OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK **FORWARD TOGETHER 2030**

Zurich International School

FORWARD TOGETHER

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A Message from the Director and the Strategy Committee Chair

At Zurich International School, we believe that strategy is not simply a plan—it is a reflection of who we are, what we value, and the future we are intentionally shaping together.

Forward Together 2030 represents a defining moment for our community. It brings clarity to our purpose—to surface and inspire each learner's curiosity, critical thinking, and high expectations for their learning so that they can have a positive impact on their family, their community, and the world. Central to this is our commitment to ensuring that every learner feels known, valued, and able to contribute meaningfully—because we believe a strong sense of belonging is foundational to learning and growth.

It also reflects the collective voice of our community—students, educators, families, and board members—who have helped shape a direction that is both ambitious and deeply grounded in our values of respect, humility, courage, and joy.

At the heart of this framework are two commitments that will anchor every decision we make: to become a hub for exceptional teaching, learning, and leading, and to ensure a cohesive learning journey for every student from early childhood through graduation.

From this foundation, our five strategic priorities guide our focus and our actions. They challenge us to hold high expectations for every learner, invest deeply in our educators, strengthen our language program, build meaningful connections within and beyond our community, and tell our story with clarity and purpose—always with the intention of creating environments where each individual experiences a genuine sense of belonging.

This framework is both an invitation and a responsibility. It calls on all of us to act with intention, to remain aligned in our efforts, and to ensure that the experience of every student reflects the aspirations we have set together.

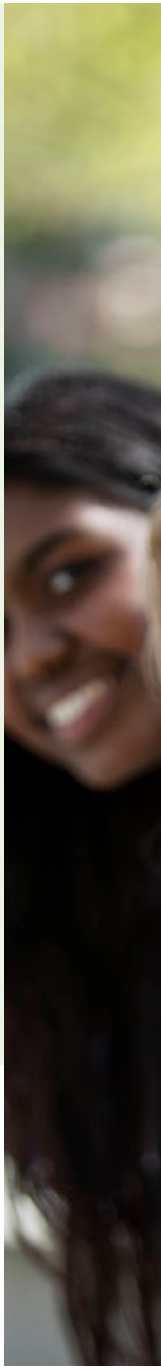
We are excited for the journey ahead—and grateful to be moving forward together.

Elsa Hernández-Donohue
Director

Lola Kinder
Strategy Committee Chair

WHY DO WE EXIST?

We surface and inspire each learner's **curiosity**, **critical thinking**, and high expectations for their learning so that they positively **impact** their family, community, and the world.



WHAT GUIDES OUR ACTIONS?

Our actions are guided by our values.
Our values shape our culture, our classrooms, and our community. These attributes aren't just goals—they are lived and practiced every day in and beyond the classroom.

RESPECT

Respect is the belief that every person—and every perspective—deserves dignity, consideration, and fairness. It is expressed through actions that honor others' rights, boundaries, experiences, and contributions.

HUMILITY

Humility is the belief that we always have more to learn, that others have wisdom too, and that our worth does not depend on being right or being the best. It's about confidence without arrogance, curiosity without ego, and leadership without needing to dominate.

COURAGE

Courage is the willingness to act with integrity, conviction, or vulnerability—even when it's uncomfortable, uncertain, or risky. It's not the absence of fear, but the choice to move forward despite fear—because something else matters more: truth, justice, belonging, growth.

JOY

Joy as a value means choosing to notice, create, and celebrate what is life-giving—even in hard times.

WHAT DO WE DO?

Zurich International School is an inclusive non-profit day school in the Greater Zurich area that delivers comprehensive bilingual and international educational programs for local and foreign national students aged 3 to 18.

HOW WILL WE SUCCEED?

We believe that a strong sense of belonging is the foundation for learning, wellbeing, and contribution. Therefore, we intentionally design for belonging across all aspects of the ZIS experience. And our Strategic Framework: Forward Together 2030 will guide us as we aspire to pursue our five strategic priorities.

WHAT ARE OUR TWO NON-NEGOTIABLES?

Our two Non-Negotiables respond to a clear desire for aspirational excellence and organizational coherence. They will anchor every decision and strategy moving forward. Aspirational excellence and organizational coherence happen best when people feel they belong.

Non-Negotiable 1

A HUB FOR EXCEPTIONAL TEACHING, LEARNING, AND LEADING

We will be a hub for exceptional teaching, learning and leading. We will become known as a place others turn to for inspiration and learning.

Non-Negotiable 2

A COHESIVE EC-12 LEARNING JOURNEY

At ZIS each student will benefit from a clear arc of experience resulting in a powerfully cohesive learning path from EC-12.

WHAT ARE OUR FIVE PRIORITIES?

Our five strategic priorities focus on inspiring every student to achieve their full potential through **high expectations**, **exceptional educators and leaders**, and a strengthened **language program**. We are committed to **being good neighbors** by building meaningful connections within our school and wider communities while clearly communicating our distinctive identity so that the **ZIS story** fosters trust, pride, and a strong sense of belonging.

1
High Expectations

2
Exceptional Educators and Leaders

3
Elevated & Refined Language Program

4
Being Good Neighbors

5
Our Story

1 — High Expectations

We will set high expectations for each of our students, ensuring differentiated experiences stretch and inspire all of them both in and outside the classroom.

"High expectations" will not translate into pressure, but into invitation—an invitation to surface, stretch, explore, and thrive. Differentiation will be more than a strategy; universal learning design will be the ethos of our classrooms. All students, regardless of their learning profile, will experience challenge, relevance, and engagement.

Graduate Profile System
By June 2027, establish a graduate profile system, a structured way of collecting and showcasing student growth and achievement academically and competency-wise (i.e., across various learning contexts in and outside the classroom) that evidences both academic achievement and Portrait of a ZIS Learner competencies for every graduate.

Evidence-Based Growth for Every Learner
By June 2026, implement a system of regular MAP data review cycles (3x/year) with teachers, coupled with targeted instructional strategies.

EC-12 Transferable Skills Pathway (Skills and Competencies)
Develop a clearly articulated path (EC-12) of transferable skills articulating the arc of experience that balances content mastery with the growth of key competencies as evidenced through the Portrait of a ZIS Learner.

Curriculum Pathways Alignment Review (2026)
Conduct a review of EC-12 curriculum pathways to ensure alignment with the new mission and Portrait of a ZIS Learner with a special focus on grade 5–6 transition and 7–10.

Inclusion & Challenge Review (2026)
Engage in an external audit of culture and practices for all students.

Grade 6 Relocation to Wadenswil Campus
Relocate Grade 6 to the Wädenswil campus to ensure developmental alignment and differentiated learning within a cohesive EC-12 arc of experience. This move will provide students at this pivotal stage with the support and stretch they need to thrive.

2 — Exceptional Educators and Leaders

We will increase our investment in exceptional educators and leaders who center their pedagogy in relevant, purposeful, engaging, and relational experiences.

Our exceptional educators and leaders will be flexible enough to respond with agility to the ever-evolving nature of learning while upholding the school's high standards and accountability. At ZIS, teaching will be recognized for its deep relevance and meaningful connection to the world. Project-based learning, interdisciplinary approaches, and authentic assessments will thrive, not as trends but as cornerstones. Our investment in recruiting and growing exceptional educators will pay off as we build one of the most inspiring teaching faculties in Europe.

Professional Learning Investment (2027/28)
Increase PD funding to 2% of the total operating budget by the 2027/28 school year to address specific strategic priorities (e.g.Content and Integrated Language Learning (CLIL), dual-language instruction).

Middle and Senior Leadership Team Development (2027)
Establish a structured professional learning program for SLT that sets shared expectations and accountability for leading teaching and learning. (Most urgent training immediately, systematic training by Spring 2027).

Faculty Growth & Appraisal Framework (SY 2027/28)
Co-design and implement a faculty growth and appraisal framework that balances support with accountability, and provides measurable feedback on teaching aligned to ZIS learning principles.

Hiring, Onboarding & Retention System (2026)
Redesign recruitment, onboarding, and mentoring systems to improve personalization and accountability, ensuring stronger retention of high-quality employees.

Learning Time and Collaboration Audit (2026)
By Spring 2026, complete an audit of learning and collaboration time to maximize student learning and create protected time for teacher collaboration, professional learning, and innovation.

3 — Elevated & Refined Language Program

We will elevate and refine our Language Program to be an example for the rest of Europe, sustaining and building on the success of the Bilingual Pathway.

The bilingual pathway will not only flourish, but its ethos will infuse the entire school. ZIS will be known for preparing globally fluent students: linguistically, culturally, and cognitively. Our language program will model how to honor identity while expanding opportunity, and other schools will come knocking to learn how we did it.

Language as Identity Program (2026)
Introduce a “Language as Identity” program that integrates home/personal languages into school culture by SY 2026/27.

German Language Learning Framework (2029)
Implement a clearly articulated framework for language learning that is consistently communicated, understood, and lived across the school, with a strong focus on communicative competence.

Bilingual Pathway Expansion (2026–29)
Expand the Bilingual Pathway into grades 7–9 and sustain its ethos across the Secondary School by SY 2028/29.

4 — Being Good Neighbors

We will build relationships so that students benefit from and contribute meaningfully to our school, local, and global communities, thus learning the vital importance of being good neighbors.

Our vision for good neighbors—globally and locally—will reshape what it means to be a ZIS graduate. Through social-emotional learning, partnerships, civic learning, civil discourse, and actions, students will not just "give back," but also build alongside. The school will act as a cultural bridge between Switzerland and the world.

Belonging Framework (Ongoing)
Develop and implement a coherent EC-12 approach to belonging, ensuring all students and adults feel seen, valued, and able to contribute meaningfully. Leverage SEL, restorative practices, and inclusive structures to strengthen connection, dignity, and agency.

Partnerships for Learning (2027)
By 2027, establish at least 5 new civic, cultural, entrepreneurial (Villars Institute) or service partnerships (local/global) that expand authentic learning opportunities for students.

Real-World Learning
By 2027, map and strengthen experiential learning opportunities across EC-12, culminating in a published framework and new partnerships ensuring all students access structured real-world learning.

Aligned Co-Curricular Programs
By 2027, align co-/extra-curricular programs to explicitly foster creativity, ethics, entrepreneurship (Villars Institute), and social responsibility.

5 — Our Story

We will communicate a clear, shared understanding of ZIS's distinctive identity so that our story inspires connection, trust, and pride.

The final strategic priority—the story we tell—will come to life when we have a deep sense of identity that radiates clarity and confidence. ZIS will not just have a brand, it will embody one. Families, educators, and community members will be clear about who we are, what we stand for, and why it matters. Our distinctiveness will not be about competition, but about authentic contribution, bringing our mission to life.

Advancing a Culture of Philanthropy (Ongoing)
by shaping parent and community engagement.

Advancement Team Launch (February 2026)
Establish a new Advancement Team, including the appointment of a Chief Advancement Officer, to lead communications, enrollment, philanthropy, and community engagement.

Communication Audit (2026)
By February 2026, complete an external communications audit. Implement recommendation.

Communication Systems & Feedback Loops (2026)
implement new communication channels and feedback loops to ensure community members are engaged, informed, and aligned with school goals. Annual survey results will track improvement.

Parent Engagement Program
By SY 2026/27, launch a differentiated parent engagement program that develops parents as ZIS ambassadors, amplifying the school's reputation through shared positive stories.

One ZIS Parent Experience
Cohesive touchpoints throughout their journey. Develop new survey instruments to measure the felt experience and report annually to the Board.

ZIS as the International School of Choice
By 2028, strengthen ZIS's reputation as the international school of choice by: (a) hosting corporate breakfasts annually, (b) conducting quarterly Kita visits to build early awareness, and (c) articulating and sharing a compelling ZIS arc of learning that differentiates us from the Gymi.

Strategic Facilities Planning
By November 2026, complete a full space audit and develop a Master Facilities Plan that aligns physical environments with the ZIS Mission. Present plan to the Finance Committee and Board by early 2027.

RESPECT.
HUMILITY.
COURAGE.
JOY.