

newsCAST

The Newsletter of Collegiate American School

Monday, 30 November 2015 | Issue 62

GENERAL

ELEMENTARY

MIDDLE & HIGH

CAS CLINIC

Message from the Head Principal:

In celebration of the Nation's 44th birthday, this newsletter will focus on UAE Vision 2021--the Golden Jubilee of the UAE, the goals behind this vision and how Collegiate American is working towards supporting it.

See this website for more information on Vision 2021 <http://www.vision2021.ae/en>



RESPECT

We turned our focus this month to the respect of this country in preparation of National Day. Also this month, we will mourn and pay tribute to the martyrs that lost their lives.

Respect is practiced and emphasized daily, however, we took it to the next level in our early and elementary counseling program. Students are grouped together in a heterogeneous setting to work on friendship skills and mutual respect. It is great to see students who may have not interacted together before demonstrating kindness and respect to one another. A life skill.



COLLABORATION

The success of the UAE is highly due to the level of planning and collaboration among agencies, countries and people. We prioritize collaboration as it is one of our values; however, a goal for us is to collaborate on a more meaningful level with our parents, students and the greater community. Student focus groups have started in most phases of the school where students can give feedback on the school and points to consider for growth.

We will be inviting parents to participate in our committees and hear your voices when we research resources for learning, feedback on our development plan and just day to day input. We are also hoping you can connect us with resources outside of the school to take learning and experiences to a deeper level. Think about it, let us know.



INTEGRITY

An area of focus this month for the value of integrity is sustainable initiatives at the school level. A newly formed ECO Club knows how important this is to our local and global environment. The UAE has committed to improving the quality of air, preserving water resources, and increasing the contribution of clean energy and implementing green growth plants.

Our initiatives are: reinstating our class recycling program, create earth friendly reminders around the school, bring in experts from the fields (we welcomed **Peter Hohmann**, an Engineer for Environmental Technology and Managing Director of Fortytwo Environmental Consultancy working with the CEBC Environment Protection Program) and our head ambassador attending the MENA Ambassador Eco Program to glean ideas about sustainable initiatives from other schools.



ACHIEVEMENT

Vision 2021 seeks to increase scores on the TIMSS and PISA assessments. The future goal for the TIMSS is to be the top 15 countries and top 20 for the PISA. In supporting this goal, this month, we administered the International Benchmark Test (IBT) in grades 3-10. The purpose of this administration is the following:

- ◆ aligns to the TIMSS and PISA exams which are not administered every year to every grade level
- ◆ gives us a snapshot of where you child is
- ◆ allows us to compare Collegiate American School with other international schools



RESPONSIBILITY

“*United in Responsibility*” is one of the key indicators of Vision 2021. Our priority is the responsibility of teaching each child and providing an education to prepare them to be successful as lifelong learners.

The last few months, we have completed and analyzed the findings of the self-study for CIS and NEASC while balancing the needs of KHDA. We found that all were quite similar in regards to the process and the findings were clear and consistent. It is now our responsibility to create action plans to work on the priorities. We know we have made a lot of growth from when we started this process in the early parts of the 2014-15 academic year with more to come. We will communicate our comprehensive plan in late December or early January.

Responsibility in our students this month was evident as Grades 1-10 created goals from their MAP scores and a plan of action. Each student knows the responsibility to their plan and are aware that the next round is coming up in January. The question will be, did they attain the goal they set out for?



Global Mindedness

Did you know that the Emirati population is only 10% of the UAE? Vision 2021 wants to preserve UAE traditions, values and continue being a cohesive society. In the implementation of our curriculum we seek ways to compare the UAE with concepts that are taught. The spiraling of values and discussions about the strength of this country increase the awareness for our students.

Transversely, to celebrate the diversity of our school, we also find that we must celebrate many of the nationalities as often as we can. This month, we celebrated Diwali. Students created a rangoli in our main atrium. This was followed by an assembly with the lighting of the lamp, song and dance. It was a great time and enjoyed by all.

Global mindedness however is not just about celebrations at Collegiate American through our work of the accreditation. For this reason, we defined global citizens as such:

“As global citizens, we exemplify International-mindedness as a holistic understanding and respect of others’ language, cultural identity, beliefs, and backgrounds while appreciating and keeping one’s own language and cultural identity; a collective and individual responsibility to protect and nurture the global family, to support all its members and tend to the environment in which we all live”.

We want to emphasize that global mindedness is how we work together, respect of our individualities and how these things make us richer in opportunity.



As I close out this update, I'd like to thank CASPA for hosting yet another successful event, the Thanksgiving Family Outing. Always a great time by teachers, parents and students. I want to also thank all of our CAS staff, parents and students for a well-attended Parent Teacher Conference.

We have many events planned on campus for the month of December. Check your Plus Portals for the most up to date information.

All the best!

Tammy

Dear Families,

As the first progress reporting term draws to a close, the professionals around our campus go into reflection mode. Many conversations are centered around the theme of improvement and the essential question is “What can I do to help each CAS student find success?”

I see so many indicators of progress within the classrooms. Students are growing as they learn the sounds that letters make, decode words for spelling rules, write narratives with details, dissect informational text, converse with classmates about their perceptions, construct math word problems, form letters, memorize passages, sing songs, and move their bodies. The road to mastering a standard is paved with many bricks – each building a solid foundation of skills.

Our challenge is finding a way to effectively communicate and celebrate those milestones to parents. With standards, an attempt is made to inform parents using a rubric on a 1-4 scale. For those of us who were given A’s, B’s and C’s on our own report cards as children, it’s a perplexing transition! You can read more about this topic here: <http://goo.gl/NI0OOS>.

Our elementary school administrators have been analyzing the school’s data and we are in the process of solidifying our improvement plan. The plan includes academic achievement and addresses issues that contribute to a healthy school culture. We look forward to sharing our goals in the weeks ahead.

It is an honor to serve our families at Collegiate American! If we can assist you in any way, please contact us.

Sincerely,

Cindy

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ASSESSMENT PLAN

Benchmark assessments, summative assessments, formative assessments—all this terminology—what does it all mean? Below are assessment definitions as well as a look ahead at what is coming up for your children.

Formative Assessments: formative assessments are assessments FOR learning. These assessments inform teachers and students of how they are doing and where they need to make progress on the standards for the unit. These assessments, while recorded in the grade book, do not count in grade averages. They are assessments to inform learning and to help teachers further differentiate. Formative assessments prepare students for the summative assessments.

Summative Assessments: summative assessments are assessments OF learning. They inform teachers and students of how they performed on the standards. Summative assessments can be projects, performance based assessments (students application of their knowledge), a written test or even an observation. They usually occur at the end of units and students are expected to apply their knowledge of the standards to this summative assessment.

Benchmark Assessments: benchmark assessments provide teachers and students with base line data—what do the students know, how much have they progressed, what do they need to work on. Benchmark assessments are not summative assessments and do not count in grades. They provide the school with data to measure student progress. In September, all students in K2-Grade 5 took a few common benchmark assessments like DRAs, Go Math assessments, Words Their Way spelling and phonics assessment, On Demand Writing Assessments as well as MAP (grades 1-5) and CPAA (KG1 and KG2) assessments. In January, students in grades 1-5 will again take the MAP assessments, the DRA and Go Math assessments.

Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2): The DRA2 assesses the reading level of your children and takes place 3 times per year.

Writing On-Demand assessments: Students show what they know about each of the writing genres (narrative, opinion and information) through this assessment. Students respond to a prompt and demonstrate their knowledge during writing sessions. After each unit of study, students take an on demand assessment to show progress.

Go Math benchmark assessment: This assesses their knowledge of their grade level math standards and shows progress throughout the year. It takes place 3 times per year.

Words Their Way Assessment (WTW): WTW assesses spelling and phonic knowledge and allows teachers to differentiate instruction throughout the year. Students are continuously assessed on the sounds and phonemes throughout the year and are moved to different groups as they master them. At the end of the year, students will be expected to take a final assessment to look at growth and progress.

The International Benchmark Tests (IBT): The International Benchmark Tests are designed to give a benchmark of your child's performance compared to the participating countries in the world and in the region. Students in grades 3-10 will be able to see their potential for learning, identifying their strengths and weaknesses on skills and concepts related to their class level. Questions are interesting and thought provoking, and encourage students to develop the skills related to problem solving, data interpretation, reasoning and critical thinking in the global context. These tests are administered once a year in November.

How MAP Helps Us Help Your Children

As students spend three sessions a year in the computer lab working on the Measure of Academic Progress tests. The skills and content this test measures are aligned with Math, English Language Arts Common Core standards. Students also are tested on General Science knowledge related to our curriculum content. Students in kindergarten grades take the CCAA (Children's Progress Academic Assessment) three times a year. Scores are reported as a calculation called RIT.

As a student takes these adapted measures online, the questions adjust to reflect his level and get progressively more complex. In this way MAP results tell us the areas of strength and weakness of each child so that teachers can modify individual curriculum activities to their needs.

Grade Level	2015 FALL Grade Level Ranges- READING		
	BELOW Expected	ON LEVEL	ABOVE Expected
1	Below 157	157-165	166+
2	below 170	171-179	180+
3	below 183	184-192	193+
4	below 193	194-202	203+
5	below 198	199-210	211+
6	below 206	207-215	216+
7	below 212	210-219	220+
8	below 212	213-221	222+
9	below 215	216-224	225+
10	below 226	217-225	226+
11	below 218	219-227	224+

Our goal as a team is to help every student make at least one year progress from a child's starting point each academic year. The MAP test results give an idea of where your child is in relation to the Means (expected band scores) of all international students in schools like CAS taking the exam in 2015. CAS publishes these grade level bands for teachers and parents on your class teacher's portal page.

Northwest Evaluation Association <i>Partnering to help all kids learn</i>		Collegiate American School Growth is measured from Fall to Sp					
Mathematics							
Season/Year	Grade	Student Score Range	Dist. Avg RIT	Norm Group Avg.	Student Growth	Typical Growth	Student %ile Range
F14	5	226- 229 -232		213			82- 87 -91
S14	4	223- 226 -229	215	212	12	9	77- 83 -88
F13	4	211- 214 -217	203	204			71- 78 -84

Your child's scores are online now on the Parent PlusPortals! Find your PlusPortals account on the CAS website under Student Services then E-Resources. After you log in, Select "e-Locker".

The screenshot shows the website interface for Collegiate American School. At the top, the school's logo and name are displayed. Below the navigation menu, the 'E-Resource' section is highlighted. The menu on the left lists various school services, with 'Student Services' and 'E-Resources' being the focus. The main content area features four resource cards: 'CAS Library', 'PlusPortals', 'Raz-Kids', and 'Languageit'. Red arrows indicate the path from the navigation menu to the PlusPortals resource.



Then select the third tab, E-Portfolio, and you will see the Manually Added MAP scores

Description	Category
MAP Result Fall 2014	Manually Added Report

Our second round of the MAP assessment will be in January and students will be able to discuss how much more they knew this time! Look for the results of the second administration in late January. We are expecting lots of smiles as CAS students will show mastery of more and more of the grade level standard skills. We are proud of our students.

If you'd like more information about MAP, NWEA made TOOLKIT FOR PARENTS, visit here: <https://goo.gl/hDggu2>

Notes from the Middle and High School



SMART Goals

During the month of November we were rich with data sources to measure student achievement. Our first set of MAP scores in the first P1 Progress Report was issued and parent conferences were held. All of these data points provide a baseline of where our students are in their learning and allow for the opportunity to set goals regarding where they seek to be by the next reporting term. Toward that end, we have been working with students to set “SMART” goals for their MAP progress. Goals are “SMART” when they are:

Specific – *what exactly are you going to achieve?*

Measureable – *how will you know if you’ve accomplished your goal?*

Attainable – *is it possible to do this? Am I shooting too high? Too low?*

Relevant – *why is this important for me? Why does it help?*

Time Bound – *by when will I have achieved this?*

The metaphor that I like to work with (to the annoyance of some students I am sure) is about a menu for your choices in life. It is wonderful to go out to a restaurant and peruse the many offerings provided, all tempting in their unique and special ways. We all hope that our life path will include many choices and opportunities for us to “order”. It is important to consider the things we do and the effort and thought we put into our choices – the more we do, the harder we work – all help to add choices to our own personal menu. Better grades = more choices; higher GPA = more choices; improving your grades = more choices; taking on and meeting challenges = more choices; extracurricular activities = more choices; and on and on.



What is your child’s goal for maximizing their own personal menu?

Homework

I have been thinking about homework a great deal lately. It is a topic that gets everybody excited and often causes considerable disagreement. Here is a link to an author, [Alfie Kohn](#), who says that homework has no proven benefits and the [teacher response](#) in defense of homework. Clearly a topic with diverse opinions in evidence. I have been working on a new homework policy for Collegiate American School. It is currently with the department chairs for comment. Next week I will work with my newly formed Student Advisory Council to get the student point of view. If you are interested in providing feedback please let me know and I will send you the draft for feedback.

For now, middle school students should expect to do homework 5 nights a week for about an hour each night. In addition they should read every evening for about 15 minutes – preferably most using material that they themselves have chosen. By high school, students should expect to do about 1 ½ to 2 hours plus an additional 30 minutes of reading. If you are thinking about the IB program in grade 11, plan on more time. Homework is calculated at 10% of the S1 and S2 grades at Collegiate American School. Following this guideline should make that percentage an enhancement, not a drag, on the overall grade.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Robert G. Haag

Secondary School Principal

Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Schools

Schools are gathering places where children learn and play. As such, communicable diseases can easily spread through close person-to-person contact. Since many communicable diseases are transmitted through contact or droplet, performing hand hygiene properly and maintaining respiratory hygiene are two prerequisites for the prevention of such diseases. Collegiate American provides close supervision and support for the children to develop the good practices, through continuous talks, health poster display and videos.

Hand hygiene:

Hand hygiene is a basic infection control measure to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. The common hand hygiene practices include hand washing (with soap and water) and proper use of alcohol-based hand rub.

Respiratory hygiene:

Cover both the nose and mouth with a tissue paper when coughing or sneezing.

Children should seek medical advice immediately if they feel unwell.

Fever:

In case a student develops fever at school (**37.8 Celsius/100 degrees Fahrenheit and above**) the health office will notify the parents to pick up their child as soon as possible. Students with fever will not be sent home on the bus. Before returning to class, the student must be **fever free for 24 hours** without any fever reducing medicine (Panadol, Brufen...)"

Following general good-health guidelines (good eating and sleeping habits) are the best steps you can take towards keeping your child's immune system strong and healthy:

When to Keep your Child Home*

- 1. Fever:** A child with fever should not return until 24 hours of no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- 2. Diarrhea:** A child has too loose or watery stools, even if there are no other signs of illness. The child should have no loose stools for 24 hours prior to returning to school.
- 3. Vomiting:** A child that is vomiting. The child should have no vomiting episodes for 24 hours prior to returning to school.

4. Certain Communicable Diseases:

Children and staff diagnosed with certain communicable diseases **may have to be excluded for a certain period of time**. They can come back to school with a medical clearness from their doctor.

Health and safety of our students have always been a priority at our school.

Please do not hesitate to contact the School Clinic for any concerns.