June 2020 Vol. 89

HIGHLIGHTS

Collaboration

Seoul International School

Mission

Seoul International School develops inquisitive, independent thinkers and collaborative learners, who acquire the essential knowledge necessary to be caring and creative contributors to the world around them.

Vision

Seoul International School will foster an earnest passion for learning that inspires students to work with others in creating a better world for all.

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The SIS HS Wind Ensemble's collaborative performance with 34 students from 34 different locations gave us a healing moment during the difficult school year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Michael Colaianni, Head of School
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COLLABORATION AT SIS

Seoul International School develops inquisitive, independent thinkers, and collaborative learners, who acquire the essential knowledge necessary to be caring and creative contributors to the world around them.

A few years ago, a group of teachers and students gathered together to develop the school's first Mission Statement. That group of individuals spoke for many hours about what were the most important assets for students to have as they entered the world beyond high school.

We discussed the merits of having bright, well informed and knowledgeable individuals come together to develop common goals and how best to achieve them. It was decided at that time that goals are best attained through the thoughts, ideas and practices of groups of individuals working together, bouncing their ideas and knowledge off of one another to find a common, and well thought out solution.

The word "collaboration" is derived from the Latin meaning to work together. It is a coordinated activity that is the result of an attempt of a group of like-minded people to work on a shared project.

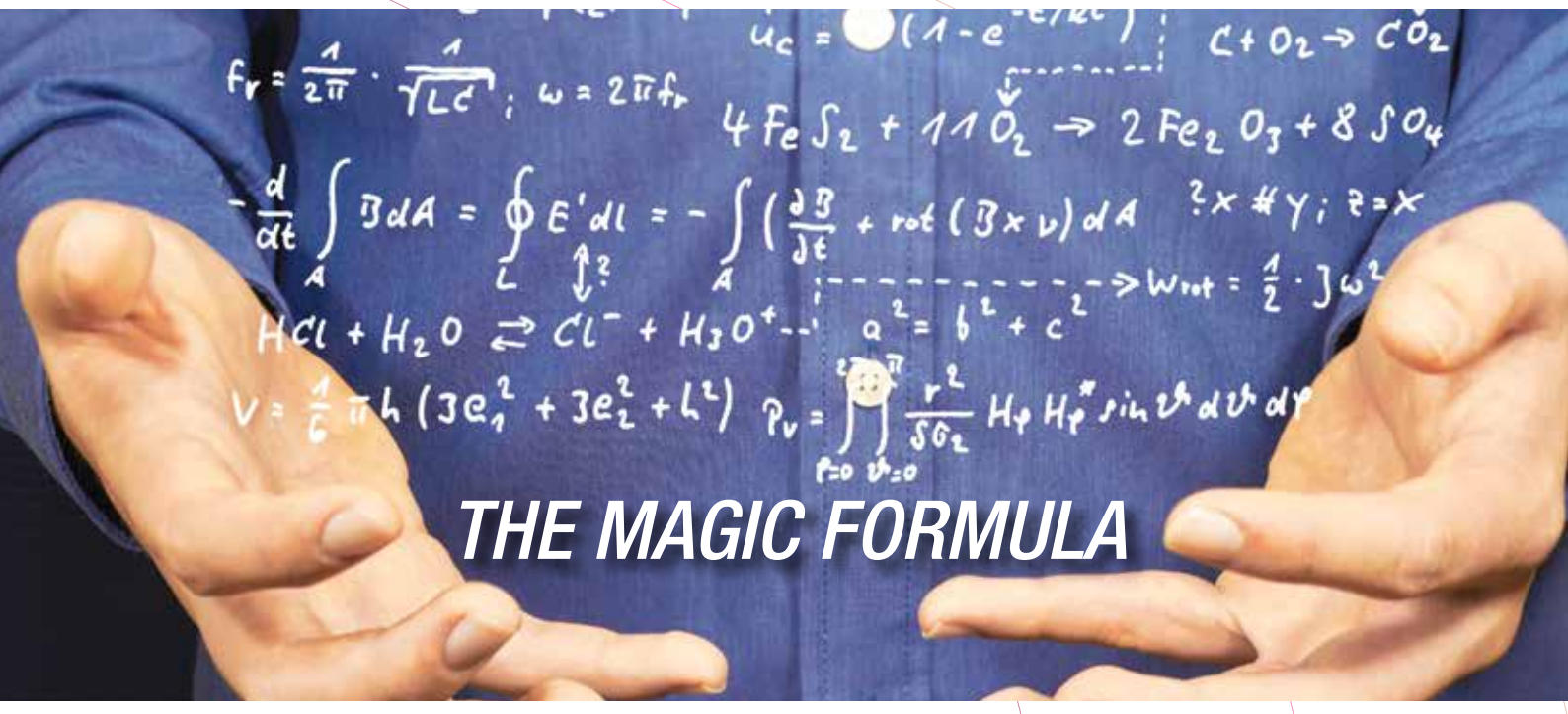
As teachers at the school, we constantly seek the ideas and viewpoints of those of our colleagues, gathering those new ideas that may come from a new faculty member and joining those with what already is known. Bringing new thoughts and ideas to the school is one of the highlights of international schools as the teaching staff turns over little by little and the school gains from the collaborative effect of new faculty. We are always learning from one another.

The schedule is developed with an eye towards collaboration as all teachers teaching the same classes have occasions each week to chat with and take the best ideas from those teaching similar classes and incorporate them into their own teaching. By working together, we are able to take the best of what each teacher has to offer and to develop a syllabus based on a collaborative effort that includes the best thoughts, ideas and processes that each of our teacher can offer.

Classes too are geared towards teaching the students the benefits of working together to find solutions. Typically, students work in groups to figure out together how best to approach an issue or problem that they are assigned. As I walk around the school looking in classrooms it is most common to see groups of students discussing issues and coming with collaborative decisions, much like many of us do in our lives. Certainly, we would expect our doctor to collaborate with another expert before making a decision to operate or a politician to gather the facts and confer with others before making a decision. As the Head of School, I have made it a habit to run any important news, information or initiatives past my leadership team and gathering consensus before arriving at a decision.

All of us need one another to come up with the best new ideas that will impact others or to decide on the best course of action when making important decisions. Through collaboration, we are best able to ensure that our decisions are appropriate and in the best interests of those in our care. Collaboration is an effort worth making and worth teaching so that our students are best prepared for what lies ahead.

Mr. Michael Colaianni
Head of School



THE MAGIC FORMULA

As students plan for their post high school studies they are often led to believe there is a magic formula that almost assures they will receive acceptances to some of the most competitive schools. Unfortunately, there is no magic formula.

The decisions on applications is out of our control. As one Ivy League admissions representatives said to a group of S. I. S. students a few years ago, "don't take it personally if you are not accepted. We do not know what we are looking for until the school year begins.' In other words, you may have an outstanding academic record in a consistently challenging schedule, excellent standardized test scores and have evidence of being highly involved in your non-academic commitments and still not be admitted. That is the case because in the most competitive schools, you would be among the 80% of the applicants who have similar achievements but the school will accept less than 10% of those applicants.

Factors out of our control are numerous. Among those factors are the size of the applicant pool from Korea and S. I. S., the desire on the part of the school to have a gender balance, geographic representation, special interests and legacies. In addition to your record of achievement, the admissions staff is judging the authenticity of your application and whether or not you are a "fit" for the environment of the school. Each year as results are released, it becomes more obvious that predicting the results is impossible. For example, thirty-five members of the Class of 2019 applied to Columbia and there were no acceptances. In the Class of 2018, forty-four applied to Columbia and four were accepted. From the Class of 2018 there were forty-six applications to Brown resulting in four acceptances and from the Class of 2019 there were 34 applications to Brown resulting in one acceptance. If there were a magic formula we would be able to see a pattern.

Applying to the same few schools is not a wise way to approach planning for post high school studies. The counseling department, using BridgeU is encouraging students to do some serious research.

Factors other than "name value in Korea" should be given serious consideration. Too often, students do not consider the size of schools, the locations and the programs offered when they compile a list of schools to which they apply. "Name value" in Korea should not be the main criteria because that results in the same short list of schools that so many other applicants in your applicant pool have. Use your time wisely to do some serious research on post high school options.

Mr. Fredric Schneider
Dean of Students

STUDENT COLLABORATION IN THE TEACHING

Effective teacher evaluation is a valued yet complex aspect of the teaching profession. Under the assumption that evaluation can lead to higher efficacies of teaching and learning, the formal supervision process is a medusa-like appendage of a school's accountability methods.

At SIS, high school teachers are familiar with using a system of teaching practice instruments whose origin rests with noted educational researchers. Like many supervision and evaluation processes, ours remains an important part of both first-year teacher induction and the oversight of teachers towards sustainability in our program.

Although the process is typically within the domain of a school administration, this article presents an approach that aims at COLLABORATION, authenticity, and reflection when working as partners with our teaching faculty.

We have found that there remains valuable unmined data important to a feedback loop. This data rests in the keen eyes of those students that populate our classes. Possessing more frequency and robustness than any supervisor notes, while having a mature and balanced view of their education, student collaboration and reflection on the teaching and learning process is important for its improvement merits as well.

The student-survey of teacher efficacy, which uses criteria and indicators that are sometimes absent from a more formal process, can be a key facet of school success. It is also a great way to include a collaborative lens of student prowess into faculty feedback mechanisms. Student value-added participation in the evaluation process is not just that of a passing and impassive observer, but is appreciated by teachers for its clarity and candor. The process involves students answering

AND LEARNING FEEDBACK PROCESS

prompts at the end of each semester to help the teacher better reflect on their practices and the manner in which they positively affect students. Students are able to give candid, valid, and anonymous feedback to teachers during the year.

As we reflect on the why of student inclusion, the obvious answer is that 'this is an effective manner for provoking student agency and mindfulness over their own education.' HS students see teachers every week for an average of two-hundred minutes. Sometimes students might take the same teacher for more than one course a year and might also have the same instructor two, three or four years in a row. At SIS this can result in a student 'observing' a teacher up to four hundred hours while participating in our high school.

There are many studies that show students and teachers alike agree that a student's feedback is an effective tool for faculty development.

Our student collaboration survey uses the following prompts:

Class structure and pacing

The pacing of the lesson supports learning and understanding / Lessons are presented in an organized fashion / Classwork and homework help prepare for assessments / A variety of sources and information is used to meet individual needs / The teacher effectively uses technology

Assessment

Stated weighted category areas match items of outcome on the assessment / Rubrics used guide me towards creation of high quality work / Assessment results are returned in a timely manner / The teacher uses assessment categories to focus on areas for improvement / The teacher uses the SIS Assessment Policy to accurately evaluate learning / I am aware of the skills that are prioritized for development in this class

Teacher & Student Interaction

I feel comfortable approaching my teacher for help / The teacher listens to my ideas and opinions / Instruction is varied so that different needs are met during the lesson

Student to Student Interaction

In class, I feel like I make a valuable contribution to the class dynamic / The teacher makes sure all students are shown respect by classmates

And the following two prompts are used to add robust commentary:

1. *Two things I definitely want my teacher to keep doing are…*
2. *One thing I would like my teacher to think about doing differently is...*

This collaborative process has proven to be indicative of following best practices and allowing more student-teacher interaction. As a follow up, all teachers review the data and share with individual classes their recognition of student input and the positive changes that will result.

All indications are that students are very savvy interpreters of great practice and excellent collaborators in the feedback process.

Dr. James Gerhard
High School Principal

COLLABORATION AND UBUNTU

[Image credit: Africa Peace Journals]

Back in 2010, I was the principal of a middle school in Tucson, Arizona. Our student population was over 90% Latino, with students either being Mexican or Mexican-American. It had been this way for generations and the culture was celebrated in many ways. Seemingly quite suddenly that year, students from African countries, mostly from Somalia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Nigeria began enrolling. Sadly, our school environment was not very welcoming of these students who dressed and worshipped differently.

One day, three of my African students came to me and asked if they could speak to the student body about their culture. They presented a few short slides on their food, religion and family. It was very successful and went a long way in helping our students begin to accept them and establish new friendships. LIttle did I know though, that these students would also make a huge impact on my life and leadership style.

One very important lesson I learned from them was the concept of "UBUNTU", an African belief that means, "I am, because we are". This concept means that we become better by helping others. I cannot be my best unless I am helping you to be your best. We are all connected and what I do affects you. This has become a core value that I try to live and lead by.

UBUNTU exists with collaboration. In the Middle School, collaboration is alive and well. Our teachers meet weekly as grade-level teams to discuss the vast components of teaching and work together to make decisions that affect our students and community. We also have team leaders in each grade. I run nearly everything through these team leaders and they work with their colleagues to gather the data, input, and practical information needed to make well-informed, team decisions. This is UBUNTU in today's world. I rely on teacher input and expertise. We work together to make each other better. I develop leaders at the teacher level, and they help me make sound decisions impacting our students and community.

We see examples of UBUNTU at the student level as well. Whether it be students working together in math groups, or in any collaborative groups in other contents. When students work together, they help each other be the best they can be. Our Student Council representatives lead our school assemblies, present at our Parent Coffee meetings, create and lead the activities for Monday Madness, and recognize their peers with the TIGERS Values awards. Ms. Zhang has started service learning groups aimed at helping less fortunate and more vulnerable members of our communities. Our new students are paired up with a buddy to welcome them to SIS. These are merely some of the examples of how our students collaborate and work together to make each other better. Real life demonstrations of UBUNTU.

I am very proud to be the principal of the middle school. Our students and staff are extraordinary. Our parents are supportive. I am able to challenge myself to see what I can do to help others be the best they can be. Working together at SIS with our teachers, students, and parents in a collaborative model is the best form of UBUNTU that I have experienced in my nearly 30 years as an educator and school leader.

I am because we are.

Mr. John Benavidez
Middle School Principal

NOBODY WINS UNLESS EVERYBODY WINS

Bruce Springsteen, singer songwriter, ended his live shows with a simple admonition that was easy to miss amidst the screams of tens of thousands of fans. "Remember," he'd tell the crowd, "nobody wins unless everybody wins."

The most successful schools understand that they create the most worth when people at every level, teachers, students, parents, administrators and community members, share in the value they help to create.

As we started our distance-learning unexpectedly, it was very successful because everyone learned from each other and shared in the value they helped to create. Thank you parents for the unending support you gave to the teachers and students at home. Thank you for your positive attitudes, flexibility, open mindedness, and mostly thanks for providing structure and routine to match the teachers' expectations at home by monitoring your child's progress which makes a big difference in their level of engagement and productivity.

As you know, distance learning looks different in ES and is based on the developmental differences of the students and their capabilities as each child develops a unique set of skills that enable them to learn in this new electronic environment.

During the entire time of e-learning, Ms. Schuppel and I have been able to observe the ways teachers have been doing new things based on feedback from students, room moms as spokespersons and parents in general. It's wonderful for me to see that our teachers took parent feedback into consideration by adjusting their lessons to meet the needs of the students and parents.

With the speed of change nowadays there's no way we can learn everything by ourselves. If we want to stay up-to-date we need to learn from other people. No "one" of us is as smart as "all" of us. All of us today need to be able to reach out and learn from each other as we move forward where everyone wins.

Mr. Art DeFilippo
Elementary School Principal

WORKING TOGETHER: COURSE SELECTION

One of the biggest challenges any high school faces is the creation of a master schedule. On the one hand, it is a technical problem involving the arrangement of classes, teachers, and students, but it does not take much time to realize that it is more than simply technical challenge. One of the key elements of each student's application to college is their transcript. That means one of the primary ways that a student communicates to colleges is through the courses they select. With that in mind, as a school we must balance what the school can offer and what the students want.

From a curriculum standpoint, SIS is an American liberal arts program. The Western liberal arts philosophy is grounded in Aristotle's belief that fulfillment can only be achieved if a human has a functional knowledge of all disciplines. While this is a respectable goal, it naturally entails students having to take courses that they may not be interested in. Raising awareness of this basic principle is critical for students to understand that their education is not solely to meet their current interests or even their specific career plans. Here is where the collaboration begins.

To start, the teachers and administration have worked together to build a scope and sequence in the curriculum, preparing a foundation of knowledge and skills for subsequent courses. A 10th grade student may be more interested in Chemistry than Biology, but because the student has not taken the foundation in Chemistry, AP Chemistry is not available to them. They have a foundation in Biology and Ecology so they can choose to take on a deeper study of one of those areas, or they can wait until they have finished Chemistry and Physics to take AP Chemistry. In other words, the course requirements in our program are not just to control what students do. There is a logical sequence to it that requires some limitation to how students navigate it.

From those built-in limitations we are then able to work with students to meet their interests. That priority is evident in how SIS actually makes the schedule. Instead of having a predetermined number of sections for a course, we take student requests and build in as many sections as we can while balancing enrollment caps. When I came to SIS in 2006 there was 1 section of AP Biology and only about 18 students were able to get in. Today we have 4 or 5 sections and every student with the interest and basic academic habits can take it precisely because all 9th grade students are required to take the prerequisite. Requirements reveal the doors that are available to open, they don't require students to go through them.

This year I had a student approach me and talk about how much more he had enjoyed his last 2 years of high school compared to his first 2 years because he was able to choose the classes he was interested in. I told him that it was his experience in those first 2 years that made him able to know what he was interested in and select accurately. None of us like being told what to do. If it isn't human nature, it certainly is adolescent nature, but one of the most important things we can always go back and tell ourselves in our lives is "It's not always about me and what I want." Students are not just in school for themselves. There is a society beyond high school that is becoming more global and complex. Citizens that can think across disciplines and understand things outside their area of expertise are more important than ever. There is college and graduate school for increasing specialization, but in the meantime, students should strive to be as well-rounded as possible. That it is hard to see the value of mathematical reasoning from Algebra II does not mean that it will not serve some valuable, future purpose. The future does not come from you or me, but from us working together.

Mr. Gray Macklin
High School Vice Principal

CLASS OF 2020 COLLEGE LIST

Congratulations to members of the class of 2020.
This fall the members of the class will matriculate at the following schools.

Fredric M. Schneider
Dean of Students

Berklee College of Music	1	Rhode Island School of Design	5
Boston College	1	Stanford University	2
Boston University	1	Tufts University	2
Brown University	1	U. C. Berkeley	14
California College of the Arts	1	U. C. Irvine	1
Carnegie Mellon University	5	U. C. L. A.	1
Columbia University	3	U. C. San Diego	3
Cooper Union	1	U. C. Santa Barbara	1
Cornell University	5	Univ. of British Columbia, Canada	1
Duke University	2	University of Chicago	2
Emory University	1	Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	4
Ewha Womans University	1	University of Nevada: Las Vegas	1
Georgetown University	1	University of the Pacific	1
Glion Institute, Switzerland	1	University of Pennsylvania	1
Johns Hopkins University	2	University of Rochester	1
Michigan State University	1	University of Southern California	3
New York University	7	University of Sydney, Australia	1
Northeastern University	1	University of Toronto, Canada	2
Northwestern University	4	Univ. of Western Ontario, Canada	1
Parsons The New School for Design	1	Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison	1
Pratt Institute	1	Washington University in St. Louis	1
Princeton University	1	Wesleyan University	2
Purdue University	2	Yale University	1

A Decade Long Tradition:
Heifer Read-a-thon at SIS

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the definition of collaboration is the act of working together with other people or organizations to create or achieve something. After reading this definition, it became evident that the topic to choose for my Highlights article this year needed to be the long standing tradition of collaboration between the SIS Elementary School family and Heifer International. In my eyes, this is the perfect example of true collaboration.

My time at SIS began during the 2009/2010 school year. During that first year, I remember celebrating my very first Valentine's Day here in Korea in a very unique and beautiful way. Rather than celebrating Valentine's Day in the traditional way of giving chocolates and flowers, SIS students gave a much more meaningful and powerful gift. That year, the students from Kindergarten to Grade 5, each participated for the 1st time in a Read-a-Thon and all the money raised was used to sponsor the "Read to Feed" Program through Heifer International (www.heifer.org).

Heifer International is a global nonprofit whose mission is to end poverty and hunger while caring for the Earth. The beauty of Heifer is that each gift given multiplies because every family that receives a Heifer animal promises to "Pass on the Gift" by donating at least one of the offspring from their animal gift to another family in need. The livestock gifts support transformational change by empowering families to be self-sufficient while also allowing them to help others when they "Pass on the Gift" to other families in need.

The first year of the Read-a-Thon, the money raised and donated to Heifer by the SIS students was used to purchase livestock gifts for struggling families. After that initial year, the Read-a-Thon and our collaboration with Heifer became a tradition in the elementary school at SIS and this tradition continues until this very day. This year marks the official 10 year anniversary of collaboration between Heifer and the elementary school.

Through the years, teachers have found ways to integrate Heifer into the curriculum. Teachers have also continually found fun and engaging ways to support Heifer, not only through the Read-a-Thon but also with money earned from bake sales, walk-a-thons, and Market Day.

Teachers have given students ownership and empowered them to help make decisions as to how the money donated should be spent. Each year, students and teachers collaborate and decide on the wisest way to spend the money. They consider how to best use the money and then purchase either animals like goats, cows, sheeps, chickens, water or give financial assistance for education to the recipients.

Heifer has proven to be a transparent and trustworthy organization. Former SIS student and 2018 graduate, Justin Chang, has gone so far as to open the door even wider and make personal connections on behalf of SIS at several of the Heifer Field Sites. He and his mother, Haewon Lee, former Elementary EPC president, have personally delivered the donations and funds to Heifer in Nepal. Through their efforts, SIS has also been able to begin donating to the Heifer-SIS Girl Child Education Scholarship, where $60/year can help a needed girl to stay in school. Over the years, we have helped over 300 students.

One fundamental principle we have tried to teach and instill in our students through the years is that they can truly make a difference in the world. One of the greatest aspects of this ongoing collaboration with Heifer is that the principle of making a difference and being a positive influence in the world has been carried forth into the minds and hearts of our students as well as our staff for the past ten years.

Donating to Heifer has helped both our students and staff understand and appreciate the true joy of giving and "Passing on the Gift". The Heifer's Read-to Feed Read-a-Thon has been an ongoing tradition of collaboration and celebration in the Elementary School for the past 10 years. Let's all work together to keep that tradition alive for many years to come.

Ms. Agnes Schuppel
Middle & Elementary School Vice Principal

Heifer Class Activity: ES students contributed toward purchasing livestock gifts for struggling families

Heifer Read-a-thon Kick-off Assembly in 2010: Since 2010, Heifer fundraising has become a valued tradition at SIS ES.

SIS-Heifer Scholarship Recipients: SIS-Heifer Girl Child Scholarship has helped more than 300 students receive an education.

Heifer Read-to-Feed fundraising raised 6 million KRW in 2019!

TODAY'S ONLINE CLASSROOMS

In a matter of weeks, the corona virus has changed how students are educated in Korea and around the world. As the pandemic keeps students out of school, international schools turned to virtual classrooms to keep classes going. Online classes quickly became a practical solution as schools grapple with the consequences of this deadly contagion. For Seoul International School, teachers and students are already well versed on using technology to collaborate and communicate, so this approach to learning is not new to our school.

Online learning presents new challenges when compared to the traditional classroom. Its' success depends on support at home. While parents have always had a role in their children's education, now more than ever, their input and involvement are critical in helping both teachers and students succeed in online learning. Just like in a brick and mortar school, parents can discuss the pace and progress of their child's education and address any opportunities for improvements. In addition, parents and teachers can collaborate on strategies to keep their child healthy, happy and academically engaged during this unprecedented time.

The success of online learning is also dependent on apps that keep the classroom connected with students at home such as Google Hangouts, Zoom, and Seesaw. All these apps provide opportunities for collaboration and instruction in real time and help build a community online. Teachers also use a variety of content delivery methods and learning activities to help keep students engaged.

Online learning, despite some past criticism, is now an important part of education. It has significantly helped make education more accessible in times like this. All you need is a computer, a fast internet connection, dedicated teachers and motivated students and parents.

Learning at SIS has not stopped, does not stop. As we slowly recover from this experience we will have learned a great deal about our ability to adapt and respond to difficult situations. This experience makes us all stronger and better as teachers, parents and students.

Mrs. Irene De Shazo
Director of Admissions

PREPARING FOR THE UNEXPECTED:
DISTANCE LEARNING AND THE BENEFITS OF A GUARANTEED AND VIABLE, WRITTEN CURRICULUM

Beginning in 2013-'14, Seoul International School initiated an ambitious and targeted schoolwide effort to review, rebuild, and revitalize the K-12 curriculum. This important initiative began in response to the ever-changing landscape of international education and marked the beginning of our current six-year accreditation cycle. As we move toward another successful WASC accreditation, the result of our focused persistence, professional dedication, and effective collaboration are clear. The past six years have led to a well documented, visible, and viable JK-12 educational program; inspired by research and best practice, created and housed on a transparent and collaborative digital platform, and designed with fidelity and consistency in mind for the benefit of every child at our school.

While this milestone is a source of satisfaction and celebration for all involved, the curriculum at SIS continues to evolve and improve. In the past year alone the elementary school launched a new math program, Eureka!/Engage NY; implemented a comprehensive and inspired K-5, NGSS-based science curriculum, Mystery Science; and adopted the NWEA/MAP assessment to track the progress of our K-8 students in reading and mathematics. In addition to the accomplishments at the elementary school, SIS' middle school continues to develop its curriculum with student choice, elective and enrichment classes, as well as the growing Makerspace program. The high school curriculum has expanded as well to include innovative and relevant skill-based assessments as part of SIS' mastery learning (formative/summative) practices. And, as a schoolwide contribution to our curricular efforts, the counseling office has adopted the International School Counseling Association standards and built a documented framework for a progressive, whole-school counseling curriculum to meet the social and emotional needs of our students.

As we all know, 2020 has been a challenging year for all, and in ways we could not have possibly imagined or anticipated. The unpredictable nature of the Coronavirus pandemic has affected every aspect of our personal and professional lives and left billions around the world quarantined, sheltered-in-place, socially distanced, and without a clear picture of what the future may hold. That said, SIS' diligence and dedication to curriculum and program development over the past six years have proven to be the very foundation our students, teachers, and parents rely on to provide stability, clarity, and the necessary meaning behind distance teaching and learning at SIS. Our documented, guaranteed, and viable curriculum has provided the necessary backbone for the distance learning protocols implemented as a result of this global crisis. The direct impact of our hard work in the areas of curriculum and assessment has helped SIS to prepare for these unfathomable and unexpected events. Our teachers are prioritizing what must be taught. Our students are clear and well informed regarding what must be learned. Our parent community has affirmed our work with their unwavering support and appreciation.

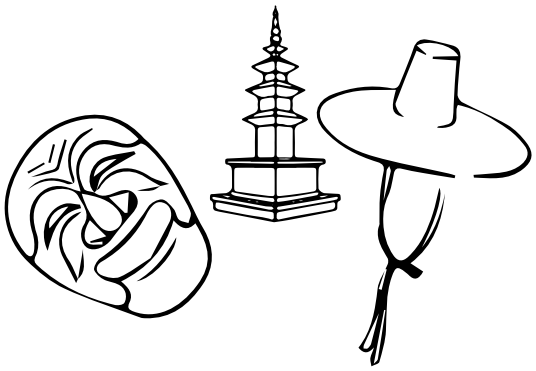
We knew this undertaking would surely contribute to teacher and student success and help continue SIS' tradition of excellence in international education, but we never anticipated how the SIS community would benefit in this time of distance learning. Looking inward (and forward) as we have done for so long, and asking important questions, such as "Why?; To what extent?; and For what purpose?; is what quality schools do and it has left our learning community better off and prepared us for the unexpected. To be sure, this is precisely what Seoul International School has done and we will continue to do as the future unfolds. Through the work of our teachers, students, parents, and administrators, the prioritization of professional collaboration in the service of our focused review of curriculum has been the anchor in a sea of recent unpredictability and led to innovative instruction, strategic assessment, and favorable online learning conditions.

Mr. David Coleman
Dir. of Curriculum and Pro. Development

LET'S HEAR FROM MR. ADAMS

SIS students, Louie (10), John (8) and Joseph (5), got together representing each level, to interview Mr. Edward B. Adams, Founder of SIS.
Since Mr. Adams is in US, the interview was done via online meeting.
It was a great opportunity for the student reporters to have a wonderful glimpse into school founder's philosophy and personal bonding with him.

Regarding Korean History



Louie Yang / 10th grade

Y I have heard you are very knowledgeable about Korean history. What intrigued you the most?

A I have a special connection to Korea as I was also born there, spent part of my childhood in different areas of the country. With the curiosity and awe of the beautiful history, I started researching and studying about the rich cultural developments over multiple centuries. I still find Shilla dynasty as the most intriguing period in Korean history.

Y Do you have any Korean historical figure you like? & The reason why?

A There are several historic figures that I had always liked, but I had a special interest in General Kim Yu-Shin of Shilla. His legendary win of the battle against Baekje led the unification of the three kingdoms, and the Silla dynasty is one of the longest sustained dynasties in human history.

Y A lot of people say that we can get some wisdom from past history. How could modern people learn something valuable from the past?

A There are lots of ways to learn something valuable from the past, but you learn more especially when you study the people that lived and persevered then. Look into the way of their lives, how they made things happen … I think sometimes people in the modern days do not always know what is best for the society, but you can look into the historic figures to see what they had done for the society and learn a lot from them.

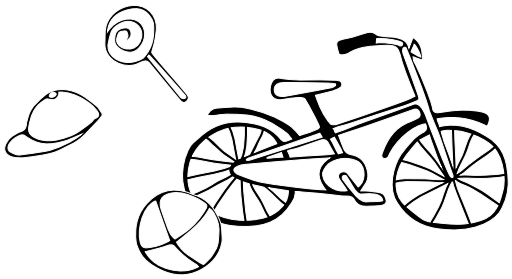
Y It seems quite long since you wrote the Korean Guide for foreigners and Korean society has changed dramatically. If you write new Korean guide, which content would you revise from your previous version? And what will be the main contents of your new Korean guidebook?

A History does not change necessarily. What has past remains, and history only continues to evolve from what was passed on. I wouldn't really revise any as the history of those times pertains to that particular period. Of course, Korea has changed a lot these days, and if I were to re-write it, I would have to bring them up to date. Yet, by changing my perspective, I may lose the way I perceived Korea then, and lose the emphasis of the past.

If I were to write a new book of Korea, the most important thing I may have to review would be the drastic change of the modern Korea. It's because since the Korean War, Korean went through a lot of changes. Last but the least, people should not forget how long Korean history really is, and how rich and valuable it was to become the basis of what Korea is today.

Regarding Teenage life

John Kim / 8th grade
president of MS student council



K What was your teenage life like?

A Unfortunately, I was not able to spend my middle school years in Korea. When the Korean War broke, I was just finishing up Elementary. All of us had to evacuate and move to Japan. My father, then worked as a secret service, came into Korea several times, and it was a very dangerous job. So my teenage life was in Japan as I went to middle and high school there. Just like any regular boy, I enjoyed school, wasn't too wild and didn't have to sit in for detention too often. I loved being active and sports. I was a basketball player, and I've always enjoyed spending time with my friends from Korea, Japan and China.

K What was the most memorable or interesting moment during your adolescence?

A I was a regular boy, at least from my perspective, but my circumstances were unique. My father worked as a missionary, and we traveled a lot since I was young. I was born in Andong, and throughout my early days, I experienced many of the major historical events in Korea. But one extraordinarily special event I reckon is one trip to the Yalu (Amrok) River in N. Korea. I even had an opportunity to see North Korea from the other side of the Paektu Mountain in China. The crater lake, Cheonji, was really heavenly just like its name. That is something you don't get to see every day.

K Do you perhaps find any similarities or differences between teenagers nowadays and your days?

A The biggest difference is that we did not have computers then, and now teenagers can't live without it. In this war-like times, students are able to take classes and do their homework from home. People can be in meetings and see each other. When I was in school way back when, this is unimaginable. The teenagers nowadays have access to so much knowledge and insight. It is a blessing, but also something to be cautious about.

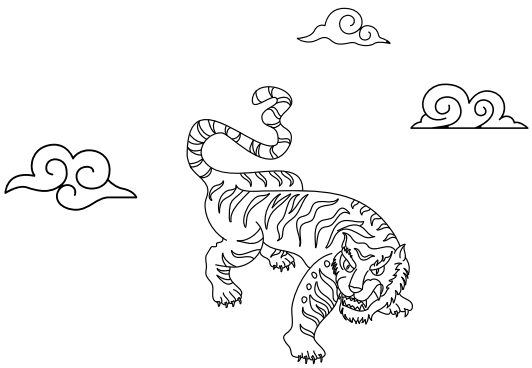
K If you could change one thing in your teenage life, what would that be?

A I never thought of changing anything in my teenage period. I enjoyed every bit of it. Of course, it wasn't easy transitioning between countries and living in a foreign country, but it is a very special memory to me.

K Do you have any academic/social advice for our SIS Middle School students who are going through their teenage life? Or could you please share any rule of thumbs for SIS students?

A I don't have much advice, but only say that if you have a chance to travel, do so as it is important to learn about the world you live in. By traveling, I don't mean to simply enjoy the new places you visit, but actually look into the culture, the history and the different people that are living in those areas. Make good friends, and try to learn something in every step of the way. Don't think of it in the hard way, but enjoy learning.

Regarding Korean folktale



Joseph Lim / 5th grade

L Do you think there will be a difference in the stories if you wrote the folktales in the present day? Do you think there will be a change in the settings? The plot? or the theme?

A No. Folktales are the same over the centuries and that's the beauty of it. Tales told over generations, it shows that people's lives are quite similar even if they may look different at times. Some people take in various perspective to change the settings or theme to be more up to date, but the story and the wisdom stay the same. So I find it more meaningful to continue re-telling the same story and see how the new generation learns those lessons.

L Which character do you find most interesting among all your published books? Why?

A Shim Chung in The Blind Man's Daughter is my favorite. It's a story about love and dedication of a young girl and her blind father. This story has been told over generations through narrative story-telling and books, but also pansori, the Korean traditional musical, in the name of Shimcheongga. Shim Chung sacrifices her life for her blind father to regain his sight, but eventually is saved for the noble cause and her admirable dedication. Life cannot be compared or valued for anything else, but by sacrificing it, her love saved all.

L Do you think those old stories still have a strong lesson for young generation?

A Yes, these folktales have a strong lesson for the younger generation. The young generation need to learn from the wisdoms and lessons from these stories. They are not only fun to read, but also very meaningful in our daily lives.

L Can you relate to one of the characters in any of your published stories? If you can, how can you relate? Were you in a similar situation?

A The Korean Cinderella is one of my favorite stories as it can be directly compared to the western Cinderella. There's no pumpkin or mice to turn into carriages and horses, but a shoe that turns the character's life around. I won't say this story relates to me exactly, but the lesson can touch anyone's heart.

ELEMENTARY AFTER-SCHOOL ENRICHMENT:

Collaboration is defined as the process of two or more people or organizations working together to achieve a goal. This is especially true of the many components at Seoul International School (SIS), that work together as a cohesive unit to bring our After-school Enrichment (ASE) program to our elementary students.

This past year, ES ASE has benefitted from free tuition and as a result, SIS has had the greatest number of students enrolling in classes than ever before, with approximately 130 students taking part in the Fall and Winter Sessions. That is more than half the population of our elementary school! It is thrilling that the program has taken off and become such a key fixture in the enrichment of our ES students

By the time acceptance letters go home with students, many critical steps have already been put into place. The ES ASE Coordinator ensures that enough ES, MS and HS teachers have signed up to teach a wide array of classes for one of three grade level categories, which include Senior Kindergarten and Grade 1, Grades 2 and 3 and Grades 4 and 5. Having educators from each of the three schools provides a wonderful opportunity for elementary students to develop positive relationships with teachers they may not have the opportunity to interact with under normal circumstances.

The past Fall and Winter Sessions had 16 and 17 classes respectively. Some class choices included Coding, Drawing, Yoga, Garage Band, Makerspace, Cooking, Board Games, Chemistry, Ballet, Claymation, Chess and more. It is the Coordinator's job to place each student in a class of their choice and communicate effectively with students, parents, classroom teachers and ASE teachers. The goal is to ensure everyone is happy and satisfied with the outcome.

In addition, class materials must be ordered ahead of time with the help of the ES secretary Mrs. Lee. These may include chess sets, food ingredients, art supplies, board games, technology and more. Furthermore, the cafeteria must be notified as to the dates and approximate number of students that will participate in each session, so a snack can be prepared for each of the ten classes from 3:00-3:30 p.m.

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

At the beginning of ASE at SIS, bus service home was not provided, however, because of the hard work of Mr. Kwak in our Transportation Department, this has become a reality. He is given a list of students by the Coordinator that require bus services and diligently contacts parents and sets up new bus routes home. This has allowed our ES ASE program to flourish and grow with many more students now able to join.

Due to the increased number of enrollment, SIS Teacher Assistant's provide valuable assistance in creating table signs and popsicle stick names to be placed strategically in the cafeteria, a list being given to them by the ES ASE Coordinator of how many classes there are and which student is in each one. This allows students to know where to sit when entering the cafeteria, as well as helping the Coordinator take attendance to ensure no one is missing without an excused absence. Along, with the T.A's help, Mr. Art and Ms. Schuppel are also in the cafeteria, monitoring the students to make sure everyone is accounted for. At the end of each session, the Coordinator, Mrs. Lee, Mr. Art, Ms. Schuppel, Mr. Kwak, bus drivers and ASE teachers work together to make certain students are picked up or placed on the right bus, so everyone can arrive home safely.

As it is clear to see, the undertaking of producing a successful, well-organized, fun-filled ASE Session is a huge undertaking, requiring the collaboration of many individuals and departments. Personally, as the ES ASE Coordinator, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone that has helped make this program so successful for our ES community. My sincere hope is that we can continue to provide thoughtful, stimulating, engaging classes that will bring a smile to the faces of our ES students.

Kaushal Patel
Literacy and EAL Support

CELEBRATING OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY

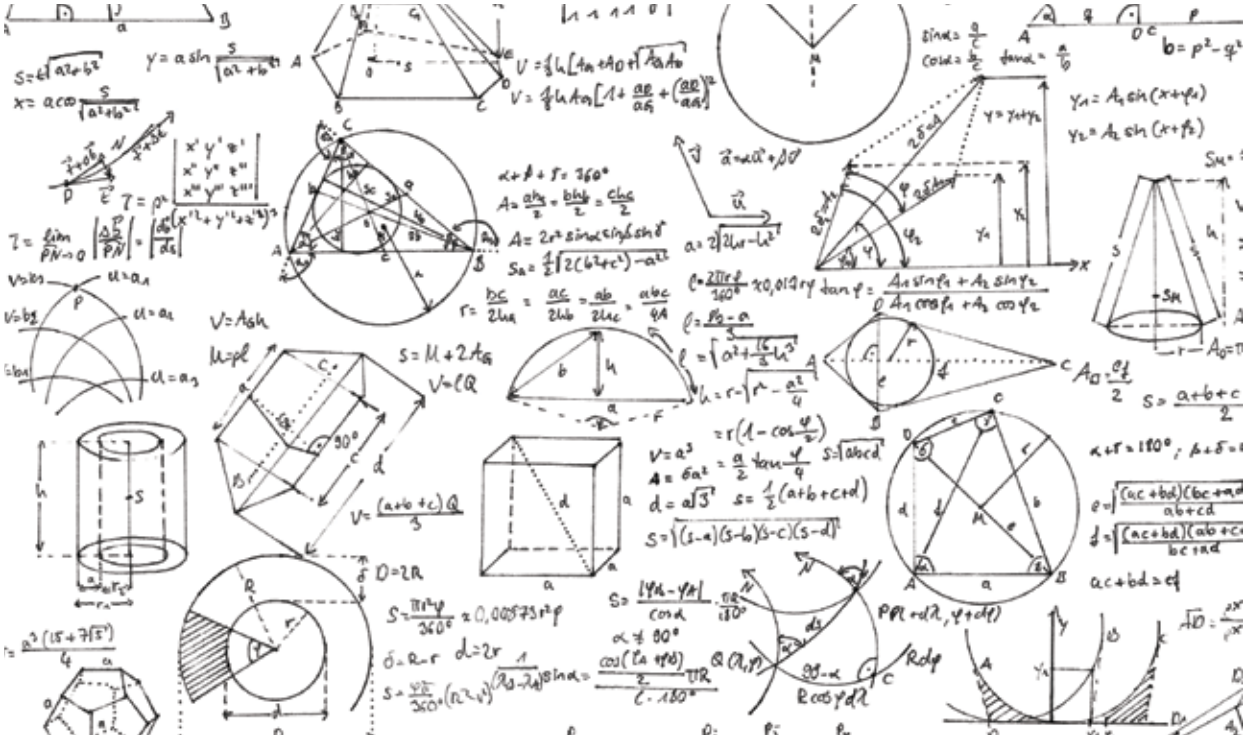
Imagine: students are hunched over their work in groups, talking in hushed tones about their ideas. A student makes a breakthrough and excitedly shares it with peers. Does this describe your experience learning mathematics during high school? For most people, including me, the answer is no. We sat in neat rows, answered questions when called upon, and struggled through homework in isolation at home.

But is this how mathematics is actually practiced? Absolutely not. Take, Paul Erdős, arguably the greatest modern mathematician. He revolutionized many fields of mathematics and co-authored papers with more than five hundred other mathematicians. Even today, mathematicians still brag about their "Erdős number," which is an indication of how far removed your publications are from his. An Erdős number of 1 means that you wrote a paper with him, an Erdős number of 2 means you co-authored a paper with someone who has an Erdős number of 1, and so on. The point of this digression is to demonstrate that collaboration is not optional in mathematics. Indeed, Erdős would have felt right at home in the classroom described at the beginning of this article. Collaboration does not need to occur at all times, but in order to be successful practitioners of mathematics, we must be trained in the habits of collaborative work.

Before coming to SIS, I taught at a boarding school in the United States. Since moving here, I have found that, compared to the students at my old school, our learners are more motivated by academic pressure, more persistent in the face of adversity, and much more capable of working with each other to generate and share understanding. At my old school, if I asked students to engage with each other as part of the learning process, it took constant prodding to achieve even insincere group discussion. Here, genuine collaboration happens before I even ask a question.

Why is there such a big difference between these two learning communities? The answer could be cultural, but that is unlikely. At the secondary level, Korea's educational culture is dominated by large class sizes, lectures and extreme teacher-orientation. The difference could also be that many students participate in after-school lessons. Again, though, hagwons are steeped in the Korean educational tradition and have little incentive to explicitly teach collaborative learning. There is only one other major factor that systematically impacts SIS students differently from the learners at my old school: curriculum. Yes, I am referring to College Preparatory Mathematics.

Given the context, it is no surprise that our students



are such strong collaborators. After all, one of CPM's core principles is that "Guided by a knowledgeable teacher, students should interact in groups to foster mathematical discourse." This is a pedagogic imperative that impacts every student during every period of mathematics at middle- and high-school levels. We are now graduating students who have seven full years of experience with this relentless focus upon collaboration; of course our students will be much stronger collaborators than students who have been through different curricula.

The magnitude of these simple facts is hard to understate. Ten years from now, will my students be finding the vertical asymptotes of rational functions or the nth roots of complex numbers? Almost certainly not. Will they be regularly collaborating to ponder solutions to complex problems? This is highly likely. The skills that are a particular focus of the CPM curriculum – skills with which our students are demonstrably far more fluent than their same-age peers in other schools – are also the skills that will make our graduates effective contributors both in professional settings and to society at large.

This powerful focus upon collaboration in mathematics courses continues, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Certainly in my own classes, students routinely engage with their peers to discuss and solve tricky problems during every class period. As we continue to work our way through these difficult times, let us take a moment to appreciate the large number of SIS students who, thanks to a talented faculty and thoughtfully planned curriculum, are mastering skills that elude even many adults.

Nathan Warkentin
High School Math

BRIDGING THE VERTICAL GAP:

Michael Silber
High School Social Studies

James Kowalski
High School Social Studies

Origination of the Idea

As AP courses go, the Capstone Program is unique. Whereas most AP courses stand alone as discrete academic experiences, Capstone is a two-year sequence of courses: Seminar and Research. Seminar, typically taken in the 11th grade, has students work through two extended research projects, called "performance tasks," one with a group and one individually. For these projects, students investigate a real-world problem of their choosing, develop research-based conclusions, write a report or argument, and present their findings to the rest of the class. In Research, after identifying a gap in the scholarly literature, students individually explore their research questions more intensively by developing a year-long investigation in which they conduct original research and report on their findings in a paper and presentation.

In both courses, students are coached to successful completion of their performance tasks, but there is no safety net. If students develop a flawed research methodology or have faulty reasoning in their argument, the teacher is not allowed to directly intervene. As such, there is maximum accountability on the part of the student to take ownership of their work and build their own proficiency of the course skills. Because there is such considerable independent responsibility, and in order to provide students with a framework of additional support, we developed the AP Capstone Buddy System.

Our goals for this program were: 1) to provide Seminar students with an extra measure of support as they develop their research projects; 2) to allow Research students to reinforce and reflect on the skills they learned in Seminar; 3) to make the transition from Seminar to Research as smooth as possible; and 4) to build a sense of camaraderie and collegiality among students in the program. In other words, by pairing up Seminar and Research students, each would have a soundboard for ideas, a guide, and a friend.

Development of the Buddy System Program

After initially brainstorming the idea, we outlined the goals of the program and identified specific skills that we wanted students to build through their buddy meetings. There were a number of aspects we had to consider to ensure that this program would be well-structured, and that meetings would actually accomplish the goals we had outlined. Such considerations ranged from basic logistics (Where would students meet? How often would they meet? How long should meetings be? Would students schedule meetings themselves?) to ensuring appropriate guidelines (What were students allowed to discuss during meetings? What sort of evaluation would they complete afterward? Would that evaluation count toward their grade?).

Over the following six weeks, we met four times to continue developing the finer points of the program's framework and execution. As we developed the program, we sought a balance between student choice and structure. Throughout our planning, we were mindful of student incentives, and wanted to ensure that there would be a good-faith effort on their part to engage, yet not make the process onerous or cumbersome so as to detract from the program's broader goals. We wanted this to be a positive experience, but recognized that not all students are motivated purely by the possibility of personal growth and helping others.

Implementation of the Buddy System

To help students clearly stay on track to achieve the program's goals, we developed a rubric that students themselves would use to evaluate their buddy meet-

THE AP CAPSTONE BUDDY SYSTEM

ings. The rubric pertained primarily to effective use of time, productive discussion, and positive interaction. In addition to the rubric, we developed a list of effective questions that students were encouraged to ask during the meetings, though students were not limited to them. From our observations of buddy meetings, this list proved highly useful at keeping students focused on the meeting without stifling collaboration or valid student-generated questions. The scheduling of the meetings was the final challenge of this implementation. Initially, we had students sign up for slots during office hours in our rooms over the course of a week. Although we did not want to appear overbearing in this process as teacher facilitators of student collaboration, we thought that it was important that there was some supervision so as to ensure regular attendance and also observe the type of collaboration that was to take place. Giving students choice is generally empowering and does allow them to take ownership. However, in this particular case, we noticed that not all buddy pairs were able to stick with the meeting slot that they had chosen, resulting in several pairs anxiously scrambling to get their meetings done on the last possible day. We therefore decided to assign slots to buddy pairs and this proved effective at ensuring student compliance. Overall, we were quite pleased with the functioning of these meetings and student attendance and enthusiasm.

The Buddy System in Action

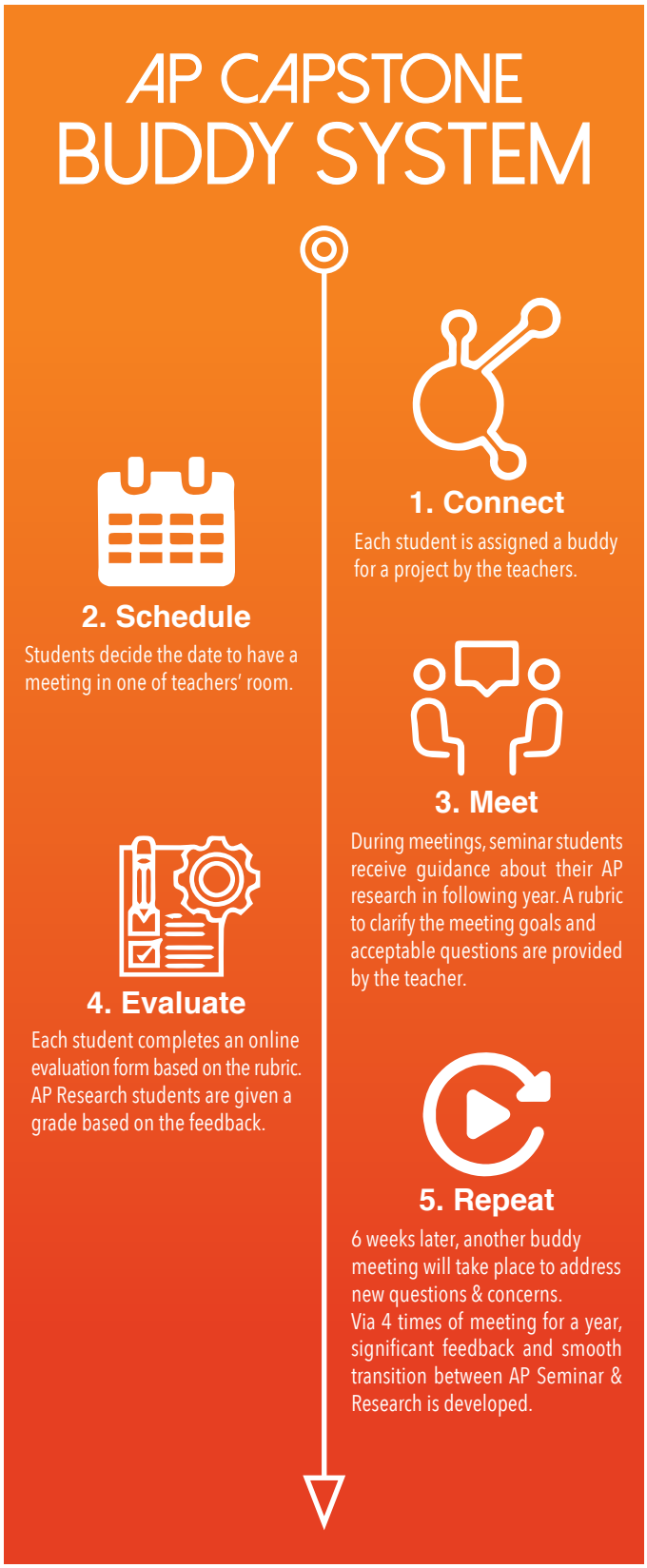
Here is an example of part of a buddy meeting in action:

AP Seminar Student: "Could you help me? I'm having trouble developing an effective research question?"

AP Research Student: "Well, do you have a question that you are currently working on?"

Seminar: "Yes, I'm asking what are the causes of cancer among Korean adults."

Research: "That's an interesting topic, but it's a bit too broad, and might just involve generating a list. What do you really want to know?"



Seminar: "Well, I'm curious to know how lifestyle choices in Korea might be connected to cancer rates."

Research: "Ah, focus on that! Which specific lifestyle habits do you have in mind?"

Seminar: "Koreans are known for eating a lot of red meat and drinking a lot of alcohol, especially soju. How about to what extent has the regular consumption of barbecue beef and alcohol contributed to cancer rates in Korea?"

Research: "Now this is something that you can begin to investigate. You should start checking out the databases. Don't forget that you need to find highly credible peer-reviewed scholarly sources, and that you need to consider multiple perspectives."

Final Thoughts

The AP Capstone Buddy System represents the best of effective teacher-to-teacher and student-to-student collaboration. The program met all of the goals we set out to achieve, which we attribute to the considerable work and planning that went into it: ample planning, ongoing communication, a common vision for success, and student-centered focus. We found that effective collaboration takes time and effort, but it can be successfully realized if teachers are motivated and share responsibility. Furthermore, students collaborated well because the buddy meetings helped them succeed, and the program itself was built with clear organization and goals. In the end, students did not see the buddy meetings as mere tasks to complete in order to get a grade, but rather as opportunities to share their expertise and learn from one another. This experience also made us as teachers more open to future opportunities for collaboration, whether together or with other teachers.

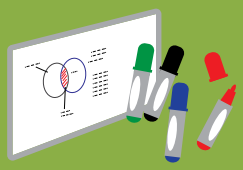
What Happened To SIS Library?!

Renovation points after stakeholder survey & benchmark

- *Create a separate classroom hosting multiple group of students at at time*
- *Airy, light-filled space for study, relax, socialize, & play*
- *Revamp e-book collection for easier access*
- *Relocate book shelves for easier browsing*
- *Create multiple smaller spacesw*

x2 **CHECK OUT (PRINT, E-BOOK)**

x3 **USE OF MEETING ROOM**



SIS Library usage since it's re-open last August

ABOUT LIBRARY RENOVATION

In December 2018, the secondary library staff submitted a proposal to completely renovate the library to reflect current best practices in library design, to better facilitate 21st century learning, and just as importantly, incorporate student and staff requests for a comfortable, multi-use space with a diverse collection of materials. In late winter the proposal was approved and the planning process began in earnest. The library team combined past renovation experience with in-person and online visits to school libraries both in Korea and abroad to gather the best design ideas & examples. Mr. Brodhead's tenth grade English class also assisted by conducting a survey of students and staff in all three divisions. The data they collected included staff and students' opinions about the ideal school library space as well as the ideal collection.

After receiving the survey data and looking at best practices at other schools, the library staff identified a number of big ideas to guide the design process: create multiple smaller spaces featuring a variety of seating options; create an airy, light-filled space that encourages studying, relaxing, socializing and playing games; relocate the book shelves to make the books easier to browse and find; create a separate classroom space so the library can host more than one group of students at a time; and revamp the e-book collection to make access easier and the collection more interesting to students.

Once the project got the green light, the library team drew up draft floor plans to be available to the competing construction companies during the bidding process. The constructions companies' design teams did a walk-through of the facility to see the space firsthand and to ask clarifying questions, based on the draft plan.

The companies then submitted their proposals and the winning company was selected. The library team then met with the construction company four more times before the end of the school year to further refine the plans. Construction began once school finished in June and continued all summer. The new library facility opened its doors to the SIS community when school reopened in August.

As a result of the renovation, the use of the library facility by students and teachers and use of its materials has increased dramatically. For example, book check outs (print and e-books) have almost doubled during the first half of the year when compared to the previous year. Additionally, the number of teachers reserving the library to use with their classes has almost tripled.

Tim Gardes
Middle & High School Librarian

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE LIBRARY INTO A COMMUNITY HUB

The library has always been an essential element of SIS student life, regardless of grade, gender, or personality. Whether it be borrowing a book, studying for a class, or simply chatting with friends, the library represents a space in which a diverse range of student activities take place. Of course, some use it more often than others, but it is hard to dispute that without the library, a great number of students may feel displaced or experience some degree of dissatisfaction.

Notwithstanding its importance, the library was never properly up to date for the past few years. It had very few furniture, and what little furniture we did have was sub-par. But there remained a greater issue with the old library. There are many different elements of student life that a library is supposed to facilitate, but perhaps one of the greatest among them is “collaboration.” A library is supposed to provide an environment where students can study, discuss, and practice together. However, the old library’s ability to enhance collaboration was quite lackluster. Sure, there were basic amenities like round tables but that was about it. It was impossible to rehearse a presentation, have a discussion in silence, or scribble down things for others to see… A good group environment provides a diversity of tools and spaces that improve the collaboration process, and our library lacked this diversity.

However, just a few months ago, the library was newly renovated. With the addition of new furniture, rooms, and displays, the recent renovation seems to have taken much of the aforementioned shortcomings into account. Besides the new look, the library has refurbished itself to be a much more efficient environment for collaboration. There are small group rooms on one side of the library with digital displays or whiteboards installed, perfect for preparing a performance or tutoring others. A corner of the library is now a lounging area, where students are free to sit together and chat. Students involved in large-scale group projects can utilize small classrooms. The collaborative space of the library evolved to adjust for a plethora of demands of different sizes.

A notable effect of the renovation was that it attracted more people to the library. Students previously uninterested in the library began to visit it more often for reasons such as curiosity or its improved comfort. This new influx of students has contributed to greater use of the library as a collaborative space. By pulling more people together, the library has naturally engendered discussion and consequently, cooperation amongst the students. After all, what are “collaborative spaces” without people? Such collaboration is visible in all kinds of different forms. It is not an uncommon sight to see people sitting down together to review the course material for an upcoming test, or solving difficult questions together on a whiteboard, or discussing the next course of action for their assignments. The previously empty table area is now home to a variety of students present for different purposes but a common goal; collaboration.

Joshua Nam
Grade 11

Mr. Gray Macklin
High School Vice Principal

Sia Cho
Grade 12

M I remember sitting in my first education course participating in a discussion about school culture with some skepticism that schools had something that could be defined as a culture. 20 years of working in schools later, not only do I see that different schools have unique cultures, but that culture is in fact what Lee Kuan Yew said it was: destiny; but is it a destiny we inherit or a destiny we create? Sure there is a unique school culture, but it is inextricably linked to a broader education culture, a national culture, and even a class culture.

Through a number of conversations with a current senior, I have come to see that students and teachers, at least, may be a lot closer in what they want school to be like. Because of distrust and blind spots we feel paralyzed to take steps toward the school culture we want. The following is a kind of conversation to identify those blind spots and hopefully establish ways that we can change in our respective roles in order to change the culture of our school.

C Kids are required to go to school but not all adults choose to become teachers. What motivates teachers to enter the profession?

M For the many reasons people enter into the teaching profession, one common thread is certainly to provide a public service. Through their education, professional training, and work, teachers deepen appreciation for the intrinsic value of learning the skills and content in their respective areas, from science to physical education. Seeing that appreciation unfold with students is very fulfilling and contributes greatly to a sense of responsibility to the students they serve. Unfortunately, once we become teachers, we realize that students don't view us as serving in that capacity, but rather as a kind of warden, imprisoning them until society sets them free after four years of good behavior.

C Among both teachers and students, that certainly seems to be the prevailing sentiment: teachers are viewed as wardens, and students consider themselves prisoners. But I feel like this stereotype really doesn't tell the full truth. As students, school is supposed to be a place in which they can be exposed to a multitude of new possibilities in the learning process. Although external factors such as grades and social pressures may sometimes distort this vision, students at their core truly desire to explore, to have the freedom to dictate their own learning and choose their own path. At the same time, students also recognize the value of building strong relationships with peers and teachers.

M But more often it seems like student goals are driven by extrinsic motivations like acceptance from an elite college or pleasing parents. How are these goals reconciled with the aforementioned intrinsic motivations, if they truly exist at all?

C I think that's a fair point to make. Admittedly, in an academically rigorous and habitually competitive setting that we're in, it's hard to make decisions solely based on our inner beliefs. Existing social pressures, as well as prevailing cultural norms, take part in shaping our actions and attitudes toward learning. A lot of times, the pressure to perform, to compete, and to excel overrides other values—in this sense, we don't really have a choice as individuals living in a success-driven society. But at the same time, it's important to note that teachers too are also part of this type of society.

M We are, and there is evidence in academic research indicating that teachers are often responsible for having the greatest impact on student attitudes toward learning, but students are not the only ones responding to external expectations. Parents and colleges expect results and look to teachers and students to deliver them. It is hard to argue against the effectiveness of grades as both the carrot and the stick in achieving those results. What realistic alternative is there to holding students accountable for their own success?

C Well, in an ideal environment, students won't necessarily be held accountable by others, but rather take responsibility through their own volition. In a culture of accountability, when a measure of performance is directly translated to a sense of fulfillment for students, it can go beyond merely promoting a drive for excellence and instead cloud their judgement. To ensure their success and well-being, then, students not only need to be empowered, but also given the support to have faith in themselves and the system regardless of the outcomes. Instead of a reactive, behaviorist approach that stimulates the worst in students through fear and numbers, a proactive approach will be driven by mutual trust.

M But we have something that approaches that in place now with ungraded formative work or the opportunity to practice without penalty. One of the most practical problems surrounding the practice is getting students to invest thought and effort into something that is ungraded. This may be where the locus of power is on this issue; surprisingly already with the students. I think if we saw a measurable change in the approach to formative work, there would be a corresponding rise in trust from teachers. If there was a visible commitment to learning without grades, I think teachers would gladly give up many of the unpleasant accountability aspects of school.

C It's true that students don't view formatives and summatives in the same way. But we also need to acknowledge that because teachers are the ones who are setting standards for students at school, they are also the ones who have the most control over defining what success is in the classroom—or alternatively, quantifying it. Ironically, students are often criticized for being "too focused" on grades, when in fact the letters and numbers seemingly hold as much of a significance for teachers themselves. After all, it's no coincidence that the kids who are deemed to be the "best students" by teachers are often the individuals with the highest grades in the class, not the kids who ace all their formatives. So how can students approach graded and ungraded work equally when the two are not created equal in the first place? The mantra of "treat your formatives like summatives" is often said, but rarely put into practice—perhaps because so much of academic curricula are grade-driven. In an environment that is heavily focused on academic achievement, it's no surprise that we are responding to it by pursuing a narrow version of quantifiable success. If the school system is built to be reactive in such ways, isn't the existence of an accountability-driven culture inevitable?

M It is hard for me to deny that grades are important to teachers. It is arguable that one thing that teachers want the most is to know that they have made a difference in a student's life. Good grades are assigned to good work so when students earn good grades, there is a sense of accomplishment in making that difference.

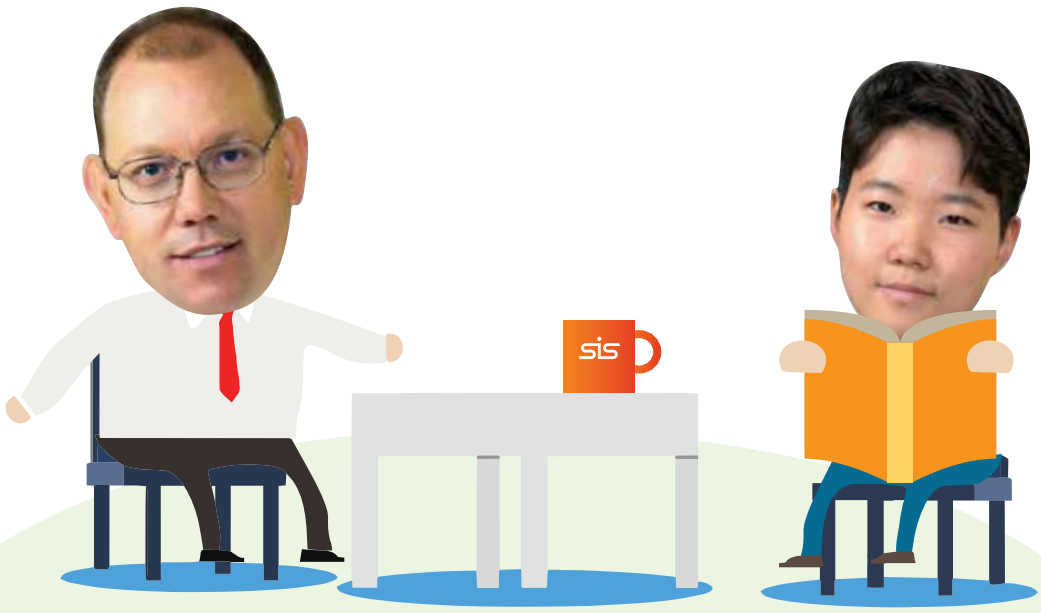
Teachers see two conflicting forces in student behavior: a fear of uncertainty and a fear of risk. Grades create a sense of certainty, but make students avoid risks, sometimes, oddly enough, by taking calculated risks like

cheating. An absence of grades may make it easier for students to take risks, but there is a lack of certainty in the level of achievement with them.

I guess one area we agree on is that grades constitute a very narrow definition of success. Teachers may dislike them as much as students. I think teachers would relinquish the responsibility of defining success to students if they were not held accountable for student achievement.

C Students certainly do fear uncertainty—uncertainty of the future, of bad outcomes, of failure. In order to minimize this uncertainty, they act in ways that seemingly secure their desired outcome—even when those ways jeopardize their integrity and entail other significant risks. To promote responsibility, however, students need to understand that there is no metric that can be applied directly to success. Rather than relying on reactive rule enforcement, a proactive culture should enable students to weigh the importance of their own actions and develop a stable mindset that prioritizes integrity over instant gratification. Whether this comes through a pass/fail system or a seminar-based curriculum, these changes could help to reorient student mindsets and fulfill the original purpose of education. Students, in return, must eliminate the belief that the system is already built for them, and realize that it is built by themselves and their own interactions. In other words, they need to stop looking at school as a rigid stepping stone—or worse, an obstacle—that they must get past to achieve success. Rather, they should transition their view to one that sees the high school experience as a moldable pathway that can be shaped by their own thoughts and actions.

M Well both the teachers and students will need to reduce their response to their fears if we are to operate in a more proactive culture. Systems that are based on responsibility are predicated on a sense of citizenship and, at the risk of being anachronistic, honor. I am not sure how we can redefine a shared definition of success that can eliminate some of the fear, but it is something that I can commit to working on. Likewise, students need to develop some courage when it comes to their fear and begin using student leadership groups like student council and National Honor Society to actually lead students. This will mean taking some hard stances on student issues. The best leaders place demands on those they lead. We can look at preserving or expanding opportunities for students to exercise a sense of responsibility, but if student behavior makes those appear to be working against teachers' ability to do their jobs effectively, then they will not be sustainable.



MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN SAMSUNG JUNIOR ENGINEERING ACADEMY

Jean Piscioneri / Grade 7 Science

For the first time our middle school students , Andrew Kim (7th), Kaden Lee (7th), Daniel Lee (8th) and Sahng-won Lee (8th), had the privilege of being invited to participate in the 2019 Samsung Junior Engineering Academy last November 19-20th, 2019 at Samsung Engineering Headquarters in Seoul. The event offered a comprehensive education course where all lectures were delivered by the principal engineers from Samsung Engineering Co., Ltd. Sustainable development and engineering, understanding renewable energy, water treatment and petrochemical engineering were among the key points of the lectures. There was a total of 40 student participants from 10 countries - Australia, Georgia, India, Uzbekistan, South Korea, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Thailand and U.A.E.

At the end of the workshop, participants were tasked to create their idea of an Eco-city based on what they learned from the lectures. Our MS students learned a great deal from this event. Additionally, they had this great opportunity of meeting and interacting with other young middle schoolers from other countries.

Here are their personal reflections…

"Most of the lectures were interesting, but there was one which hooked my attention. The lecture was about safety engineering, I think I felt much more interesting about it because I didn't know that safety engineering was actually an existing subject. We got a chance to move in to another building where we tried simulations of safety precautions in the world of engineering." - by ***Kaden Lee*** (7th grade)

"It was a great opportunity for me to express what I know and what I want to do in the future. I learned more details about bio-engineering, which I am very interested in, by listening to the Engineers'' lectures. I had the opportunity of meeting new friends with similar interests as me, and I was able to cooperate and work with them. I am very thankful for Samsung for giving me this opportunity." - by ***Andrew Kim*** (7th grade)

"The Samsung Engineering Academy was a humbling experience for me to discover my potential in the engineering field for our environment. In this two-day event, we learned about waste treatment engineering, safety engineering, and energy usage that could prompt our future generation to an eco-environment. I highly recommend those of you guys who are interested in science and the environment." -by ***Daniel Lee*** (8th grade)

From Left: Jean Piscioneri, Andrew Kim, Sahng-Won Lee, Daniel Lee, Kaden Lee

"From the Samsung Engineering Academy, I learned multiple things. I learned more about the different types of engineering, and engineering in general. I liked making new friends at the Engineering Academy. I also liked the team building activities there." - by ***Sahng-Won Lee*** (8th Grade)

It was such a great experience for our middle school students to be a part of this event. The organizers of this event, Ms. Erica Lima and Ms. Juhyon Yeon, did such an amazing job in facilitating the logistics of this workshop, and in accommodating the participants. The entire 2-day workshop was well executed. It was a great way of bringing young students together to collaborate and become well informed on the topic of sustainable engineering. We look forward to the Samsung Engineering Academy as an annual event for our SIS students.

Jean Piscioneri
Grade 7 Science

"Let's hear from SIS Tigers"

What is your Best Collaboration Memory ?

To hear diverse voices of SIS Tigers, we conducted the survey about collaboration via Instagram last April. A number of students, teachers and staff along with parents shared their best collaboration experiences. Here are their best collaboration memories.

SIS Global Issues Network painting a mural for orphans in Thailand!

- Eugene Jang

The Christmas party "dance" collaboration was a beautiful memory that I will never forget.

- Irene De Shazo

Best memory that I can remember was when the volleyball team won AISA!

- Andrew Song

How 8th grade team collaborated to ensure that the exceptional learning and teaching our parents and students are accustomed to continued without a hitch

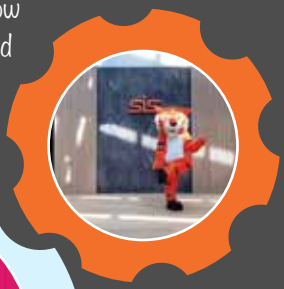
- Terence Tong

Being able to successfully deliver family fun day for everyone to enjoy

- Eun Kyung Park
Parents of Andrew(G.9) & Philip(G.9)

The talent show

- Alma Tyvand



My best memory is the Little Shop of Horrors Musical! It was full of fun+frustration but it shomehow ended up very nicely!

- Rin Kishimoto

I love the way my students work together to share their ideas and what we've been learning. Even in first grade, they creatively stretch the thinking of their friends in order to deepen understanding for all!

- Diahn Hill

Grateful for wonderful memories of collaborative performances with students, faculty, and staff for UNICEF.

- Hye Yong Min

THIMUN 2020: AN EXERCISE IN COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION

On Jan. 24, members of both the SIS Model United Nations club and Seoulite press team, accompanied by advisors James Kowalski and Wendy Grant, traveled to the Netherlands in order to take part in THIMUN 2020. As one of the largest and most prestigious international MUN conferences, the event attracted hundreds of participants from high schools all around the globe. Despite lasting just over a week, the trip ultimately proved to be a memorable and enriching experience for students and advisors alike.

The group began their journey in Amerstam, where they got an opportunity to enjoy the sights and sounds of the city several days ahead of the conference. With a visit to the Anne Frank House, a lunch at the famous Pancake Bakery, and a canal boat tour, the itinerary was packed with a variety of interesting experiences. In between these tourist attractions, students also found plenty of time to explore and navigate the bustling, bicycle-packed streets of the urban center. Throughout these excursions, students developed stronger bonds with each other as time passed and eventually found themselves collectively spending time together to make the best of their trip.

"I definitely enjoyed the first few days of the trip, and I think that the planned activities definitely helped me bond with some of the other students during the trip," said Hugh Kang (11), MUN club member. "We were a diverse mix of grade levels, so there naturally were some divisions among the group. However, as we spent more time together and worked toward collective goals, such as huddling around a single person's phone to find our way back to a pre-designated meeting spot on time, such divides naturally faded away and we definitely were a much more cohesive group by the end of the trip."

After spending two days in Amsterdam, the group relocated to The Hague, where they would officially begin their participation in THIMUN. At the conference,

The Hague International Model United Nations

SIS delegates were tasked with representing Liechtenstein, one of the smallest countries in the UN. Despite representing such a tiny nation, however, SIS delegates found their voices in their respective committees, often leading group discussions and even main submitting whole resolutions. With representation across six different General Assemblies and the Sustainable Development Commision, along with roles in MUNITY (the

THIMUN newspaper) and the student officer team, SIS surely made its mark upon THIMUN 2020.

"I was proud to watch delegates from SIS collaborate with other members of their committees to craft creative resolutions to solve some of the world's most pressing problems," said Leonard Lee (12), President of the Sustainable Development Commission. "Every year that I have gone to THIMUN as a student officer, it has always been so rewarding to watch as students who had come from opposite sides of the globe worked together to find common ground and manage to engage themselves in fruitful debates that would go on for hours. As a chair, I also got an opportunity to help lead the debate, and develop my own skills in leadership. All in all, I believe SIS had a very strong showing at this year's THIMUN, which will always be special to me as the last MUN conference of my high school career."

Christopher Shin
Grade 11

A STRENUOUS, YET INVALUABLE EXPERIENCE

As a charity club, we feel obligated to donate every year, but where do we get the money to buy supplies, improve schools' facilities and the clothes to donate? To start off, we earn our money from three services we provide the school. Every Tuesday, during office hours, we have coffee sales where members of UYSC (United Youth Service Club) deliver drinks to the faculty around the entire campus. To give our customers a wide range, we serve a variety of drinks, such as americanos, lattes, peppermint teas, hot chocolate and occasionally cookies as well! Along with the coffee sales, we have after-school donut sales on the same day, earning a total of around 80,000 won each week. Nevertheless, we have one paramount event that we hold annually: the UYSC Talent Show. In this event, there are clubs, students, even teachers performing. Though this is a high school event, we welcome eighth graders to join and watch since they will be freshmen in a few months. In order to attract students and teachers to buy tickets, there is a raffle for a prize at the end. Just to clarify, the prize is not bought with the club's money instead, the club executives each pitch in. Moreover, we have a clothing drive open for donation from students in all school departments for the students in Cambodia; we bring all the clothing with us to Cambodia.

Although we travel to Cambodia with the object of teaching and donating, we attempt to learn about Cambodian culture to the fullest extent because we feel that it is impertinent to go to a country and to leave without learning anything about what they stand for, which is why we, at all times, give UYSC members a chance to learn. At the start of the trip last year, we made a visit to the Cambodian Landmine Museum; the landmine museum primarily pays respect to a distinguished man who risked his life to remove landmines spread throughout the country. In this visit to the museum, not only did we learn about the heroic acts the man has accomplished for the country, but we also learned about the hardships

and hair, which is the manner of life international kids will never experience. Though we go to each and every school being a teacher, we come out learning something from the Cambodian children as well.

To summarize, we want students of SIS to at least take into consideration joining this club. Despite the weather and the effort, it is all worthwhile because the jollity and high spirits the children exhibit is honestly priceless.

the Cambodian community went through in the 20th century. The knowledge we perceive after visiting the museum does not simply educate us with regards to Cambodian history, it teaches us about a variety of other subjects such as why Cambodia's economic status quo is at a lacking state today, and also about the customs and mannerisms of Cambodian heritage.

Essentially, the reason why UYSC is putting so much time and exertion in earning money and gathering clothes is to better the lives of hundreds of Cambodian students. Last year, we visited four different schools, CS Kampong Phuk, KP Floating School, Po Trey and Norodam Soramaright, donating either school materials, clothes, or improving the school's facility by painting the building. Considering the fact that members are teaching children at an age range of six to eighteen, it is not an effortless task. In hot and moist weather, exhaustion piles up fast when you are taking care of twenty to thirty sprightly children. However, the children make it easier for us to teach and play games with them because they are tremendously loving and appreciative. To give an example, when we arrived at KP Floating School, the children formed a line for us to walk through, with both hands together, displaying respect for our visit. Over and above that, when we teach, not only are we able to act along the lines of being a little kid and have fun, we acquire a slight perspective on what it's like to be a kid living in a third-world country. For those who are unfortunate, they have no shoes to cover their feet while carrying around ragged bookbags and dirt all over their face

Additionally, during the trip, we all have a growing realization of how fortunate our lives are to live in a safe place with such advanced technology. Because we are forced to compare our lives in South Korea with Cambodia, we overcome our indolent behaviors and attain a more appreciative mindset. There is not a chance that any of us can fully comprehend what it is like to live in Cambodia, yet through a one-week experience, we can somewhat walk in another person's shoes.

Sophia Eu
Grade 10

MY CHILDHOOD DREAM, QUIZ SHOW

Ever since I was a toddler living in the United States, I have been a huge fan of television game shows. I had dreams of both playing them and hosting them when I grew up. "COME ON DOWN" and "SURVEY SAYS"—phrases from the hit shows The Price is Right and Family Feud respectively—were some of my first complete sentences. My older brother Fred shared these dreams with me. We would buy or make—sometimes even on our Apple II computer—home versions of our favorite game shows and take turns playing the roles of host and contestant.

I held onto these dreams throughout my early childhood. But when I moved to Korea and entered SIS as a 7th grader, I started taking classes like geometry with Mr. Noone that actually challenged me. This jarred me into letting go of my dreams and start thinking about more "respectable" career options such as those in medicine, law, and engineering. Medicine went out the window that fateful day in AP Biology when my lab partner and I frantically struggled to get our fingers pricked for a blood sample to analyze. Law did as well after I had watched one too many episodes of the hit series LA Law on the Armed Forces Korea Network and became concerned that I might be forced to do something against my conscience. So that left me with engineering. I ended up taking AP Computer Science the very first year it was been offered at SIS, found it interesting enough to pursue degrees in computer science at both Rice University and Indiana University, and then made IT my career focus to this day.

Sounds depressing, doesn't it? I let go of my childhood dreams to pursue something more mainstream. But one day, my dreams actually came to pursue ME. Months after I had started my first job in IT in Houston, Texas, my local news reported that the iconic word puzzle game show Wheel of Fortune was coming to town looking for contestants for a special series of locally taped shows. Miraculously I was selected out of tens of thousands of Texans that had applied. Sadly I wound up winning $0 on the show, but I didn't care; I was living my childhood dream! Over the next 20 years, I eventually tried out and was selected to play on three more game shows—***The Price is Right, The $100,000 Pyramid***, and ***Who Wants to be a Millionaire***—winning over $35,000 in cash and prizes.

But all this time I still worked in IT. Surely then I must have never fulfilled my dream to become a game show host in front of a large audience. But after I had been on my last game show as a contestant in 2018, that dream came running to join the first. At work, I started receiving and accepting invitations to emcee company-wide events where I could host mini-versions of popular game shows with customized material for ice breakers and entertainment. My local church in Houston also decided to start holding annual game show nights and invited me to host popular game shows—including the very two shows that first captured my attention as a toddler, ***The Price is Right*** and ***Family*** Feud—in front of crowds of over 500 people. And then to top it all off, last year I ended up winning a contest to cohost the live online mobile game show ***HQ Trivia***—for a playing audience of over 100,000 people! The experience was everything I thought it would be and more. Toddler me would NEVER have imagined it!

It is often said that we should "follow our dreams." But from my experience with my own dreams and from talking to others about theirs, I don't think it's quite as simple as that.

Yes, sometimes we should follow our dreams, but sometimes we should make adjustments to them instead based on what we've recently learned about ourselves and the world around us. And sometimes we should even allow our dreams to pursue US. Our ability to seek and apply wisdom when it comes to our dreams will ultimately determine how successful we are in life and how much of an impact we make on our world. And that, as I uttered multiple times to host Chris Harrison on ***Who Wants to be a Millionaire***, is my final answer.

Eugne Byon / Class of 1991

Eugene Byon graduated from SIS in 1991. He has degrees in computer science from Rice and Indiana. He has worked for ExxonMobil in IT for over 22 years and is currently in a team coaching role. He lives in Houston, Texas with his wife and 3 children.

SPECIAL BONDING WITH SIS

When we decided to move back to South Korea from Germany in 2018, we had the tough task of finding a school for our daughters. We already had good exposure to international schools in Korea during our previous stay here. Based on our previous experience and expectations, this time we were looking for a school that focuses on all-round development but at the same time gives very high priority to academics. This was a decisive factor and one of the main reasons for choosing Seoul International School (SIS) for our kids.

We have had a great experience with SIS so far, be it the quality of academics, teaching and non-teaching staff, facilities or the positive environment that SIS provides to students. SIS is also instrumental in teaching moral values and responsibility towards the society which students clearly demonstrates at home by showing the likes and dislikes about certain things while watching the TV or while reading books. Apart from that, SIS makes every effort to connect with parents, which makes us feel like the extended family of SIS. Saturday booster program is one such activity, which is a sort of basic training for sports like basketball, swimming, soccer, etc. This program is a great opportunity to meet other parents and teachers in an informal environment.

SIS annual family fun-day was another opportunity to actively participate and support different activities. We helped in running the stall that was set up by the parents of our elder daughter's class. We met many parents, talked on length to understand everyone's perspective about the school, education, and topics such as their experience from previous country where they had stayed, culture and education style followed there. It was very insightful to understand the diverse perspective from other parents with extensive global exposure.

SIS also encourages parents to participate in field trips as chaperones. Going to these field trips with kids gives us more insight into the behavior and relationship with other classmates. I had the opportunity to accompany Sophie during one of these trips. Our kids also get a sense of behavior in a complex learning environment where both parents and teachers are present at the same time. This is something unusual, but it proves to be is very effective to bridge the gap that kids usually keep in their behavior in front of the teachers and the parents.

The Suzuki violin class conducted by Dr. Park asked for mandatory participation from parents to sit with the beginner level students during the classes so that they can help their kids practice at home. It was such a novel concept to include parents in the classroom to encourage a collaborative learning effort.

Although every teaching and non-teaching staff of SIS is awesome, I would like to especially mention Mr. Art who is one of the most approachable, humorous, and dedicated educators we have ever met. Every time we meet Mr. Art, it boosts our confidence and gives us the certainty that our kids are in responsible and safe hands.

Last but not least, as one of the very few non-ethnic Korean parents of SIS, it was quite possible to get the feeling of being left out. However, SIS was always very inclusive and made sure that all communications from school are communicated in the timely manner. We truly believe that the values and experience earned at SIS are going to play a major role our children's future life. Choosing SIS was one of the best decisions we made for our children. We are glad to be part of the SIS extended family!

Meenakshi Sah Dr. Sudhakar Sah
Parents of sarah(G.6) & Sophie(G.2)

TAKING OVER A BIG ROLE:

Eight years after his arrival, former Athletics and Activities Coordinator, Ivan Atanaskovic departed SIS, having built a successful, impressive, comprehensive program over the course of his tenure. Before departing, Ivan and I sat down for nearly four months for a weekly meeting to help with the seamless transition in my new role. This sense of collaboration that took place between Mr A. and I in many ways exemplifies the community as a whole here at SIS, where students, teachers, and the administration collaborate to deliver the best program possible.

Having been in the classroom for 16 years before shifting into my current role, collaboration was always important when working with other teachers while implementing new curriculum, and constructing shared summative tasks. However, in my current role, engaging with the whole school community, from the cafeteria staff, student leadership, coaches, athletes, and teachers, the necessity for excellent communication and collaboration becomes most apparent to keep the athletics and activities program churning along like the well oiled machine that Mr. A helped to build. So it was with that understanding that I sought to make my first year as the

TRANSITION, COLLABORATION AND ACHIEVEMENT

Athletics and Activities Coordinator a purposeful one, sustaining an already effective program.

Sadly, we had an abbreviated athletics and activities calendar this year, needing to cancel our spring sports season, along with numerous international trips over the course of February through June due to Covid-19. That being said, our first six months of the school year were memorable, seeing our Boys Volleyball team taking the AISA Championship and Conference Championship in one of the most successful volleyball teams SIS has produced in some time. Along with success on the court, we also saw our tennis teams perform at an exceptionally high level, with the girls winning the KAIAC tournament championship for the first time in many years. As winter progressed, and the basketball season commenced, you could feel the heightened excitement for two of the best basketball programs witnessed at SIS in many years. As a new Athletic Director, one of the easiest ways to succeed in one's job is to be blessed with such great coaches, and our basketball program has just that, a seasoned crew of coaches that has led our teams to championships on a yearly basis. This year was no different.

Along with athletics, it is my role to help organize the activities program at SIS. Working with all divisions to deliver excellent programs has been extremely rewarding, and I look forward to helping to grow the options included in our extra and co-curricular program in the near future. This would not be possible without the support from the club advisors, ES and MS sports coordinators, and the ASE coordinators at each level. Our comprehensive activities program is built on the collaboration that allows for our students to have a multitude of activities to choose from at each grade level, We all look forward to another successful school year in 2020-2021!

Jonathan Ames
Athletics & Activities Coordinator

A Year In Activities

2019

August	HS	Ambassadors Choir Retreat at Gangwon-do
	HS	Volleyball, XC, Tennis Season
September	ES	Soccer Boosters
	ES	Grade 4/5 Soccer
	ES/MS/HS	Family Fun Day
	MS	Soccer and Cross Country Season
October	HS	NEAMC Math Competition in Jakarta
	HS	AISA Boys Volleyball Tournament in KIS
	HS	AISA Girls Volleyball Tournament at Osaka
	HS	AISA Cross Country Meet in Busan
	HS	Cross Country Invitational @ SIS in Wirye
	HS	Dragon Cup Tennis Tournament in Beijing
	HS/MS	AQT Quiz Tournament at SIS
	HS	KAIAC Forensics Tournament at KIS
	HS	History Bee and Bowl Competition at SFS
	HS	KAIAC JV boys and Girls Tournaments
	MS	Grade 7 Trip to Vivaldi Park
November	HS	Basketball and Cheer Season
	MS	Swimming Season
	ES/MS/HS	KAIAC Chess Tournament at YISS
	ES	Grade 4/5 Flag Football
	HS	SEOMUN Conference at SFS
	HS	KAIAC Forensics Tournament at SIS
	HS	KAIAC Music Judging Workshop at SIS
	HS	KAIAC Cross Country Meet at KIS
	HS	KAIAC Tennis Tournament at Olympic Park
	HS	KAIAC Boys Volleyball Cup Tournament hosted by SFS
	HS	KAIAC Girls Volleyball Cup Tournament at CDS
	HS	Little Shop of Horrors School Play
	MS, HS	AQT Quiz Tournament at KIS
	HS	Korea Classic Basketball Tournament at SFS
	HS	National Public Speaking Championship at SIS
December	ES/MS/HS	Winter Concerts
	HS	Ambassadors Concert at Grand Hyatt and Hilton
	HS	UYSC Trip to Cambodia

2020

January	HS	KAIAC Forensics Tournament at YISS
	HS	AISA Girls Basketball Tournament in SIS
	HS	AISA Boys Basketball Tournament in Osaka
	HS	AISA Math and Leadership at Busan
	HS	THIMUN Conference in Hague
	HS	KAIAC JV boys basketball tournament at Osan
	HS	KAIAC JV girls basketball tournament at Dwight
	MS/HS	Physical Theatre Workshop and Performance
	ES	Swimming Boosters
	MS	CIMUN at CI
February	MS	MS Table Tennis and Volleyball Season
	ES	Grade 4/5 Basketball
	HS	Soccer, Badminton, and Swim Season

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