



BERLIN  
METROPOLITAN  
SCHOOL



# Quarterly News

July 2023

Dear BMS Families,

With this last Quarterly Newsletter for the academic year 2023/24, we would like to provide you with an update regarding changes and adaptations in the coming academic year. As an institution, we are committed to ensuring a sustainable level of success for our school. In doing so, we continuously reflect on our practices and procedures and try to improve in all areas of teaching and learning, in our service offers, and in the overall management of the school. Through the international accreditations and authorizations we have been able to secure for BMS over the years, we are held accountable to an ongoing cycle of reflection and development. These cyclical reflection periods are at times tiring but within a long-term perspective, are very rewarding for our institution in terms of agility, aspiration, and institutional quality.

As you already know, we are currently preparing for the re-evaluation by CIS and NEASC, in combination with the re-evaluation of the IB concerning the Primary Years Programme (PYP) in ELC up to Grade 6 and our Diploma Programme (DP) in Grades 11 and 12, which will take place in April 2024. Through the evaluation framework, we are guided to critically examine every single part of our institution. One important aspect is the definition and articulation of our purpose and direction as the foundation for everything else. Are we the institution we wanted to become? How do we define a high-quality education at BMS? What are our values and commitments and what kind of education do we want to deliver? These essential questions are included in the first step of this accreditation process.

We used this opportunity and invited parents, students, alumni, and our BMS Advisory Board to provide feedback on these essential questions and we discussed with them how we can develop further. As a result of this reflection process, we created a new set of guiding statements which will help us to guide our future development according to our strategic priorities.

Our BMS School Motto will remain the same because we recognized in the interviews with our students that they are fully aligned with our school motto and that they still find it appropriate and aspirational.

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BMS School Motto:  
inspire each other – grow together.

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In our discussions, we recognized that we are currently missing the expression of a common vision for our school and gathered ideas and perspectives throughout several interviews and brainstorming sessions. We designed the following statement for our school, which we find is a wonderful aspiration to have and which captures our core belief and daily motivation in a concise way:

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BMS School Vision:  
We believe in the power of education to transform lives.

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We discussed how appropriate our current BMS Mission Statement is and came to the conclusion that we need to adjust the statement because we as an institution have grown out of the current one. We wanted to make it more straight forward and clear because we want to use this statement to guide all our actions in consideration of our mission. Our Mission Statement is a clear commitment to the academic success of our students and a values-based education, which helps our students to develop into eager, positive, and reflective young adults.

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BMS Mission Statement:  
We strive for academic excellence and strength in character  
to contribute to a more informed world and an open-minded society.

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We also examined our community values and our students came up with concrete suggestions on how to adapt those statements to ensure that students will have a better understanding and easier access to those statements which indeed should guide our interactions here at school. Therefore, we adjusted the statement using an active voice instead of posing questions and we also clarified that these values are applicable for all members of our community. We added to our community values the aspect of an “inclusive culture” we want to nurture at BMS one that builds strong ties in our community and creates individual pathways of success for our students. This aspect was especially highlighted by all stakeholder groups as the defining aspect that truly is connected to who we are as school; our students in particular identified it as a unique attribute which makes BMS school culture so special.

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BMS Community Values:  
We are all responsible for creating a safe, positive, respectful, and inclusive learning environment.  
We respect the dignity and equality of all individuals, groups, and cultures in all interactions and act upon any form of prejudice or discrimination in the school community.

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The final part of our BMS Guiding Statements is the expression of our educational philosophy in which we define our understanding of a high-quality education. Our philosophy statements outline the cornerstones of the type of education we offer here at BMS and they drive the development of our academic program and all additional offers from K-12. We will keep our current focus areas of International Mindedness and Global Engagement, Inquiry-Based Teaching and Learning and Character Building. We have added a fourth aspect to our educational philosophy that we identified as a priority for the further development of our program and this is the aspect of Digital Citizenship.

### BMS Educational Philosophy:

- + We encourage each other to consider and negotiate other views and ways of thinking to become responsible and compassionate global citizens.
- + We encourage critical thinking, foster conceptual knowledge, and promote interdisciplinary understanding by using the process of inquiry as the leading pedagogical approach.
- + We invest in character development that offers challenges, choices and opportunities with an emphasis on reflection and adaptation.
- + We foster digital citizenship through a learning environment that cultivates digital literacy, media fluency, and safety & well-being in a digital world.

During the process of reflection and design of our adapted set of guiding statements, we also created an implementation plan to ensure that we create a school-wide understanding of those fundamental aspects. We will implement this action plan with the start of the coming academic year and look forward to many opportunities to engage with these aspects that we find important for our school.

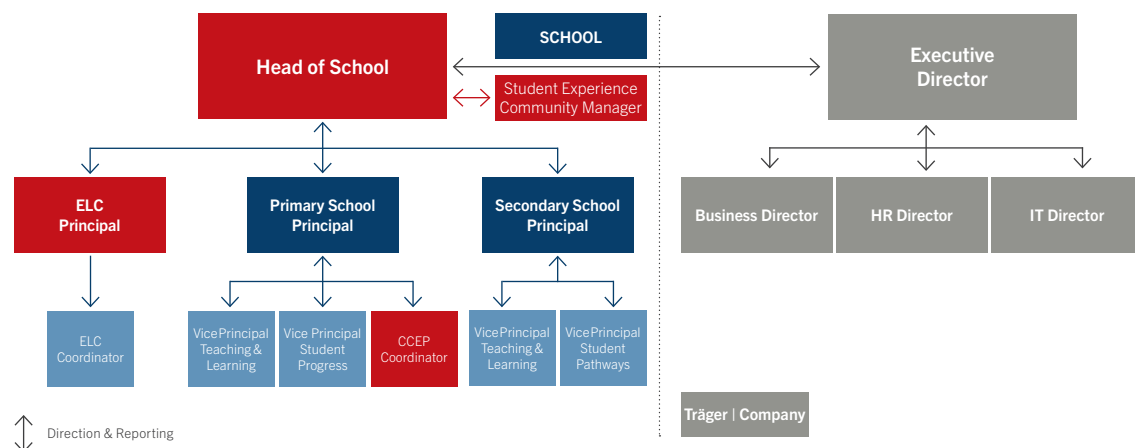
## BMS Governance Structure

We also would like to use this newsletter to inform you about some changes to our governance structure and the further harmonization of our K-12 program. We have informed you that we will establish the new role of Head of School at BMS with the beginning of the new academic year. We think that this is an appropriate next step in our institutional development because with this change, we will separate the school operations and all aspects which are linked to teaching and learning from the responsibilities of the “Träger”. The „Träger“ is per definition not responsible for managing school operations, instead carries the responsibility for the framework in which the school can function. This includes the definition of the purpose and direction of the school, the articulation of the overarching standards and the strategic development plan of the institution. Core responsibilities of the “Träger” are also all legal and financial aspects, facility management, IT development, human resources, admissions, and communications.

With this adaptation of our governance structure, we will follow the typical model of how schools are organized, and we think that this change will create many opportunities for our institution to address our priorities in a sustainable way. Our colleague Sam Hearn, who is currently the Secondary School Principal, will take over the role of the Head of School. Silke Friedrich will remain in the position of Executive Director and will carry the responsibilities of the “Träger”, continuing to oversee the strategic development and overall outlook of BMS. We will use the academic year 2023/24 for the transition and will use this year to hire a successor for Mrs. Hearn in her role as Secondary School Principal.

We also looked into the composition of our leadership team and the organization of our Early Learning Center and the CCEP. With the new academic year, we will implement the ELC Principal role who will be responsible for all academic, organizational, and legal aspects of the ELC Division. The ELC Coordinator who will focus on the organizational aspects. The local, legal requirements and will support the ELC Principal. We are especially proud to have an internal hire who will take over the role of the ELC Principal. Ionna Grizka Soeder will take over the leadership of the ELC as of August 2023. Mr. Grizka Soeder will be supported by Martina Nickel in her role as ELC Coordinator.

### Future Governance Structure



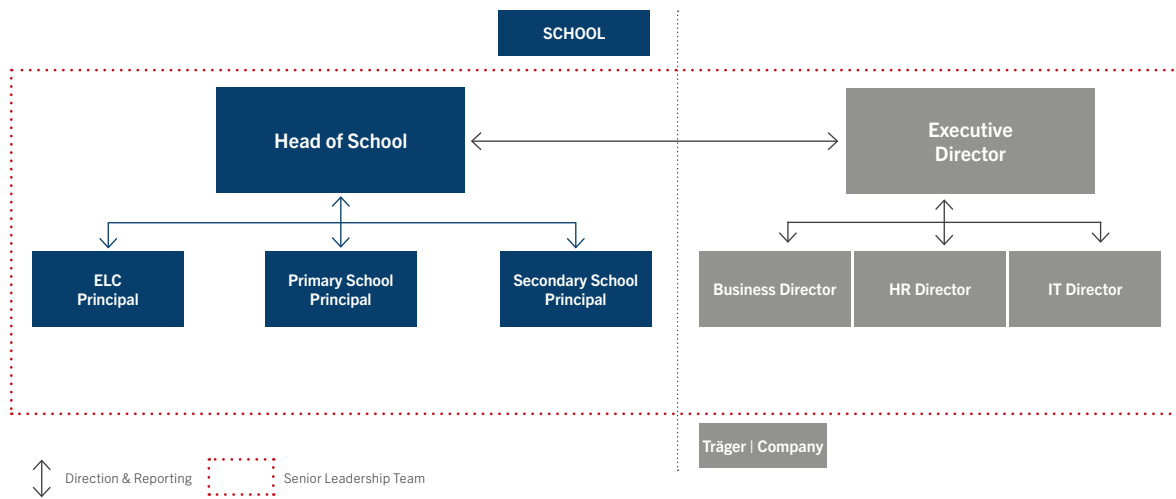
We examined the organization of our CCEP division, in which we combine two essential aspects of our program offers. One aspect is the offer of a after school program and vacation program, which is legally required childcare for students from Grade 1-6. A team of 27 educators is currently providing this program. The other aspect is the design and the administration of an extensive club program, which we designed with a special focus for our Primary students currently and which we run with external experts mainly.

As of August 2023, the team of educators will be organized under the leadership of the Primary School Principal, Ms. Saliha Aslan. Ms. Antje Couball will remain in her position as CCEP coordinator and will be responsible for the organization and administration of our after school and vacation program. With this integration, we expect better alignment and closer collaboration between Primary teaching team and our educators in the support of our students and the service for our families.

With this change in our structure, we will establish a new role for the next academic year. We have hired a Student Experience & Community Manager who will report directly to the Head of School. This new position will take over two core responsibilities: the design and administration of the club program with a greater focus on student experience from 1-12, including student exchange programs, student travel, and so forth. The other core responsibility is the management of all our community activities. This role will act as contact person for our parent association and will build strong ties to our community in order to maximize the opportunities our wonderful community provides. We are proud that we were able to promote another internal candidate to this important position. Ms. Eleri Merkhham will take over this role starting on August 1, 2023.

With these changes, the composition of our Senior Leadership Team will also change:

### Senior Leadership Team



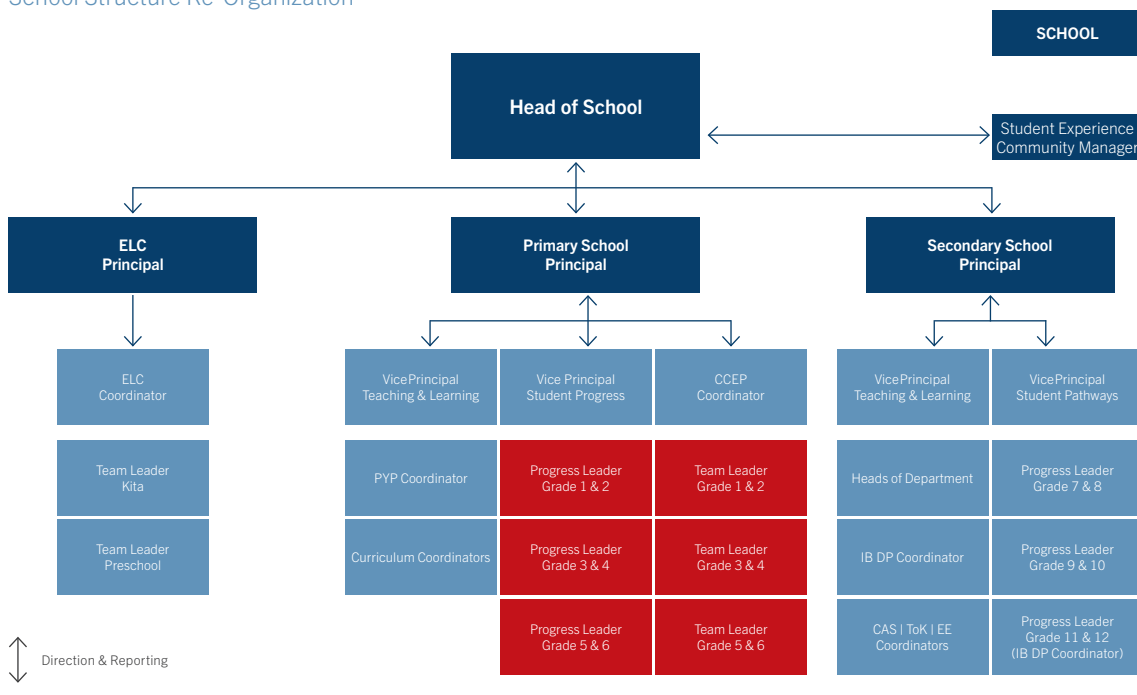
In order to further align our structures from K-12 and to harmonize the approaches between the different divisions, we also adapted the current structure in our Primary School.

We changed the focus of the current role of one of the two Vice Principals positions to student progress and hired a very experienced colleague from YK Pao School, Shanghai which is one of the most prestigious schools in Asia. Mrs. Eva Tücking will join us with a wealth of experience in the area of student support and we trust that she will establish strong systems and a wide-spread understanding on how to enable our students to achieve the best possible learning outcomes in the most sustainable way. We aligned the focus of this role with the job description of the Vice Principal Student Pathways from Secondary School, a role that we established 2 years ago, and which has already created a positive impact on the learning culture at BMS.

With this change, we also revisited our Middle Leadership Positions and decided that we will change the focus of our current Grade-Level Team Leaders and instead will establish Progress Leaders for Grades 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6. These Progress Leaders will work closely with the VP Student Progress and will use the various academic data to analyze how effective our systems are and how we can improve the learning outcomes for our students in the most sustainable way. This change is a further step in achieving a more cohesive alignment with the Secondary School who established the position of Progress Leader successfully two years ago.

Finally, we would like to inform you that we will welcome two highly respected members of our team to leadership positions. Ms. Melissa Lake will take over the role of the VP Teaching and Learning and Mr. Andrew Turner will move into the role of the PYP Coordinator. Both colleagues are long-term members of our team and are highly respected by our colleagues, students, and parents.

## School Structure Re-Organization



These changes and adaptations to our governance structure and also to our set of guiding statements will enable us to address a next level in the further development of our institution and our school program. We are prepared for the new academic year with regards to our structures and especially with regards to our team – there is a strong feeling of excitement and enthusiasm about the coming academic year!

## Graduation | Class of 2023

We would also like to use this opportunity to share with you the graduation photo of the Class of 2023. 59 students graduated from BMS and are ready and prepared to enter various universities here in Germany and abroad. We wish our BMS alumni all the best for their future and hope that they will stay connected with BMS wherever they go.

Graduation is also a time to highlight and celebrate exceptional commitment and engagement from our students and this year's award recipients embody the qualities we seek to instill in all our students. The BMS Academic Excellence Award was given to Milo who was able to show consistent and outstanding academic achievements in all of his DP subjects, demonstrating the highest attributes of academic achievement in his cohort.

Emma and Nastasia were awarded the BMS Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) Award, as both of them demonstrated a deep commitment to their CAS projects this year and acted as true role models in developing and initiating community and service projects in Gr. 11 and 12.

The BMS Spirit Award was given to Ron and Talia, as they were two outstanding examples of the core attributes and values we strive to promote at BMS, demonstrating positive intentions and contributions to their cohort and the school community. Their personal engagement and positive outlook were exceptional!



If you want to stay informed about our community life, please scroll through our website. Here you will find snapshots from the many events over the past weeks and months, including our annual Secondary School Concert, which was once again a resounding success and has solidified itself as a much-loved tradition at our school. We also would like to highlight the Gr. 6 PYP exhibition, where students showcased their learning pathway at BMS with impressive research projects on the topic of sustainability. Further examples of the amazing talents of our students was at our annual Primary School Talent Show hosted by our CCEP Team and of course the Creativity Showcase in which all students from K-12 participated and demonstrated their creative approach not only to Art subjects, but also to Science, Math and Languages as well as the core subjects in the IBDP and the Humanities. It was wonderful to see our community again united in the celebration of learning. Finally, we would like to highlight the celebration of our international community during international day. The commitment from our BMS families and the level of dedication was impressive. The positive, festive mood in our courtyard was truly inspirational!



A busy, successful, and positive academic year comes to an end. We want to thank our families for their trust in us and for the constructive, positive collaboration throughout the year. We truly feel blessed to be able to work with such a dedicated, interesting, and supportive parent community. We also would like to use this opportunity to thank our staff for their commitment to deliver an interesting, enriching, and aspirational program each day and for their personal approach towards our students. Finally, we want to thank our students. They are the greatest asset of BMS, and it is so rewarding to see how our students develop. It is a privilege to witness their curiosity, creativity, and reflection unfold!

We wish you all a great summer and look forward to welcoming our community back on campus for the start of the 2023/24 academic year.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Silke Friedrich'.

Silke Friedrich  
Executive Director