir

EMER CORDOBA | Upper School Music Teacher



The theme of this Summer Issue of Dragon News is "Reaching Our Destination," and for the first time in our school's history, 9 students from Middle School recently had the joy of joining the AMIS Asian Junior Honor Choir & Middle School Honor Mixed Choir Festival. Our department has long aspired to achieve this goal, and we are thrilled to have finally made it a reality.

This is a special year for the organizer, The Association for Music in International Schools (AMIS), pronounced like the French word for "friend," as it celebrates its 50th Festival Season with over 15 different events worldwide. That is half a century of music festivals connecting students from many international schools across multiple generations!

Our singing dragons traveled to Shanghai American School (SAS), Pudong, where they met for the first time with fellow musicians before embarking on a process of polishing the music they had learned prior to the trip. A combined high school choir from Shanghai American School Pudong and Puxi joined the opening ceremony, where experienced singers showcased their talents on stage and inspired younger singers. It was great to see and hear Allison Wang, a former HIS dragon, among the singers on stage!

Having prepared 11 different pieces of choral music for mixed voices during the 10 weeks prior to the event, all Honor Choir students joined in combined rehearsals directed by Mr. Tom Ford. Mr. Ford is an accomplished choral music educator with over 30 years of experience and currently

teaches High School Choir at Concordia International School Shanghai. During the trip, Mr. Emer Cordoba led sectional rehearsals with the Honor Choir low voices and Ms. Chanmi Joo chaperoned with multiple and invaluable support roles.

Seventh grader Kris Z. Said: "I've enjoyed this choir festival because I met students from other schools in Asia, and I have a new friend from BASIS Nanjing. I think my singing skills are better and I also made new memories."

"AMIS gives talented young musicians a chance to connect with others who love making music in a big group," said Brandon Miller, Upper School Choir Teacher at the host school SAS. Collaborating in a large ensemble with singers that have never met before represents an opportunity for our students to grow as musicians and members of a team with lofty goals.

Eighth grader Daisy Z. shared, "For this festival, I improved my musical skills singing with other voices and my social skills because I made connections with other choir students. I look forward to crossing paths with new people in future music festivals in different places."

Seventh grader Agostino D. said: "I think that many rehearsals can be really tiring but at the end is so satisfying to see everyone cheering at you. And it's fun because you can sing and travel with friends and get to know students from the other schools." Eighth grader Marco D. said "Although we had endured standing for several hours a day rehearsing, I ultimately enjoyed myself during



the process and took pleasure in interacting with other singers at the concert."

Beyond the music, students enjoyed social activities such as visiting Shanghai Disney Town, an outdoors movie with BBQ, and dinner at Florentia Village, creating memories that went beyond the stage.

Seventh grader Eason L. was chosen among other outstanding candidates to sing a beautiful solo. Eason recalled: "I wanted to audition for this solo because I liked the theme of the song about journey and friendship. I feel very honored to have been selected as a soloist with this honor choir."

As 200 voices filled the theater during the final concert, the spirit of collaboration and creativity was evident. The concert was not only about listening to music, but also about connecting with the messages embedded within each song. In the end, the hearts of parents, friends, and members of the community who had gathered to celebrate the growth of the students and share the joy of their musical accomplishments also joined the hearts of singers on stage; all hearts are beating together as one.



From Lanes to Legacy: HIS Aquatics Charts the Future

NATALIO LIARES IV | Aquatics Coordinator

As the final school bell rang and students dove into summer, HIS Aquatics closed a landmark year with celebration, pride, and a vision for the future. Our theme, "Reaching Our Destination," captures the essence of a year that blended competitive successes, personal milestones, and new horizons for aquatic sport at HIS.

The season was launched with the Shanghai Swim League's four rounds and championships. Our Gold Dragons lit up every pool they entered—securing over 170 medals, 20+ new school records, and hundreds of personal bests. At Round 3, HIS made history by hosting our first-ever SSL meet, a triumph of organization, spirit, and community support.

A key highlight in October was the HISAC Swim Meet, where our Dragon swimmers claimed the title of overall champions, bringing home an impressive total of 71 medals. The team's dedication and hard work truly shone through as they secured an exceptional collection of hardware, demonstrating the remarkable strength of our swimmers.

In November, the 3rd Zhejiang Hangzhou Age Group International Swimming Invitational held at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Center Aquatics Arena was a thrilling event for all involved.

Over two action-packed days, HIS swimmers delivered outstanding performances, contributing to the school's success as they finished 6th overall out of



75 teams, including a significant number of overseas teams.

With over 1,600 athletes participating, HIS Dragon swimmers stood out, demonstrating their best effort throughout the competition. It was an excellent opportunity to highlight their skills and compete at an international level.

In December, the ACAMIS Swimming Championships (Junior & Senior) brought prestige and fierce competition to campus.

HIS Dragon swimmers made their mark with a combined 23 school records, 125 PBs, and even one ACAMIS Senior swim record. These meets were not just about medals—they reflected the athletes' resilience, preparation, and Dragon pride.

The ACAMIS Senior Swimming Championships was a milestone for HIS, as we hosted our very first ACAMIS swimming competition. The event was nothing short of spectacular, showcasing the incredible talent of 29 schools from across the region.





Just a few days later, we continued our tradition with the HIS Swim Team Aquathlon. Swimmers-turned-multisport-athletes tackled this run-swim-run format event with courage and excitement. It was a fantastic introduction to triathlon, which we intend to add to our co-curricular program next year—marking a bold expansion of HIS Aquatics into the multisport arena.

As we reflect, we also look forward. Our destination was never a finish line, but a launchpad. With new programs and deeper engagement ahead, HIS Aquatics is ready to dive into its next great chapter.

Go HIS Dragons—
today, tomorrow, always.



Adding to the excitement, we had the privilege of welcoming a special guest speaker, Andrii Govorov, the world record holder in the 50m butterfly. His presence added a unique touch of inspiration and expertise to the event, making it even more memorable for all swimmers and spectators alike.

The year also saw us celebrating the festive spirit with HIS Santa Splash, marking the end of Semester I. The event gave our swimmers the chance to showcase their skills and brought the community together to spread holiday cheer. Swimmers, families, and staff came together for a fun and lively meet, with festive and holiday spirit filling the air, making it a perfect way to wrap up the semester.

The year's penultimate highlight came on 30 May with the HIS Summer Splash. This festive meet saw thrilling races and a beautiful opening performance by our Artistic Swimming team. It was a fitting finale, full of cheers, personal victories, and laughter filling the air as families, coaches, swimmers, and the community celebrated together.



EMPOWERING YOUNG SWIMMERS ON INTERNATIONAL WATER SAFETY DAY

On May 15, we marked International Water Safety Day with a fun and educational event to raise awareness about the importance of water safety. Our young students participated enthusiastically in hands-on activities emphasizing essential safety skills.

The IWSD 2025 event successfully taught students key water safety techniques, including floating, swimming with clothes, safe entries, and exits. After an informative presentation and Q&A session on how to stay safe in pools, open water, and other aquatic settings, the students practiced putting on life jackets. They also worked in teams to master the "H.E.L.P." and "Huddle" positions, two vital survival skills for staying safe in emergencies.

Students demonstrated their newfound knowledge with enthusiasm and a strong sense of teamwork. Our young swimmers not only learned essential techniques but also worked together to spread the importance of water safety in and around the water.

HIGH PERFORMANCE SWIM CLINIC WITH ANDRII GOVOROV

The two-time Olympian and 50m Butterfly World Record holder Andrii Govorov worked closely with HIS Dragon swimmers to elevate their swimming abilities and build their confidence through personalized feedback last November.

The swim clinic attracted swimmers eager to enhance their performance and refine their skills. Our young athletes learned from one of the sport's best coaches, engaging with advanced techniques and training methods designed to improve their strokes and race strategies. The event concluded with a race simulation, providing athletes with the chance to demonstrate their progress and hone their skills in a competitive setting. The event helped participants develop advanced skills and fostered a sense of community among the swimmers. They left with a deeper understanding of their potential and acquired the tools necessary to achieve their goals.

Andrii also shared valuable insights with the ACAMIS Senior swimming athletes during his stay, motivating them to push beyond their limits and continue striving for greatness. His experience, both as a world record holder and as a coach, resonated deeply with all the swimmers, fueling their passion and determination.





It's Been Another Year to Remember in Dragon Sport

FILIPÉ NOGUEIRA | Director of Athletics and Activities

The summer break provides all of us with time to reflect on the year that has been, celebrate the achievements of our student athletes, recharge the batteries, and plan prepare for another big year ahead.

The school year 2024-2025 was another very successful year for our HIS Gold Dragon student athletes, who continued to represent themselves and our school exceptionally well.

VOLLEYBALL

Volleyball started our Athletics calendar, as our Varsity teams again headed to Jeju, South Korea for their invitational tournament. The trip included a cultural day around the island, allowing the student to experience some of the rugged scenery, culture and cuisine. The action on the court was of a very high standard and gave our teams a gauge of the level they would be working towards throughout the season.

Later, ACAMIS success in Hong Kong was within reach of both teams with boys and girls in contention after the round robin games and ultimately placing 2nd and 3rd respectively.

Middle School Volleyball continued to be a positive steppingstone to the Varsity teams, with students from Grades 5-8 honing their fundamentals and enabling multiple teams to compete at both CISSA and HISAC tournaments. The U14 boys were the standout in this age group, with a U14 HISAC Championship to show for their fine season.



BASKETBALL

Varsity Basketball season is always a scheduling challenge, with Winter Break and Spring Festival interrupting preparations and making it difficult for players and coaches alike to develop consistency and build into the season-ending tournaments. Nevertheless, the boys started the season strongly with wins at both Ningbo and HISAC tournaments.

Middle School Basketball saw continued strong numbers in the boys' teams, with the girls starting slowly but building into their season and keen to continue attending practices, even after the end of the season—a great sign!

Four boys' teams attended the CISSA event and played their best basketball of the season, which highlighted the tremendous progress they had made from the very raw skills and understanding they presented with at the season's first practices.



FOOTBALL

Varsity Football season was the highlight this year, with HIS hosting the Green Division ACAMIS Tournament—the first time ACAMIS Football has been to HIS since 2019. Our teams were excited to play in front of our HIS community as the sidelines were packed with students, teachers, and the always loud and partisan parent PAFA Cheer Squad.

With the tournament being held earlier than usual in March, it didn't allow as much preparation as usual for the teams but they both went in full of confidence having already returned from HISAC and Ningbo tournaments as champions.

The overall standard of the ACAMIS tournament was the best I have seen in my seven years at HIS. After three days of hard play, the Boys team retained its ACAMIS Championship, going back-to-back with a convincing 5-0 win in their final, led by Grade 12 student Gaspard. The girls were hampered by injuries as the tournament progressed and fell a little short of their lofty pre-tournament expectations, finishing in 4th place.

Our Middle School football teams are going through a rebuilding phase with the boys having huge numbers at practice, including many Grade 5 and 6 players with plenty of development to come in the next few years. The girl's squad was light on numbers but still put together some solid performances, including victory at HISAC which was the 5th consecutive win at that event dating back to 2020.



SPORTS

TENNIS

For the first time HIS was represented at SISAC in Tennis. Grade 9 student Simão was the sole representative and played a very consistent tournament which saw him come back from a loss in the early days play to progress to the final and win our first ever SISAC Tennis Championship.

The new 2025 ACAMIS Tennis Championships will now include a singles format as well as team event, so we look forward to seeing him and a growing number of HIS tennis players represent us at that event in October.

GOLF

Another individual sport with growing participation at HIS is Golf. This year we sent a team of seven students ranging from Grades 5 to 11 to Hainan for the ACAMIS Championships.

The younger students were thrilled to be playing in their first ever tournament and learnt a lot from the experience, returning to Hangzhou with renewed motivation to continue their development. Of our four Upper School student athletes competing, Grade 6 Mia was the standout with a second-place overall finish with an outstanding two-round score of 150.



TABLE TENNIS

Table Tennis at HIS has some great talent coming through the younger age groups, well-supported by a group of High School students who are helping to mentor the younger athletes.

The ACAMIS format this year reverted to a team event with no individual competition. Four teams of three players went to Beijing and competed against the best international school students in China. Our Boys team of Alan, Micah and Vidor finished in 4th place from 28 teams, and the girls' team of Alice, Wendy and Amy also finished in 4th from 14 teams. Our Middle School players also tasted success at the HISAC tournaments with a swag of medals and podium finishes across all divisions.

BADMINTON

Badminton is among the most popular sports at HIS based on student participation, particularly in Middle School. Our 14 courts are barely enough to meet demand when we have our practices, which is a good problem to have.

While our Middle School players were having fun at HISAC and Shanghai CISSA events, our Varsity Team went to Beijing and confronted an incredibly high standard of play at their ACAMIS event. Our team of eight competed in the teams event and although they didn't make a huge impact on the leaderboard, they certainly enjoyed their time there and learned a lot about what a high standard of badminton looks like.



ULTIMATE FRISBEE

HIS made its debut appearance at ACAMIS Ultimate Frisbee this year, which was another highlight for me. This sport is growing in popularity throughout China and the HIS students have joined in the fun.

Altogether 14 students made their way to Shenyang and despite being relatively new and inexperienced, they made the most of their trip by engaging with students from other schools, learning new techniques and movement patterns, and coming back to Hangzhou with a new passion for this fast-paced sport.

They were deserving recipients of the Spirit of ACAMIS Trophy, which recognizes the team with the best sportsmanship, team ethic and ambassadors for their school. Next year, the Middle School and Varsity seasons will be aligned in the Spring, which will enable both Middle School and High School students to experience the ACAMIS action.



TRACK & FIELD

Our Track and Field athletes continued to run, throw and jump their way to success this year. Over 30 athletes competed at competitions in Nanjing, Shanghai and Beijing during the season and produced results that saw them earn ACAMIS Championship honors in five events in Beijing—Grade 10 Joey in Long Jump and Triple Jump, Grade 10 Ayrad in 110m Hurdles and 400m Hurdles, and Grade 8 Jiyu in Discus.

The team continues to grow in numbers in the Middle School years, and this should bear fruit in coming years as they get more development and competition experience. From next year Track and Field will also be on the HISAC event schedule so the team will have many opportunities locally and nationally to compete.



SPORTS

THANK YOU, COACHES & CHEER SQUAD

As always, our student-athletes could not have had so many amazing experiences this year without the guidance of their coaches.

Altogether 42 faculty members were involved in coaching our teams this year and they continued to provide not just technical and tactical advice, but the role modelling, compassion, and motivation that students need through the ups and downs of an athletics season.

This year we bid farewell to some coaches who have made very significant contributions to our HIS Dragons teams so I'd like to send a very special thank you to them: Coach Hobson will depart as Head Coach of our back-to-back ACAMIS Boys Football Champions, and is a coach who epitomizes the qualities that a youth

coach should have as a role model and mentor to many young men at HIS.

Coach Hendricks has also been very impactful in both our Volleyball and Track and Field programs for the last three years and has brought vast experience to our throwers in the Track team, highlighted by several ACAMIS winners in these events.

Coach Bull-Beddows has not only supported the Track team, but on numerous occasions been recruited to share his knowledge and experience in the field of sports psychology with various Varsity teams as they prepare for the mental challenges of a big tournament.

Shout-out also to Coach Nichola, who has not coached this year to focus on

our Duke of Edinburgh's International Award program but is a two-time ACAMIS Girls Volleyball Championship coach in 2021 and 2023 and much-loved by her team members.

Finally, our HIS Cheer Squad continues to bring passion and support to all our teams across all corners of China and Asia. It is such a bonus for our students to have support of their parents, friends and family members on the sidelines.

Sometimes the cheering serves to motivate, on other occasions it serves to console and comfort our young athletes. Our Cheer Squad has developed a reputation near and far for their passion and spirit and on behalf of all of our athletes and coaches, I thank you for your support.





LOOKING AHEAD TO NEXT SEASON

The year ahead for HIS Athletics will bring more exciting opportunities for our students. HIS has received an invitation to join the SCISAC Conference, which is for Under 15 athletes in the three core sports of Volleyball, Basketball and Football. This conference includes Nanjing International School, YCIS-Chongqing, Xiamen International School, Hong Kong Academy, and TIS Macao.

Our Grade 8 and 9 students will get to have a 3-day residential tournament each year which will be a good progression from Middle School sports to the ACAMIS High School events. The Dragon Cup will also be revived next year, with four-team Division 1 and Division 2 Varsity

tournaments in Volleyball, Basketball, Football and Badminton involving HIS, SCIS-HQ, SCIS-PD and SSIS-SZ.

Golfers will also have more regular events next year with closer ties with the China Junior PGA allowing for students to compete regularly in events through the year, earning points which could qualify them for Junior PGA tournaments in the United States.

And 2025-2026 will also see the introduction of a Sports Advisory Committee at HIS comprising of students and coaches, who will be sharing ideas and implementing new initiatives to improve experiences and opportunities for all student athletes at HIS.

ENJOY THE SUMMER!

I wish all our student athletes a fantastic summer break. Some will no doubt be spending much of it in rest or recreation, and I'm sure some will take the opportunity to participate in specialist sports camps over the holidays to continue to develop in their chosen sports.

I encourage all students keep active and perhaps try out a new activity during the holidays to challenge yourself in a new way and perhaps even discover a new passion.

Congratulations to all our Gold Dragon student athletes this year and I'm looking forward to an even better year ahead in 25-26. GooOOOO Dragons!!!

CONNECT WITH US

DragonNews magazine is published four times a year and is shared with the HIS and wider Hangzhou communities.

If you would like to contribute an article, have a suggestion for content, or want to ask a question, please email:
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STUDENT DRAGON WECHAT STICKER SET by Anna Zhou, Grade 12 student



Scan the QR code to use the stickers!



"Did you find me?" I'm on pages 20, 32, 37, 47, 49



Hangzhou International School

杭州国际学校

CLASS of 2025



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Japan



Ola Almahamid
Türkiye



Parth Bhatia
India



Kari-Amalia Borsdorf
South Africa - Germany



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Once a Dragon, Always a Dragon!



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Founded in 2002, Hangzhou International School was the first international school in Hangzhou and remains the only non-profit, WASC accredited, IB World School in Zhejiang province.

