



ISSUE #6

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THE MEDDEE

The Weekly Newsletter of the International School of Ulaanbaatar

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings to all

Thankfully the number of wet days we've had this past month has been so few. Except for our snowy Wednesday this week, the team working on our new sports fields has been able to work more or less



unhindered. On **Friday October 7th**, at **2.00 pm**, there will be a ceremony to mark the opening of these new turf-covered fields. If you can be in the back of the school at that time next week, we'd love to have you attend the celebrations.

Thinking of celebrating, our school year has really only just begun – a mere 40 days into the 180-day school year, and as I observe what's happening here with the eye's and ears of somebody new to ISU, I find so much reason to celebrate almost every day. Walking into Primary and Secondary classrooms filled with students so engaged in their learning, directed with care and skill by such passionate teachers; attending Primary and Secondary Student Council meetings where student leaders harness the enthusiasm and collective wisdom of their fellow Council reps; eating lunch in the cafeteria filled wall-to-wall with the chatter of happy, well-fed and well-behaved children; watching from the spectator stands in the gym our volleyball teams exhibit skilled and disciplined sportsmanship as they compete against other UB schools in our newly-formed local sports league; receiving cheery "good morning" greetings at the front of the school from parents and students eager to get to school every day – so many reasons for us to celebrate student learning at ISU.



The primary business of ISU is of course student learning. However, this learning cannot occur effectively without the foundation of a safe, caring, and positive school environment. It would seem from what I describe above that this foundation is indeed in place. As much as we celebrate this fact today, there is much room for growth. We must continuously work hard to maintain and build upon this

foundation. This requires a tremendous amount of on-going discussion and planning – guided always by the precisely worded statements of our school philosophy and objectives.

These guiding principles are capsulized in our ISU Mission, Vision, and Motto. Given that we are about to welcome the Accreditation Visiting Team a week from now, I think it's timely that we review now these fundamentals of ISU education. Then over the next several Meddee editions, we will review further each of the six goals of our five-year strategic plan in more detail-goals that derive directly from

our ISU philosophy.

THE GUIDING CORE VALUES OF ISU

ISU's core values are the foundation for our priorities and serve to hold us accountable to ourselves and to our community. We believe that:

- a well-rounded education balances the academic, physical, social and emotional development of students while accounting for their unique talents and abilities;
- a multicultural environment enables a broader world view and affords students the opportunity to develop an understanding and appreciation of diversity;
- a learning environment that provides students a sense of belonging and individual worth encourages mutual respect and fosters character development;
- a balanced education provides students with the tools, confidence and motivation to excel in the face of challenge, and orients them toward post secondary and life-long learning;
- an international school is enriched by the relationship with its host country, which serves as an important resource for strengthening the learning experience;
- education is the shared responsibility of all members of the school community - parents, teachers, staff and students.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our school's reputation is founded on the world-class International Baccalaureate (IB) program, personalized to each student's needs and facilitated by an expert staff. Our mission defines the purpose of our school and guides our decision-making so that we can achieve our vision.

Our mission, in partnership with the ISU community, is to:

Achieve excellence in all that we do to inspire the unique potential of our students to contribute and thrive in a global society.

We will accomplish our mission by committing to:

- provide excellence in international education while encouraging the unique potential of our students;
- inspire our students to respect cultural diversity and the environment;
- invest in a holistic educational experience that empowers students to become global citizens, life long learners and critical thinkers.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision we hold for our school clearly defines where we are headed and what we aspire to achieve over the next five years. It will help build our community and inspire action, yet keep us grounded.

Drawing on Mongolia's unique cultural heritage and environment, ISU offers a world class international education to prepare students for higher learning and for life.

SCHOOL MOTTO

*Empowering Students to Make a Difference
With
Education in Mind
Community in Heart
Success in Life*



Robert Stearns, Director

DIARY DATES:

October 8	ISU Soccer Tournament 11:00-17:00
October 9-14	IBO/CIS/NEASC Accreditation Team visit
October 17-25	Fall Break
October 24,25	Professional Development Day for Teachers

SECONDARY NEWS

This has been an exciting week at ISU, as the weather has changed and snow is already upon us. Please be sure that your children are dressed appropriately – even though they are older, they get cold!

The outdoor fields are closer to completion with the plastic grass. We are excited to see the green, the red, the lines and the basketball hoops. A big thank you to the school board and in particular Mr. Burak Inanc for organizing this for all of us to enjoy and play on.

Our YAC students from high school went out last weekend for an overnight trip (see next article) and they will go out again for a day long hill climb while the Jr. YAC group will go out for the whole weekend hiking and climbing supervised by Chris Cartwright, Maggie Dawson and Kristen Idiens. I am sure that all of these students had fun or will have fun on these adventures.

Have a great weekend!

Betsy Hanselmann, Head of Secondary

Senior YACs

The ISU Senior YACs made their first foray into the outdoors this school year, with a two-day backpacking expedition in the Bogd Khan Mountains. They left the Bogd Khan ger camp, behind Zaisan and hiked up on to the western ridge of the valley before following a trail for the next five hours into the Nukht valley.



Students carried all of their equipment and provisions for the trip in packs that weighed, in some cases, in excess of 15kg. On arrival at the camp site, students set about making their home for the night and preparing their evening meals. It was great to see the improvement in the students' culinary skills, from the first trip they did two years ago and a relief that all



the pans could be cleaned with a minimum of effort. From boiled bacon and burnt rice to beef goulash – what a transformation!

The ISU YACs programme is designed to give students the skills to enjoy the outdoors independently and with minimum impact on the environment. Throughout the year the senior YACs will be working towards achieving the John Muir Award (Explorer level) which is awarded for discovering and conserving wild spaces. If you are aware of any conservation projects that students could get involved in please contact Dave Chilton or Dave Lauchmen at the following email addresses:

d.chilton@isumongolia.edu.mn; d.lauchmen@isumongolia.edu.mn

Dave Chilton, MYP Coordinator

Sustainable Cities

On Monday morning, Grade 9 students went on a field trip to the Flourishing Futures community centre in the Bayanzurkh district. They were gathering information for their unit on Sustainable Cities which is an inter-disciplinary unit between Humanities and Design Technology. Students went on a walking tour of the ger district, listened to one resident share her life story and carried out a very realistic budgeting exercise before returning to ISU.

Flourishing Futures is a long-standing NGO in the city and provides many services to some of the most poverty-stricken members of the community. Part of their work includes education programmes for kindergarten children and young adults, vocational training, food and fuel distribution and supporting local families with construction projects. If you would like to visit or get involved with Flourishing Futures, please contact Troy Trvdik rinkydinkadt@yahoo.com



David Chilton and Ken Vanderstoep



PRIMARY NEWS

Primary School Production

Recently I attended the auditions for the December Primary School Production, "Alice in Wonderland". With much enthusiasm, 69 primary children expressed interest in assuming one of the 25 speaking roles. What a wonderful example of students being risk takers!

Something very special about this production is that all 150 of the primary students will be on stage at one point during the performance and that every child will have the opportunity to develop the IB learner profiles through the arts. The Primary Production truly enhances the balanced educational experience that ISU students receive. A big thank you goes to Ms. Bailey-Summers, Ms. Sarantungaa and Mr. Kidson for organizing and assisting with the auditions. We look forward to the production journey ahead!

Rick Elya, Head of Primary

ISU PTG Meeting Sept. 27, 2011

Attendees:

Pam Mewbourn Karen Bailey-Summers
Betsy Hanselman Elizabeth Bailey-Summers
Charlotte O'Connell Tom Loughlan
Bo-Kyoung Kim Bileg

It has been discussed to move the **PTG meeting times**. Parent attendance has been poor, which frustrates the teachers and administration who have taken time away from their students, our children.

Morning meetings were scheduled because last year many parents promised to attend morning meetings. We realize scheduling may be difficult, that is why Elizabeth sent out the **meeting time survey** (see below). Please respond, please participate. We understand parent participation may be a new concept for some cultures, but the benefits of parental involvement are tremendous.

We are trying to find translators for the Korean parents, and Ms. Sara, the other music teacher, has agreed to act as translator for the Mongolian parents.

As a parent run school, the parents need to be involved, not just the few who are on the board. The teachers need and appreciate our support and involvement.

Thank you!

PTG meeting time survey

Please respond back as to what day (Tues, Wed, or Thur) and time (either 0830 or 1500) would be most convenient for you to attend the PTG meetings. The teachers would not mind meeting after school, 1500 - 1600. Please try to let me know by Friday your preferences, I will tally the results and will submit a change for the next meeting time and day. Please send your response to Elizabeth at Elizabeth Bailey-Summers schnauzman1765@gmail.com

Fall Fair Recap

The Fair was a huge success. Bileg provided a breakdown of cost/profits - **PTG's Financial report**, which can be found at ISU website: <http://isumongolia.edu.mn/school-life/the-ptg>

Historically, 50% of Fall Fair profits have gone towards community donations. This year, a small portion is going to be used to help pay Registration Fees

of financially insecure students to attend the ISCMS (an International Honour Chorus) Festival in Beijing. ISU pays registration fees for Sporting Events, however, as NO Fine Arts Program has ever attended such a festival, there is no budget for ISU to pay these fees for this year. We expect that to be rectified by the next fiscal year. This is a small one time donation, and we don't expect much impact on the overall community donation fund.

As noted in Bileg's chart, the Bake/Feed Me sale did well. We think it would have been even better if more food had been provided – the Feed Me part ran out of Chili and Hot Dogs by 1230. Next year we will try to recruit more food items.

Upcoming Events

Accreditation Visit – October 9 – 14

PTG will set up a refreshment table in the morning for visiting team. Elizabeth has volunteered to do this.

International Week – November 14 – 17

PTG organizes food items brought from families into tables of country of origin.

PTG has charged a small plate fee in the past, can continue charging plate fees, esp. for non-school attendees. Idea for armbands for students?

Pam put forth an idea to have an International Basket Raffle. We could raffle 1 basket filled with international items or several from each country. Ideas???

Betsy will check with Mr. Stearns about moving the food night to Sunday the 20th, in order to give parents and staff more time to prepare food and tables. Apparently this is a HUGE crowd, with many community members attending. Pam or Elizabeth will check the number of disposable items in PTG closet available for use.

Winter Performance – December 8

The Primary School will be performing the musical 'Alice in Wonderland'.

Mrs. Bailey-Summers has, in the past, used these events as a charity project for her classes. Her classes will decide upon which charity and what items are needed (i.e. Money, food, warm clothes...).

PTG usually has a bake sale. As the performance will be around dinner time, it was suggested that sandwiches or other like items be provided. Another Bake/Feed Me sale, as it were.

Needed Items for the Art Classes The Art teachers are requesting recyclable items such as cardboard toilet paper rolls for projects.