

**Council of International  
Schools**

**New England Association of  
Schools and Colleges**

**ADDITIONAL GRADES VISITORS' REPORT**

on the

**INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF ULAANBAATAR  
MONGOLIA**

**Report by the on-site Visitors  
following a  
Request for Accreditation  
of Additional Grades**

**ADDITIONAL GRADES EVALUATED:**

**Grades 11 and 12**

**April 22-25, 2007**

**VISITORS:**

**For NEASC:**

**Ken Imperato  
NEASC Evaluator  
Connecticut Dept. of Education**

**For CIS:**

**Margaret Alvarez  
Accreditation Officer  
CIS**

## INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1992 and situated close to the city center, the International School of Ulaanbaatar (ISU) is a non-profit, independent and coeducational establishment serving an international community in grades PK – 12. Grades 11 and 12 were established in 2002 and the school gained authorization for the IB Diploma program in 2002.

ISU is legally recognized by the Mongolian government as well as the United States Embassy. This recognition gives the school a tax free status. The school is governed by an elected ten-member Board.

ISU currently enrolls 201 students, 101 boys and 110 girls, housed in two adjacent buildings in an inner city neighborhood. There are 109 students in the Elementary School (Preschool - Grade 5), and 92 students in the Secondary School (Grades 6-12). The school's newest grades, Grades 11 and 12 currently enroll 16 students.

Thirteen teachers work in Grades 11 and 12. All of these teachers work within the MYP section of the school. These teachers come from: the United States, Korea, France, Mongolia, the United Kingdom, Canada, China, and India.

Students in Grades 11 and 12 can choose between studying for a full IB Diploma, IB certification, the ISU Diploma or combinations of the above. In general classes take place within regular IB Diploma classes with teachers differentiating instruction and assessment for the different levels in the class. Theory of Knowledge is a graduating requirement for all students.

The school is about to move to a purpose-built site on the outskirts of the city. The new site will afford facilities more suitable to students studying at this level as well as facilities for older students such as a junior and senior lounge. In addition, the school is currently developing resources for the IB Diploma and building on its faculty knowledge base.

In 2006 the school approached CIS and NEASC with a view to adding its Grade 11 and 12 to its Preschool - Grade 10 accreditation. The Additional Grades Visit took place as part of the school's scheduled 5 Year Visit in April 2007. This report contains information pertinent to Grades 11 and 12 and readers are referred to the 5 year Report for a more general overview of the school.

The Visitors would like to thank the school for their hospitality during the two visits and for the manner in which they worked with the Visitors and candidly dialogued with them about the school's strengths as well as the school's areas for growth.

## **SECTION A PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Visitors' Comments**

For further information on this section please refer to the 5 Year Report.

Since its inception, the school has intended to grow into a Preschool to Grade 12 institution. The additional grades and the implementation of the IB/DP are largely in alignment with the school's stated philosophy and objectives. There was some concern among staff that some students, especially those with ESL needs, were enrolled in the IB/DP that were struggling and better suited for an IB certificate in their strongest subject area(s).

### **Areas for Attention**

- The school should be mindful of its Philosophy and Objectives when determining whether or not a student is suited for the full Diploma Programme.

## **SECTION B ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **Visitors' Comments**

For further information on this section please refer to the 5 Year Report.

Job descriptions exist for the IB Coordinator and CAS Coordinator but they need to be updated to reflect current reality. Instructional policies need to be created which delineate the school's operations in this area.

### **Areas for Attention**

- The school needs to create instructional policies which govern the school's operations in the additional grades.
- Job descriptions need to be updated for personnel serving this section of the school.

## **SECTION C SCHOOL STAFF**

### **Visitors' Comments**

For further information on this section please refer to the 5 Year Report.

All but two of the teachers staffing grades 11 and 12 are new to the IB/DP this year. However, professional development opportunities have allowed these teachers to grasp the IB/DP conceptually, while still leaving teachers desiring more professional development in their content areas.

Whereas there has been heavy turnover in staff two or more years ago, IB/DP teachers have indicated an interest in continuing next year and beyond.

## **Areas for Attention**

- The school may consider providing additional opportunities for subject specific training in IB/DP courses.

## **SECTIONS D, E, F Not Applicable to Additional Grades of 11 and 12**

## **SECTION G SECONDARY CURRICULUM**

### *General*

#### **Visitors' Comments**

The Mission Statement of ISU says that the school will "... provide a quality education, through a recognized international curriculum..." By having the complete IBO curriculum up through the Diploma Programme (DP), the mechanisms for meeting these goals are in place. The Visitors found that ISU is completely supportive of the DP curriculum and standards.

The DP had been authorized in 2002. The DP Curriculum is comprised of 6 groups: Language A1 (English, Korean and Mongolian), Language A2, B (Second language: French, English, Mandarin), Individuals and Societies (History, Business and Management), Experiential Sciences (Biology, Chemistry), Mathematics (Mathematical Studies, HL/SL Mathematics), and Arts and Electives (Visual Arts). Geography and Physics are not currently offered.

The IBO provides curriculum outlines for the DP as well as supporting in-service. ISU has taken advantage of the professional development offered by the IBO. The school is in the process of building its own capacity to do more in-house trainings. There is frequent review by the IBO of the curricula, the courses offered, the facility and resources available for the students. As a result of IBO feedback, ISU teachers continue to enhance curriculum documentation, including better vertical articulation between the MYP and the DP. Vertical articulation is facilitated by the fact that several teachers serve the upper MYP grades as well as the DP. Teachers are also developing Diploma syllabi to reflect the reality of the program at ISU.

Curriculum mapping is enhanced by using Atlas Rubicon, which was on-site during the visit conducting professional development.

The school expects that all teachers understand ESL principles in helping those students who enter any given course with English language needs and intends to provide ESL training to subject area teachers to minimize the need for break-out ESL instruction. No ESL support classes are available to students at this grade level. Students choose to study English as language A or language B.

The library needs to be more fully developed to support curricular needs at this level, with an emphasis on accommodating research requirements of the DP. Similarly, ICT resources need to be more fully developed and integrated into the DP curriculum. Many of the current limitations in these two areas will be addressed when ISU moves into the new school later in 2007.

Students in Grades 11 and 12 can choose between studying for a full IB Diploma, IB certification, the ISU Diploma or combinations of the above. Approximately three

quarters of the students will take the full IB Diploma. In general classes take place within regular IB Diploma classes with teachers differentiating instruction and assessment for the different levels in the class. Next academic year an ISU General Science course will be added. Theory of Knowledge is a graduating requirement for all students. Next academic year the school timetable will be modified to ensure that the school fully complies with the IBO's regulation for the number of hours to be assigned to each subject. It is the school's intention that by October 2007 all teachers will have received IBO training. Currently the majority of teachers have received training.

The school currently offers the following subjects at this level:

Business and Management Studies  
History  
Theory of Knowledge  
Mathematics  
Mathematics Studies  
English A1  
English B  
Visual Art  
Mongolian A1  
Korean A1  
French B/ab initio  
Physical Education  
Biology  
Chemistry

Parents and students have expressed the desire for more subject choice, in particular in the area of languages and science but do recognize that the current number of students enrolled in the program necessarily limits the number of courses the school can offer.

Teachers report ongoing resource needs. Details can be found in the sections below. A comprehensive resource audit will help the school plan its future development needs. ICT resources remain an area for development as well as the ongoing integration of ICT into the curriculum. Many of the challenges in this area will be addressed with the move to the new school.

Subject specific needs are mentioned below.

### **Areas for Attention**

- The school may consider additional ESL support for DP students.
- The school may wish to engage in long range planning related to the IB/DP courses it currently does not offer and its impact on staffing.
- Teachers should continue their efforts to improve vertical and horizontal articulation adapting all aspects of DP curricula to the program at ISU.
- The school should consider an examination of necessary resources to support the DP as it moves to a purpose-built facility, including the possible enhancement of computer technology, library and classroom resources.

## ***Business and Management***

### **Visitors' Comments**

This is a two-year study on organizations, leadership and business decision-making. Major theorists in these areas are studied, while projects and case studies form the basis for student analysis and inquiry as well as assessment by the teacher. International cooperation and responsible corporate citizenship are major components of this learning area. The curriculum is well developed. The teacher will leave ISU at year's end.

### **Areas for Attention**

- Recruit credentialed business teacher for next year.

## ***Language A***

### **Visitors' Comments**

ISU currently offers English, Mongolian and Korean at this level. ISU is the only school in the world to teach Mongolian A and also serves as a link with other schools world-wide who offer Mongolian as a self taught language. Resources are generally adequate but teachers would like to further develop the use of technology.

### **Areas for Attention**

- The school is encouraged to complete its plan to create a structure for students studying their mother tongue on a self- taught basis.

## ***Language B***

### **Visitor's Comments**

ISU currently offers English B and Ab Initio (beginning) French as a Language B. Student numbers are generally high in English B and Ab Initio French has currently 1 student. This number is expected to grow in the coming years. Resources are in need of development. In particular more contemporary graded readers are needed for English and more age and level appropriate resources are needed for French. English B teachers also recognize the need to develop more assessment criteria.

### **Areas for Attention**

- Teachers are encouraged to further develop resources in their areas
- Teachers are encouraged to address the need for more assessment criteria.

## ***History***

### **Visitors' Comments**

Members of the history department have developed a coherent scope and sequence from Grades 9-12 which serves as a solid foundation in Grades 9 and 10 for the IB Diploma programme. Other areas of the curriculum are under development. Resources are being acquired. There is currently a need for more material to support historical investigation.

### **Areas for Attention**

- History teachers are encouraged to continue building resources which support the curriculum and to complete the development of the curriculum.

### ***Mathematics***

#### **Visitors' Comments**

Mathematics department teachers have enhanced the scope and sequence for grades 11-12, helping to better reflect the DP philosophy. Additional work in this area for grades 9 and 10 will help the transition from MYP to DP. There is currently a need for more mathematics tools and mathematics software.

Students in the DP follow a rigorous two year program that allows them to achieve at high levels of mathematical and statistical reasoning. Investigative and modelling tasks along with extensive written work form the basis for assessment. A standard level of "mathematical studies" is also offered in grades 11 and 12 for those who are less advanced. Close collaboration across subject areas helps ensure strong horizontal articulation of the curriculum.

### **Areas for Attention**

- School administrators and teachers are encouraged to continue building resources and utilize software that supports the curriculum.
- The school is encouraged to continue its review of the MYP curriculum to bring better vertical articulation with the math DP curriculum.

### ***Visual Arts***

#### **Visitors' Comments**

A visit to the Art classroom bore witness to high quality student work. The Art area like other subject areas is in need of additional resources. This includes additional books, visuals and in particular ICT equipment to enable computer aided activities. Teacher training would also support such a development.

### **Area for Attention**

- The department is encouraged to continue building resources for the area.

### ***Experimental Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)***

#### **Visitors' Comments**

Students in the DP study biology and chemistry in accordance with standards, aims and objectives of the IBO. Non-DP students take a "general science" program over the two years that provides a broad background in basic scientific theory with an eye on practical applications. Physics is not currently offered at ISU.

Grade 11 and 12 curriculum across the sciences is well developed, but undergoes continual review to better align the ISU program with the philosophy of the IBO.

A more contemporary laboratory is in order to better conduct experimentation, but will become a reality when the new school opens.

#### **Areas for Attention**

- Consider the addition of physics to the science offerings.

### ***Theory of Knowledge Programme***

#### **Visitors' Comments**

TOK has been made a graduation requirement for all students, not just students who will complete the IB Diploma. Resources are generally good and much use is made of the internet. Additional use could be made of teachers from other teaching areas.

#### **Areas for Attention**

- TOK is encouraged to develop the use of expertise from outside the teaching area.

### ***The CAS Programme***

#### **Visitors' Comments**

As the school recognises this is an area for development. Next academic year when the Coordinator has more available time the school is optimistic that areas in need of development can be addressed. The school's outreach program is one area for development. The school's ECA program supports the CAS program however students need to undertake additional activities to complete the requisite number of hours.

#### **Areas for Attention**

- As the school plans, attention needs to be given to aligning the CAS program more closely with IBO requirements. The Visitors are confident that this will be addressed as the school is well aware of its needs.

## **SECTION H SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

#### **Visitors' Comments**

For further information please refer to the 5 Year Report. Currently there is no support for students in the Secondary School. However, no students with diagnosed or suspected learning differences are currently in the additional grades.

### **Areas for Attention**

None other than those in the 5 Year Report.

## **SECTION I GUIDANCE SERVICES**

### **Visitors' Comments**

The addition of a college counselor next academic year will strengthen support in this area and alleviate some of the pressures felt by the incumbent who also serves as the IB Coordinator and CAS Coordinator. The job description for the college counselor needs to be updated to reflect current reality. As mentioned in the 5 Year report, there is a need to further develop the school's pastoral system and career guidance provision. Teachers would appreciate training in understanding the needs of students at this age level and in understanding how the role of the homeroom teacher can be further developed to support pastoral needs.

The school has been a PSAT/SAT testing center since 2004.

It is important that the school's newly implemented student record system be carefully monitored and evaluated to avoid a repetition of the challenges currently facing staff in piecing together records from various sources. An off site back up would render systems more secure.

### **Areas for attention**

- The school should continue the development of an effective pastoral system which fully supports the needs of students in the additional grades.
- It would also be helpful to formalize the system of career guidance support given to students.
- The school is encouraged to finalize the construction of student records from inherited data and to ensure that these records are adequately protected from fire, theft or other eventualities.
- The job description for the college counselor needs to be updated to reflect current reality.

## **SECTION J HEALTH SERVICES AND SAFETY**

### **Visitors' Comments**

For further information on this section please refer to the 5 Year Report.

The current science laboratory needs an eye wash and better chemical storage facilities. The new building to open in August 2007 is expected to address these shortcomings.

### **Areas for Attention**

- As the school moves to its new facility, specific plans for science chemical storage should be a priority.

## **SECTION K STUDENT SERVICES**

### **Visitors' Comments**

For further information on this section please refer to the 5 Year Report. There are no student boarding facilities at ISU, nor will there be at the new facility when it opens in August 2007.

### **Areas for Attention**

- None specific to grades 11 and 12 in the areas of security, food service, transportation and maintenance/cleaning.

## **SECTION L STUDENT LIFE**

### **Visitors' Comments**

The student culture at ISU within the additional grades seems to be extremely cohesive and mutually supportive.

There appears, however, to be limited distinction between the expectations, codes of behaviour, leadership expectations for students in Grades 11 and 12 and students in other areas of the school which would prepare students for adult life and life after ISU. Much of the preparation for college life and its responsibilities tends to be informal. Next academic year, Juniors and Seniors will have a Junior lounge and a Senior Lounge which will go some way to addressing this issue.

### **Areas for Attention**

- The school might research ways in which to instil a culture in Grades 11 and 12 which will further prepare students for the demands which will be made on them in college and life after ISU.

## **SECTION M LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER**

### **Visitors' Comments**

For further information on this section please refer to the 5 Year Report.

The library needs to be more fully developed to support curricular needs at this level, with an emphasis on accommodating research requirements of the DP. Similarly, ICT resources need to be more fully developed and integrated into the DP curriculum and the library. Many of the current limitations in these two areas will be addressed when ISU moves into the new school later in 2007.

Without a current librarian and a current library assistant undergoing training in librarianship, some concern was expressed as to the readiness of the new library specific to accommodating the DP courses.

### **Areas for Attention**

- The school may consider creating short and long term plans to equip the new library with research materials for the DP, including expanded on-line academic journal access.
- As the current library assistant pursues her credentials as a certified librarian, the school may consider specific training in the role of the library in the IB Diploma Programme.

## **SECTION N SCHOOL FACILITIES**

### **Visitors' Comments**

For further information on this section please refer to the 5 Year Report.

The visitors toured the new, purpose-built school facility that is to open in August 2007. With the opening of the new facility, virtually all current facilities-related limitations should be obsolete. Limited outdoor and indoor activity/gym space in the current school has limited the school's offerings in extracurricular activities as well as physical education offerings for all students, but particularly older students. The science laboratory in the current school is inadequate to support the range of experiments necessary to properly execute DP courses in the sciences.

The new gymnasium and outdoor sports and playing fields will enhance the school's ability to generate student interest in sports and to compete in sports, while being able to host events or games (which cannot currently be done at the existing school facility).

### **Areas for Attention**

- The administration and teachers may wish to consider developing short and long range plans specific to how the new facility will enhance curricular offerings, particularly in physical education and the sciences.
- The Board and Administration may wish to consider developing short and long range plans specific to the operation of sports and other extra-curricular activities that can be accommodated in the new facility.

## **SECTION O FINANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

### **Visitors' Comments**

For a fuller examination of the Finance and Financial Management section please refer to the 5 Year report.

The school differentiates its fee structure according to the program students are in. Consequently a student in the IB Diploma program pays more tuition fees than in the other sections of the school. Student numbers in the additional grades remain low and given the breadth of classes needed to offer a full IB Diploma program some of the classes are very small ( 1-2 students). The school has not undertaken a study of the financial viability of the program seeing the program as a service to the community and as a flag ship on which to base standards for quality. Students and

parents have expressed a strong desire for a greater variety of subject offerings at this level however care needs to be taken to ensure that additional subjects would not unduly burden the school's finances.

### **Areas for Attention**

None at present

## **SECTION P ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING AND PERFORMANCE**

### **Visitors' Comments**

As mentioned in the 5 Year Report the area of assessment has been highlighted as an important area for development. Assessment at this level follows IBDP principles.

Limited use is made of data from IB Diploma examinations or any internal tests to enhance the delivery of the IB programme or to inform the development of the IB at ISU. Debriefs from the IB Diploma Coordinator are held but a formal system of evaluation is needed. It should be noted, however, that student achievement results at this level are impressive with a high percentage of students passing their IB examinations.

Parents are kept regularly informed of student progress and IB Diploma report cards have been created

### **Areas for Attention**

- It is important that the school develop a formalised system in which teachers use the IB Diploma results as well as internal tests to enhance teaching and learning at this level.
- There is a need to develop assessment policies for this area.

## CONCLUSION

The addition of Grades 11 and 12 has been a welcome school development. The school has invested and continues to invest in teacher professional development to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively deliver the program. In general the IB Diploma results are impressive. Students and parents speak highly of the teachers' dedication and their willingness to give additional support when necessary.

In order to strengthen the program attention should be given to continuing the development of resources for this area. This includes library, ICT as well as classroom resources. A resource development plan which supports the school's ongoing curriculum development plans would assist teachers plan for additional resources. Attention should also be given to developing systems which use the analysis of student achievement results to improve teaching and learning. The addition of a college counsellor next academic year should free up time for the IB/CAS Coordinator to focus on areas of need in the CAS program. Policies are needed which delineate the school's operations in this area.

As is normal for a small school the school offers a limited selection of courses at this level. Students, whether or not they will ultimately sit for the full IB Diploma, IB certificates or the ISU Diploma, are taught in IB classes. Teachers differentiate instruction and assessment as appropriate. As the school grows and/or as demographics change it will be important to continually analyse the extent to which subject offerings meet the needs of students currently enrolled in the school.

Given the information received and the many positive aspects of the program the Visitors are happy to recommend that Grades 11 and 12 be added to the school's accreditation. It is understood that these grades will then be subject to the follow up recommended in the 5 Year Report as the issues are school-wide issues not just issues pertaining to Grades 11 and 12.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Imperato

Margaret Alvarez