

# newsCAST

The Newsletter of Collegiate American School

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GENERAL

ELEMENTARY

MIDDLE & HIGH

## NEWS FROM THE HEAD PRINCIPALS DESK

This year has begun with quite a busy start. A goal of the Senior Leadership Team was to be proactive in our communication and we hope that you have seen an improvement thus far. As part of the school improvement process, we are looking at our end of year data for the 2014-15 school year and will be comparing it with the benchmarking currently in place. This will drive our School Evaluation Form for KHDA. Additionally, this data will be used for our CIS/NEASC accreditation. All critical components. We have received notice that our CIS visit will take place at the end of February.

**SECURITY** We are pleased with parents' adherence to our security policy. Identification tags are compulsory at CAS. Our next step will be to randomly check visitor's IDs on campus. If Collegiate American personnel asks to see your ID, please do so. Additionally, we have on schedule our first fire drill as well as lock down drill in the next month. Please note that for the first lock down drill, we will inform parents so that they can debrief with their children at home the purpose for this practice. The US Consulate Office of Security continues to be a partner with Collegiate American. In our parking lots, it is imperative to always be on active watch.

**HEALTH** Our medical office would like to note the following:

For the safety of your children in Collegiate American School, if medication must be given during school hours, we would like you to be aware of the following school medication policy:

1. No medication will be prescribed if requested verbally by a parent, staff or student.
2. Written request for the administration of medication has to be signed by the parents and will be kept by the nurse.
3. Medications should be brought to school by a parent / guardian or responsible adult. Children are not allowed to carry medicine with them. If there is medication remaining after treatment or at the end of day, please make arrangement for it to be picked up.
4. Mixed dosages in a single container will not be accepted for use at school (for example, 5mg&10mg tablets in the same bottle).

5. Medication must be brought to school in original packaging with the following information: student's full name, dosage of medication, timings and specific directions, duration.

Please stop by the Health Office to ask any questions.

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT** We were pleased with the amount of parents who showed up to CASPA's breakfast recruitment and information session early in September. CASPA has already sponsored great events such as the Eid Celebration for Grades PreK-G2 and coming up Wild Wadi Night on the 23rd of October. We hope you can make these events. We'd also like to thank those parents who signed up as Classroom Parents in the Early Childhood and Elementary divisions. We hope that us streamlining the responsibilities creates a positive experience for all.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** Ongoing learning and professional development is a priority for our teachers at CAS to be able to deliver instruction aligned with best global practices. During our early release day in September, we completed sessions on interpreting data. This will assist all staff as they look at the MAP and benchmarking data. Additionally, we had a team of teachers go to the IBDP training this past weekend. More information is available on that in the "Notes from the Upper School". We will also have a team of teachers presenting at the MENA Common Core Conference hosted by KDSL at the American University of Dubai. We are excited that Collegiate American teachers share their expertise with other teachers from the GCC region.

**PHILANTHROPIC EFFORTS** As we prepare our students to be responsible citizen of the world, we encourage the notion of giving back. This past month, Collegiate American hosted the Water for Workers where many of our families participated in giving back to the workers of Dubai by distributing water and towels through collaboration with the Sameness Project. We are also currently mid campaign with the Radisson Appeal Boxes. This is a city wide effort to give personal hygiene and care products to those less fortunate in Dubai. We have committed to filling up 300 boxes as a school and are well on our way. This campaign ends October 14th.

**IVEI INTERSCHOOL COMPETITIONS** In an effort to build cohesiveness amongst all Innoventure Schools, some interschool competitions have been planned for this academic year. Collegiate American is proud to be hosting the first one on October 28th. This will be a debate for Grade 6-13 students from all four Innoventure Schools. Additionally, music students from all four schools will be gathering to record the IVEI anthem.

We look forward to seeing you around CAS at all of our events!

Tammy Tusek  
Head Principal

Dear Families,

It is an honor to serve as Elementary Principal with such a passionate team of professionals and a capable student body. Upon joining Collegiate American School in mid-August, I have enjoyed getting to know our school family and assessing the status. Early in our work together, your Elementary School Senior Leadership Team - consisting of Deputy Principal Maha Sarraf, Early Childhood Coordinator, Rhonda Hearn, and me – defined our theme: **RAISING THE BAR FROM WHERE WE ARE.**

Our goal is to create a school environment where teachers thrive and students achieve their greatest potential in a safe and nurturing school setting.

We expect to have a strong presence in the school and in classrooms – listening to and observing what is taking place, assessing needs, and getting to know the teachers and students.

We have high expectations and standards for the academic, social, emotional, and physical development of all students.

We want to provide a team-based framework to facilitate effective coordination of services and interventions.

We will design relevant and ongoing professional development for all staff.

We encourage families to engage as meaningful partners. We want and appreciate your feedback and suggestions!

***Sustainable and effective improvement takes patience and commitment.*** Growth must be grounded in the mission and purpose of schools: teaching and learning.

When I left the United States to move to Dubai, my doctor ordered a physical exam to assess my health. I accept that as a common standard of practice. In fact, I would be critical of a doctor who would try to treat me or write a prescription for me without knowing what my current state of health is at that moment! School assessment is much the same. Growth can be achieved more rapidly when teachers know where students are and apply appropriate strategies and interventions to help them along the way. I am looking forward to receiving the Children's Progress Academic Assessment™ (CPAA™) and Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP®) reports for our students. These are personalized assessment experiences that adapt to each student's learning level and they will be administered again in January and at the end of the year.

Professional Development is an important part of the learning cycle for teachers. Our Elementary School Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meets routinely with grade level team leaders and core content leaders to discuss student achievement and to formulate plans to provide necessary training and supports. During the early release days, our staff meets in various groups for professional learning. Last week, our entire faculty participated in an overview of our assessment results and discussion of how we use student achievement data at CAS to help inform our teaching. After the large group session, our early childhood

Writing Effective Learning Targets

Words Their Way training

Guided Reading

A round table discussion about Rubrics

Learning how to use Think Central a web-based resource

A round table discussion about Behavior Management.

In addition, the Arabic staff help their own round table talk about best practices.

Some of the best memories from grade school are usually centered around **events!** I'm looking forward to the BOOK FAIR, LITERACY AFTERNOON, and the UAE NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION – all coming up this month!

I have an open door policy and encourage you to visit if there is any way that I can support your child or family. If I am not in my office, Sonia, our administrative secretary, will know where to find me!

I'll see you around campus! J

Ms. Cindy

## Student Corner

### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade ROCKS at CAS!



We are delighted to be back in school to see our old friends and to make some new ones. We started off the first week of school playing some ice breaker games as well as building the tallest structure out of spaghetti, tape and string. And can you believe we had to stick a marshmallow on top! We had to be creative and really work together to accomplish our goal. This year there will be a lot of problem solving, creative thinking and team work.

Whose tower was the tallest?



### Fun Fact:

There are 45 students in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade from 29 different countries at CAS. Now that's a lot of frequent flyer miles.

## Notes from the Middle and High School

Our approach at Collegiate American is, to borrow from author Steven Covey, to *begin with the end in mind*. This thinking can be viewed through many lenses, but our current focus is to think about what our first graduating class in June of 2018 will “*look like*”. Who will they be? Where will they go? What universities will they attend? These questions guide us as we complete the work necessary to offer the IB Diploma (IBDP) at our school beginning next year with the grade 11 students. There are seven phases along the road to being an authorized IBDP school. We have just finished phase 4, Consultation, are completing our Request of Authorization and moving into the Verification Visit phase. We anticipate that our visit will occur around April of 2016. In the meantime, we are fine-tuning documents, procedures and options for our students.

### IB Requirements:

In order to become an IBDP school all of our policies had to be carefully reviewed and edited. One of the most important policies in the IB is that of Academic Honesty:

*“Academic honesty must be seen as a set of values and skills that promote personal integrity and good practice in teaching, learning and assessment. The IB recognizes that academic honesty is influenced and shaped by a variety of factors including peer pressure, culture, parental expectations, role modeling and taught skills.” (DP: Academic Honesty, (July 2011) p2)*

It is not sufficient that the school have this policy in place, but that the school train students throughout the grade levels regarding appropriate ways to research and exactly how to avoid the perils of plagiarism. In this age of so much readily available information students must learn how to use information ethically and responsibly.

### Teacher, Student and Parent Information Sessions:

Thus far informational meetings have been held with the teaching staff and the students which explained the program in detail. Full IB diploma students will be required to take six courses over the two years in grades 11 and 12 as well as Creativity, Action and Service (CAS), Theory of Knowledge (TOK) and they will be required to write the 4000 word Extended Essay (EE) on a topic of their choice. Many experts feel that the IB Diploma is the most rigorous high school diploma available. A parent meeting on the program will be held on **Monday, October 19 from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.** in the Lecture Hall.

### Teacher Training:

During the first weekend in October we will have seven teachers attending IBDP training in a variety of subjects. This intense three day training is a requirement for the program and is also often an opportunity for teachers to really look at their current practice and reflect on the methodologies and techniques that they are using in their classrooms. As an IBDP school our teachers and school leaders will be required to continue to attend training to keep their skills sharp and up-to-date and to consider new and different ways of teaching and learning.

## **Diplomas at Collegiate American:**

We will be offering several options for students as they graduate from Collegiate American School. All students who earn the required number of credits in grades 9 – 12 will receive an American High School Diploma. Some of those students will also choose to take some IB coursework as part of their diploma. A final cohort will choose to go for the full IBDP – all six courses, three at standard level, three at higher level and the CAS, TOK, and EE requirements. In order to take an IB course in grade 11 the students must have received at least a “B” in that course in grade 10.

## **Meanwhile in Middle School...**

As an American School, Collegiate American School uses several sets of American Standards as the basis for our curriculum. In English and mathematics we employ the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). In science, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) are used and for social studies the American Education Reaches Out (AERO) standards. Other subjects use corresponding standards sets from the United States. One thing that is important to note about standards-based education is that they are *learning* standards, not *teaching* standards. They involve detailed information about what students are supposed to know and be able to do.

In middle school we have grouped these standards into four units which will be taught through a Project-Based Learning (PBL) model. Each unit incorporates standards for English, math, social studies and science.

For example in our current unit in grade 6, Ancient Greece, students are studying the Essential Question: *“What was so important about Greece that we still study it?”* One of the English standards include is: *“Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.”* (CCSS ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3). One way for students to achieve this standard would be to write their own myth or a Greek tragedy.

In math in this unit one of the standards is: *“Apply and extend previous understandings of numbers to the system of rational numbers.”* (CCSS Math.6.N.S.) A way in which students might demonstrate the attainment of this standard would be to use a number line including whole numbers and integers to explain historical events. Measurement for the science and social studies standards could include alchemy and it’s relation to the table of elements and developing laws that govern collective living.

Not all of the standards can be included and integrated in the PBL units, but the ones that can be taught together create meaning for students beyond the figurative walls of the given subject.

Our next Curriculum Coffee is on Monday the 19<sup>th</sup> of October (R.S.V.P to [soniaK@casdubai.com](mailto:soniaK@casdubai.com)) and will focus on the middle school in the PBL units – please come!