

UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

A Look Back on the Year 2020-2021



Executive Director's Message

Dear UNIS Community,

It is hard to believe that this year is coming to an end. I must admit at times it seemed as if we would never put closure on the 2020-2021 school year. Yet here we are! Each day brought a new challenge and a new look to UNIS as we problem-solved ways to provide our students with the best education possible in the safest of environments. It didn't matter if you were a student, teacher, administrator, staff member, or a parent; this will be a year we will all reflect on for a long time as we say, "we lived through the pandemic of 2020-21."

But there was much more that shaped the year than just the pandemic. We have begun unprecedented work on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion knowing that we have much more to do. Our Board of Trustees, in collaboration with the community, has built a new strategic plan that will set our course for the next five years. There was ongoing construction on the new first-floor Gathering Room which will be complete as we enter school in September.

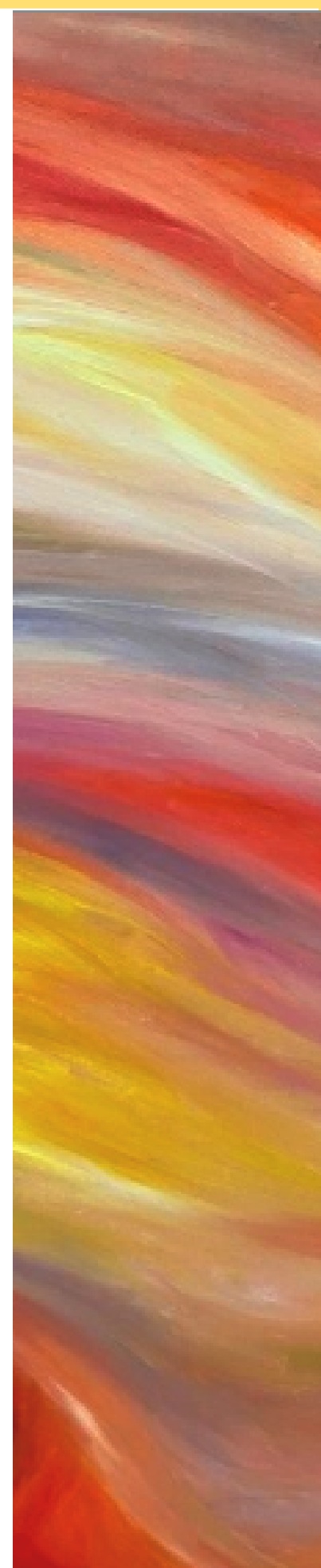
The UNIS-UN student-led conference was like no other, as they explored the impact of a pandemic on the global community. Our students put together a speaker list that included CNN correspondents Christiane Amanpour and Sanjay Gupta as well as Singapore Ambassador Burhan Gafoor. Needless to say, the Conference was a tremendous success.

And most importantly, this year we have delivered a pre-k to T4 educational program in a thoughtful, creative way that sets our students up for success in the years to come.

I know we are all looking forward to our summer holiday and in that spirit, I wish the entire community a peaceful break with the hope you can spend time with family, friends, and loved ones.

Best,

Dan Brenner



Section of a group painting
by Queens M4 students

Message from the Board Chair



Dear members of the UNIS community,

As we reach the end of this school year, I feel full of hope and pride. Hope, because we are seeing the pandemic ebb and there's an extra bounce in our step as we look forward to the summer and more human interaction. The recent UNIS Graduation in Central Park was a case in point! I also feel hope because I believe the pandemic has brought with it important lessons for us all. For one, it has enlightened us to the inter-dependency of nations, and the need for global solutions. That is what the UN is all about. Pride, because UNIS rose to manage this crisis with such ingenuity, resilience and determination. The effort of the teachers to re-set to a such a completely different teaching environment can only be described as heroic.

I am also proud of the work the School had embarked on to better embody and champion diversity, equity and inclusion. The Board is fully committed to supporting this work. It has affirmed this more strongly by including specific wording on anti-racism and diversity both in its policies and in the UNIS Strategic Plan.

With a focus on the future, the Board is also supporting the Capital Plan, which will entail a major investment in the learning spaces and infrastructure of the School. This will be a challenge, but we believe it is of huge strategic importance to ensure that UNIS can excel even more in the years ahead and be the world-class institution it must be.

If you are interested in knowing more about the Board's activities, we now have more information posted on the UNIS intranet, under "Governance". Since a few years back, the Board of Trustees prepares an Annual Report on its activities; I'm providing the link to the latest report completed, for the 2019-20 school year.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for UNIS, Joan McDonald, who will be stepping down from her position at the end of the school year. We also have four trustees leaving the Board: Anita Batisti, Carol Sirou, Burhan Gafoor and Yvonne Tsang. They have all done exemplary work, fueled by their love of UNIS, and will be sorely missed.

I wish you all a wonderful summer!

Catherine Pollard

Chair

UNIS Board of Trustees





Parents, Leadership, & TH Students sign the Anti-Bystander Pledge

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Updates

The UNIS leadership team has humbly listened to students, alumni, faculty, staff and parents. We know we have much to do and are committed to the necessary hard work to continue. However, we would like to acknowledge some of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) work of this year led by UNIS Director of DEI, Dr. Judith King-Calnek.

In an effort to continue to address DEI issues, we welcomed DEI coordinators at each division:

- TH Co-Coordinators - Joey Braccino & Julien Remy
- MS Coordinator - Zehra Imam
- JS Coordinator - Mohammed Souali
- Queens Coordinator - Stephanie Clapes.

In collaboration with the Parents' Association DEI Committee, the

student-run Equity & Inclusion Board, and the alumni group Black at UNIS, numerous successful virtual events were held.

You can watch many here (click the title):

- International Holocaust Remembrance Day webinar in January
- Black History Month mini-speaker series, featuring *Scattered Africa* (Sheila Walker), *Abolitionists & Artisans* (J. King-Calnek), *Beyond Victims, Pathologies, & Magical Negroes* (K. Butler) in February
- International Women's Day fireside chat with H.E. Amina J Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General in March
- AAPI Webinar Panel, *I am Not a Virus: How to Stop AAPI Hate and the Effects of Racism* in May

UN DAY

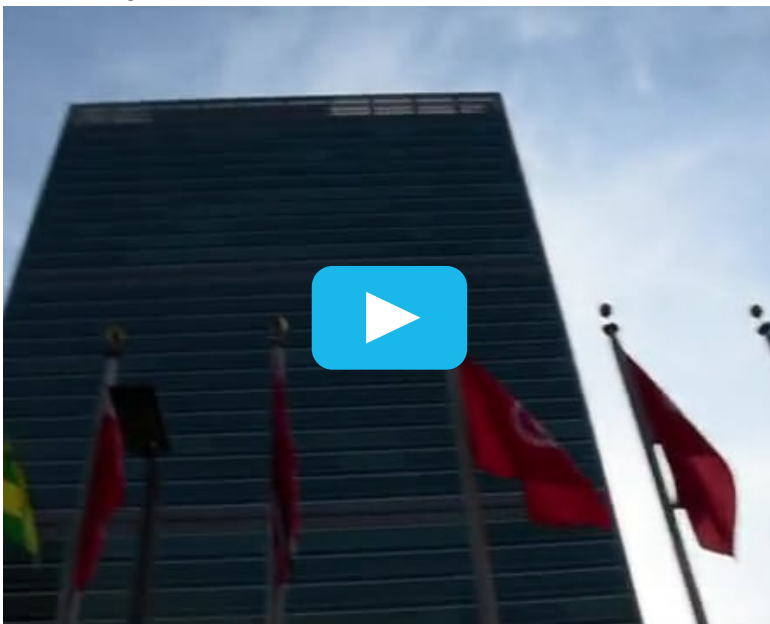
Like most events over the past year and a half, UN Day looked quite different. Despite the different format due to safety, the celebration of the UN spirit and ideals was not dulled.

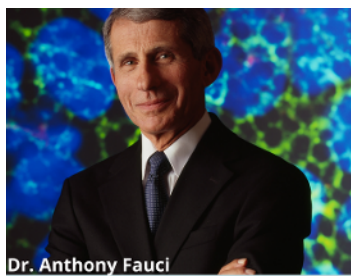
Tutorial House students learned about the US Electoral College with NYU Professor of Politics and Co-Director of the NYU Center for Social Media and Politics, Joshua Tucker. TH Students also participated in a guided activity around SDG #4.

Middle School students enjoyed a special UN Day webinar, while the Queens campus enjoyed both in person and virtual activities - including wonderful musical performances.

Junior School students engaged in their annual UN Day assembly including the UN Chant and the Message from the S-G.

Although we were unable to visit the UN this year, Junior School Mascot Germain had the privilege of taking a tour with UNIS Board member Stephen Margetts in celebration of UN Day. Watch below.





Dr. Anthony Fauci



Christiane Amanpour



Dr. Sanjay Gupta



Amb. Burhan Gafoor



Dr. Robert Jenkins



Andrew Hudson



Dr. Jay Varma



Paolo Belli

This year's student-led International Conference was fully virtual and absolutely incredible. We are extremely proud of our UNIS-UN team for pulling off such a wonderful event in such unique circumstances.

The title of the conference was *A Global Catastrophe: The Impacts of COVID-19*. The two-day conference covered topics such as politics and the pandemic, Coronavirus through the eyes of the media, economic fallout and recovery, COVID-19 and immigration, racial and ethnic disparities, the effects on domestic life dynamics, and many more.

The conference featured Keynote Speakers: Dr. Anthony Fauci (& Dr. Michael Phillips for live Q&A),

Christiane Amanpour, Sanjay Gupta, Ambassador Burhan Gafoor, and many other guest speakers including multiple UNIS alumni. We are extremely privileged to be able to engage with leaders from many different facets. Each session was filled with informative information.

Please feel free to enjoy all the conference sessions at:

unis.org/unis-un/2021-conference-videos

Please note this page is password protected and requires the passcode: unis20un21.



INTERNATIONAL FOOD & FUN FAIR

The International Food & Fun Fair (IFF) is an annual community building and fundraising event that celebrates who UNIS is and what UNIS is about. This event can be particularly challenging in a virtual format given that we usually come together on a weekend and share food from each others' home countries. However, thanks to the UNIS PA, a wonderful solution was developed.

The UNIS Community built a gastronomic map with recommendations of restaurants, specialty stores, and gastronomic stores around NYC. Please continue to utilize this UNIS tool throughout the summer!

Click below to access the interactive, gastronomic map.

UNIS Virtual IFF 2021 🔍 ⋮

5,033 views
[SHARE](#)

☒ **Restaurants**

- 📍 The Lavaux - Switzerland
- 📍 Veselka - Ukraine, Eastern Europe
- 📍 Her Name is Han - Korea
- 📍 SUGARFISH - Japan
- ... 145 more

☒ **Specialty Store**

- 📍 Ideal Cheese Shop - Italy
- 📍 Malaysia Beef Jerky - Malaysia
- 📍 Meet Fresh - Asian
- 📍 Bourke Street Bakery - Australia
- ... 38 more

☒ **Grocery Store**

- 📍 Zabar's - New York Jewish
- 📍 Titan Foods - Greek
- 📍 Netcost Market - Russia/Eastern Europe
- 📍 Kalustyan's - International
- ... 21 more

Map of New York City showing numerous location pins for restaurants, specialty stores, and grocery stores. The map includes labels for various neighborhoods like Manhattan, Hell's Kitchen, Times Square, and Tribeca. The map data is ©2021 Google.



JUNIOR SCHOOL

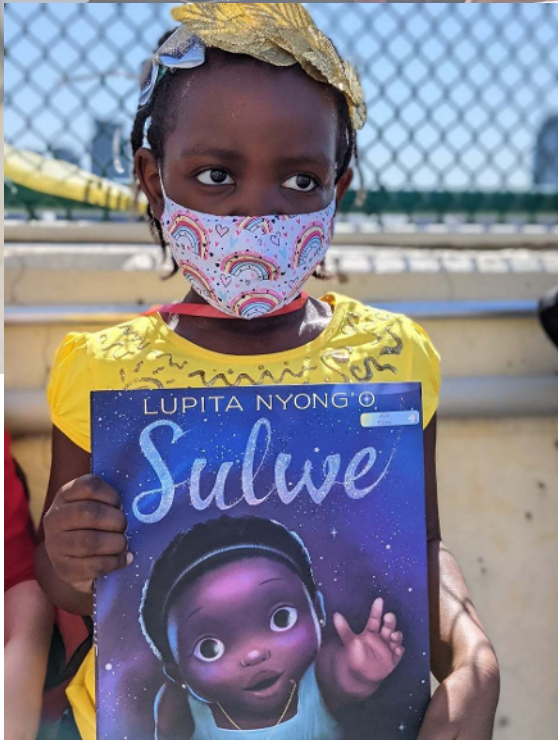
The Junior School Talent Show is an annual JS tradition and celebrates JS students' creativity and talent. Over 50 students participated from Pre-K to J4 and performed spectacularly showcasing a range of talents. Below you can find the video to enjoy the performances.



The JS was also able to celebrate another tradition - the Book Parade! JS students and faculty dressed up as their favorite characters and shared their favorite book. It was wonderful to see so many joyous faces and excitement after a challenging year.



JUNIOR SCHOOL



JS students celebrate their favorite books during the Book Parade.



JUNIOR SCHOOL

Five J4 classes and over 75 members of faculty and staff created the mural "The Year That Zoomed By." The community mural commemorates a special school year spent in the midst of a worldwide pandemic.

The 8 ½ ft x 8 ½ ft mural, installed on the wall of the landing in the stairwell across from the Junior School library, is made of 256 unique ceramic tiles. Under the artistic direction of Anne Francey, students and their teachers created a painted portrait of themselves on zoom, some appearing to be holding hands from one tile to the other, while staff and faculty wrote hashtags expressing the resilience, memories and hardships of a memorable year. The tiles were created within a short three day span, relying on careful planning and truly inspired community effort.

The final design of the mural evokes a close-up view of a QR code, alluding to the virtual communication mode that defined much of the school year, when teaching and learning were taking place remotely through a computer screen. The color glow of the painted tiles sections, contrasted with the written tiles whose white lettering on a dark blackboard, imbues the mural with a soft light.



The Year That Zoomed By



MIDDLE SCHOOL



The Middle School Environmental Club has been hard at work throughout the year. In November they began planting spring bulbs and other perennial flowers, including hydrangeas, sedum, and daffodil bulbs up in the front of the school.

In April, they continued in a celebration of Earth Day. Middle School students spent their break/lunch times to share herbs, seeds and soil with their peers.



Clearly, Middle School classes did not let this challenging year keep them from enjoying the outdoors...even in the coolest of weather. Middle School math classes studying geometry took their lessons outdoors after a snowstorm. They built snowmen to discuss ratios and volume of snow throughout the city.

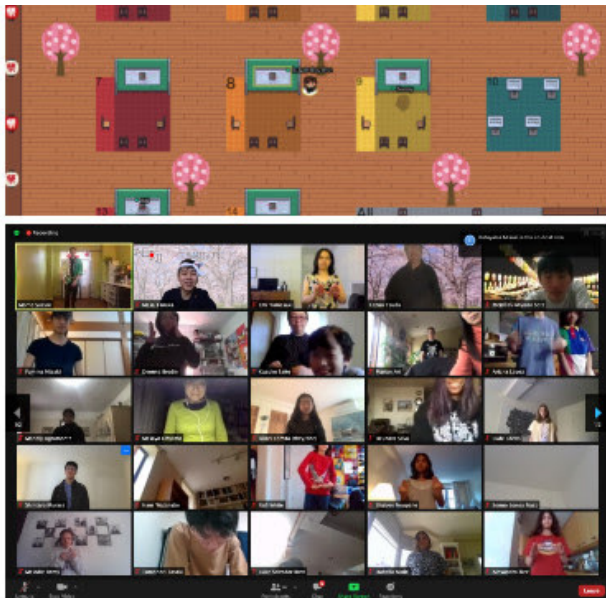


MIDDLE SCHOOL

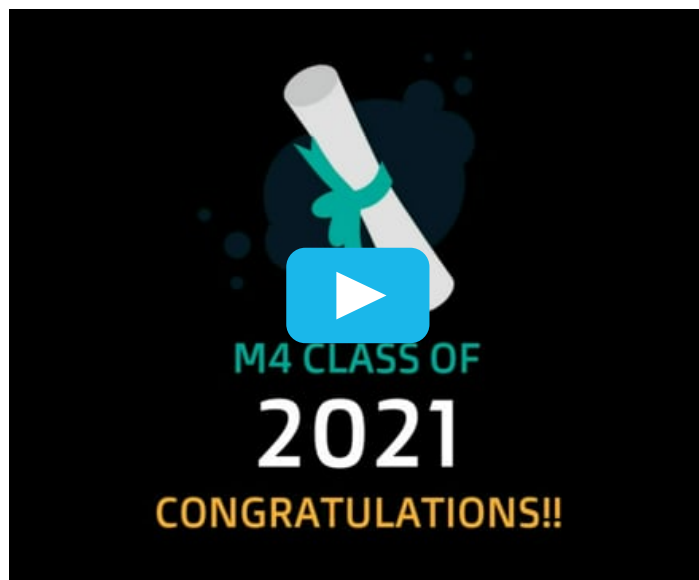
The Middle School Student Council set out to create events to bring cheer to their fellow students. This Spring, they successfully planned and executed a 'Cupcake Giveaway' and the joy amongst MS students was contagious.



In May, MS students celebrated the 26th Annual Harumatsuri (Japanese Spring Festival). This event is usually hosted at UNIS, but occurred virtually this year. UNIS Students learned about Japanese culture, learned to draw manga cartoons, wrote calligraphy, folded origami, and danced the Bon-style dance.



Our culminating event for the Middle School was graduation. Our M4s had an in person ceremony using both the theatre and the cafeteria. Although we weren't able to welcome family and friends in person, they were able to join virtually. The ceremony featured Speaker Nancy Pelosi as the Graduation Speaker and proud UNIS grandmother. Speaker Pelosi has known the class since they entered Middle School, so it was a special moment to reflect on their journey into high school. Watch the recording by clicking the video below.



QUEENS



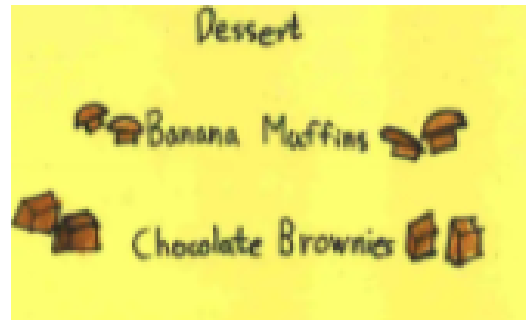
One of the first successful in person celebrations was the Queens campus Winter Olympics. Students participated in hockey, luge, snowball throwing, and passing the torch. Though the gym looked quite different with only class at a time using the space due to social distancing, it was certainly plenty of fun.



Our artists on the Queens campus are always hard at work, with beautiful pieces to showcase their creativity. This Spring, J2 classes studied the work of artist Joan Miro and then created their own Miro inspired clocks.



QUEENS



JS students on the Queens campus altered their annual restaurant day to resemble what many restaurants did during the pandemic, shifted to take-out service. The students prepared delicious meals and took them home to serve to their parents!



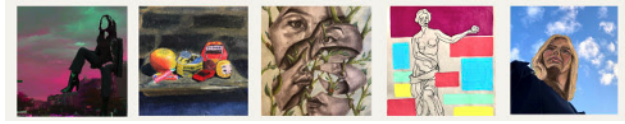
Earth Day was celebrated throughout the Queens campus in a variety of ways. Many students were able to spend time outdoors planting.



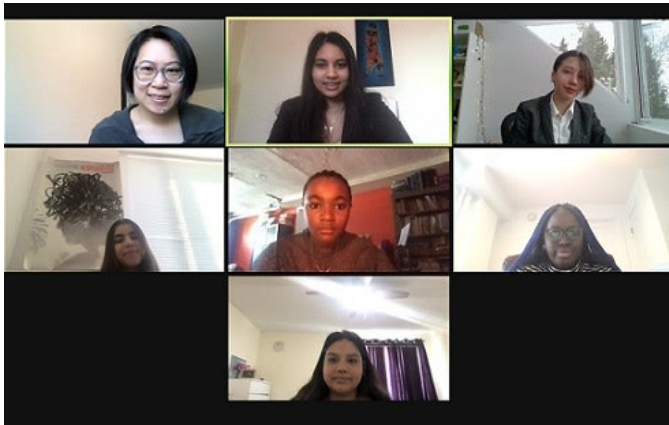
The Queens campus also culminated the year with the celebration of M4 students at their graduation. The ceremony was held out on the field and filled with joy. The graduation featured skits, student speeches, musical performances, and much more. Congratulations to our M4 students and good luck in high school!



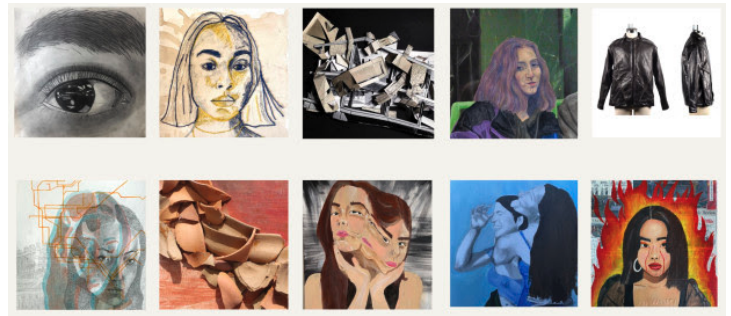
TUTORIAL HOUSE



In January, UNIS Model UN (MUN) attended the virtual Yale Model UN conference. Delegates had to adapt to new technology while collaborating with other high school students and writing resolutions to address their committee's issue. Fortunately, the virtual format didn't dull stimulating debate on topics from Drug Trafficking in Albania to Neocolonialism in Africa. In February, MUN participated in the Princeton Model UN Conference. Delegates enjoyed the vigorous debate on a variety of current pressing issues like the Israel-Palestine conflict, water scarcity in Africa, and state-sponsored labor trafficking.



The Amnesty International club held their #Write4Rights event where students hand wrote letters on behalf of those who are in need of urgent help because they have been unrightfully imprisoned, abducted, and threatened. T1-T4 students participated and 62 letters were written to government officials and ambassadors.



In March, the IB Art students held the 2021 IB Art Gallery Exhibit: Unmuted. Despite the challenges UNIS faced over the last 12 months, our T4 art students succeeded in producing a truly impressive and heartfelt gallery show that exemplified the spirit of our community.



This May theatre classes participated in a virtual dance workshop with the Brooklyn Academy of Music's "Dance Africa" program. The class focused on the traditional dances of Rwanda and the work was led by a professional drummer and choreographer. This is the 6th year the Theatre Department has collaborated with BAM.

CLASS OF 2021 GRADUATION

Congratulations

We were thrilled to be able to celebrate our 2021 graduates with an in-person graduation at SummerStage Central Park. The celebration began with a personalized message from Secretary-General António Guterres to the graduates and continued on with an inspiring speech from U.S. Supreme Court Justice Breyer. To watch the ceremony, please click the video below.



After a challenging end of high school, our T4s were also able to enjoy their Senior Boat Ride, a UNIS tradition of over 20 years. The excitement and joy was palpable.



CLASS OF 2021 SENIOR GIFT



The Class of 2021's class gift to UNIS is a mural with a message located on the North Side of the roof. The mural is titled "Shaping a Better World." They completed it over the course of three days. It has now become an inspiration for future graduating classes.

Upcoming Events

First Day of School: Wednesday, September 8

UN Day: Sunday, October 24

October Break: Monday, October 25-Friday, October 29

Thanksgiving Break: Wednesday, November 24 - Friday, November 26

Have a Great Summer!

Need to contact a Principal?

Junior School: Pascal Vallet
pvallet@unis.org | (212) 584-3061

Middle School: Elaine Kelly
ekelly@unis.org | (212) 584-3014

Tutorial House: Antoine Delaitre
adelaitre@unis.org | (212) 584-3148

Queens: Barbara Kennedy
bkennedy@unis.org | (212) 584-3106

#UNISproud. Please keep tagging us in your UNIS social media posts, so we can enjoy smiles (even behind the mask) like this one!



