

# news **CAST**

The Newsletter of Collegiate American School

Thursday, 11 February 2016 | Issue 64

GENERAL

## COLLEGIATE AMERICAN SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

The objectives of the Advisory Council are to drive school improvement, guide development, monitor progress and hold the school accountable for the quality of education delivered. The Advisory Council includes all stakeholders namely, parents, professionals from the community, members of higher education, Collegiate American School senior leadership, Innoventures Education group management and a Board Director. Students and teachers are invited to participate at each meeting. The Advisory Council meets formally three to four times a year. The Advisory Council is also informed about various internal and external reports related to the school's progress including reports by accreditation bodies, external consultants, summary of parent surveys, the school improvement plan, and academic results. Established in 2011, the Advisory Council continues to play a significant role in the improvement of the school through its contribution to the school Board of Directors.



**Members of the Advisory Council with students in the classroom**

Some significant recommendations of the Council that have been implemented include the following:

- Islamic Education and Arabic
  - Enhance Islamic Education and Arabic by providing higher levels of challenge and engaging students to raise attainment
  - Make a Group level appointment to support and develop Arabic and Islamic studies
- Teaching and Learning
  - Improve the use of assessment information to inform lesson planning and set appropriate targets for students' progress
  - Include student progress in lesson evaluation and performance management system, as any improvement in teaching/assessment needs to reflect in attainment and progress of students in lessons and over time. Lesson evaluation should have a way to indicate the student progress.

- Raising teaching and assessment standards through the leaders of learning programme. Consultants from Incyte spent a week in school earlier this year to support the school specifically in the areas of analysis and use of data, raising teaching quality, special education needs and Arabic studies
- Parental engagement and Communication
  - Raise the level of parental and community engagement and use their expertise to enrich the Curriculum
  - Improve parent communication
- Staffing
  - Expand the Secondary leadership team to focus on improving the quality of education and the holistic development of the student body
  - Appoint the SEN Coordinator as a member of the senior leadership team to better meet the needs of students of all abilities
  - Bring forward the recruitment cycle to ensure that we are able to hire quality teachers in a timely manner and fill all positions
- Infrastructure, Facilities and Resources
  - Increased security and surveillance – 15 CCTV and 14 peripheral cameras added
  - Shading for the Middle and High School playground
  - New additional IT equipment including 54 iPads, 13 desktop computers, 10 projectors and 4 interactive whiteboards, a 3D printer plus 3 additional printer/copiers
  - Wi-fi network upgraded with new switches and access points to support the BYOD programme
  - Multiple new software and iPad apps.

All members of the Advisory Council have an opportunity to visit classes and observe not only teaching and learning but also the various facilities provided to students for holistic learning.

A profile of the Advisory Council members is appended in the following section for your reference.

### Collegiate American School Advisory Council

February 2016



**Advisory Council and Senior Leadership Team**

L to R: Back: Robert Haag – Head of Secondary, Vince Tabrizi – Parent & member of Advisory Council, Tammy Tusek – Principal, Hamdi Osman – Board Member and Chair of Advisory Council, Maliha Ahad - Parent and member of Advisory Council, Keith Powell – Deputy Head of Secondary  
 Front: Cindy Davies – Head of Elementary, Noor Sweid – Member of Advisory Council, Dr. Lance de Masi - Member of Advisory Council, Poonam Bhojani – CEO of Innoventures Education and Deputy Chair of Advisory Council, Michael Stephen – Director Finance and Administration of Innoventures Education and Secretary of Advisory Council

## COLLEGIATE AMERICAN SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

### AVISHESHA BHOJANI

Avi's professional career spans Marketing Services, Media, Private Equity, Investments and Government sectors. At the helm of the BPG Group ([www.batespangulf.com](http://www.batespangulf.com)) since 1991, Avi consolidates the Group's interests across advertising, public advocacy, public relations, design, activation, media asset management and digital verticals, in the Middle East and North Africa regions. He has also assisted in the conceptualization and execution of a number of strategic Dubai initiatives and has served the Government of Dubai while assisting with the development of Knowledge Economy hubs in Dubai. An Alumnus of the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad and Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, Avi is a founding Director of Endeavor UAE, PanIIM Alumni Network Gulf and the Advisory Board of Abu Dhabi Capital Management. Avi is also the Managing Director of Innoventures Education, General Partner of Montana Capital and AMEA Ventures Ltd, and is Chairman of International Management Ventures FZ LLC.

### HAMDI OSMAN

Hamdi is the Chairman of Solitaire IGT. He graduated in physical education from Helwan University, Cairo, in 1976. He then moved to the US to pursue his interest in professional soccer and in 1978 joined FedEx, an organization he served for 33 years. He is on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Freights and Logistics, the American Business Council and the Supply Chain & Logistics Group (SCLG) of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Industry. He was also a member of the International Advisory Council and the School of Business and Management, American University of Sharjah from 2002 to 2005, and on the Board of Trustees of the American School of Dubai between 1998 and 2006. He is a former CEO of FedEx for the Middle East, Indian Subcontinent and Africa.

### POONAM BHOJANI

Poonam is an Economics Honours Graduate with an MBA from India's premier business school, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore. Prior to envisioning and cofounding Dubai International Academy, Poonam has had significant industry experience working on leading edge technology solutions with a range of organizations across India, Hong Kong, USA, Belgium, Sweden, The Netherlands, Oman and UAE. She is the CEO of Innoventures Education and has served as the President of the Middle East IB Association of Schools and is the Secretary of the Dubai Private Schools Group.

### DR. LANCE DE MASI

Dr. Lance de Masi is the President of The American University in Dubai (AUD). His career bridges experience as an academic and practicing communications professional. Prior to joining AUD in 1997 he held various high-level management positions in the US, Italy, Spain, Cyprus, UK; and most recently, Dubai with IMPACT/BBDO where he served 6 years as Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer. Dr. de Masi's tenure as President has witnessed AUD's transformation from a small, up-start operation to an institution of higher learning of substantial size and credible academic reputation. In 1997, he was granted a Doctor of Humane Letters degree by Schiller International University. He currently serves as President of the UAE Chapter of the International Advertising Association (IAA).

### MALIHA AHAD

Maliha Ahad has more than 20 years of diversified marketing experience, with global leaders like Procter & Gamble, 3M, Walt Disney and Saatchi & Saatchi across Middle East, Philippines and Pakistan. More recently and prior to setting up her own company in partnership with her husband, Maliha worked for National Foods Products Company (NFPC) in Dubai as Marketing Manager Oasis Water. She is currently working in the education sector and is the exclusive UAE and Saudi licensee for the International Preschool Curriculum, the world's leading international early childhood education organization. Maliha's daughter is a student of the Middle School at CAS.

### **VINCE TABRIZI**

Vince Tabrizi is an IT Delivery Executive with extensive experience in managing outsourcing engagements with a high focus on service and project management, IT governance and business controls. He has been with IBM for 17 years and has held various management positions working with different clients such as American Express, New York University and Cleveland Clinic. Vince is currently leading Business Operations for IBM Gulf & Levant. He is a parent at Collegiate American School.

### **NOOR SWEID**

Noor has 14 years' experience in the private equity sector and has particular expertise in relation to strategy, growth, execution and exits. She led the growth and IPO of Depa, the world's largest interior contractor, on the London Stock Exchange and NASDAQ Dubai, and founded, grew and exited ZenYoga. Noor is an angel investor and is also the founder and chairperson of 85Broads, a network of former Goldman Sachs ex-employees and graduates of top management schools. She sits on the board of Endeavor UAE, a global not-for-profit organization supporting high-impact entrepreneurs in developing countries. Noor holds an MBA from the MIT Sloan School of Management, the business school of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

### **MICHAEL STEPHEN**

Michael Stephen is a Chartered Accountant and has a Diploma in Portfolio Management with over 20 years' experience in consulting and industry. He was part of the core team of Innoventures Education that set up Dubai International Academy in 2005. Michael started his career in an accounting firm focused on audit, tax, corporate law, and business and investment advisory services. He is a Fellow of the Association of International Accountants, UK and has been on the faculty of a business school in Dubai.

# Progress Update from the School Board and Advisory Council



On behalf of Collegiate American School, we are delighted to share with you some highlights of the school. The academic year 2015-2016 got off to a smooth start with 827 pupils from more than 81 nationalities and 156 members of staff from over 27 countries.

## 1. Review of guiding statements

Based on the feedback received from all stakeholders, the following guiding statements have been adopted for all our schools namely Collegiate American School, Dubai International Academy, Raffles International School and Nurseries and Raffles World Academy. Student, Staff and Parent inputs continue to further strengthen our guiding philosophy.

### Vision

Providing world-class education

### Mission

To empower students with a holistic, rigorous and international education for success in an ever-changing world

### Core Values

Achievement | Collaboration | Integrity | Respect | Responsibility

### Philosophy

- To be recognized by the success of our students in achieving their personal goals
- To make student development the center of all school decisions
- To aspire to the highest internationally recognized performance standards
- To build and celebrate a culture based on internationalism
- To enable staff to become life-long learners through the development of their professional practice

## Collegiate American School Approach

To offer a curriculum based on the American Common Core Standards in a technology-enabled learning environment focusing on digital learning utilizing the best practices in curriculum, assessment, and instruction.

## 2. Academic highlights

### 2.1 Preliminary findings on school results

- Collegiate American School students are competitive with international standards for the MAP assessment in the subject of mathematics in the majority of grade levels.
- An academic focus area to increase achievement is in science.
- In the area of reading, in the early childhood division and primary grades, the consideration of a reading program with components of spelling, grammar and writing would provide the multiple language learners a great foundation with their skills in English.
- International mindedness continues to be a focus throughout the school and is aligned with UAE National Agenda.

### 2.2 Enhancement in academic provision

Grade 6/7/8 are now studying utilizing Project Based Units of Learning. This integrates subjects and prioritizes collaboration and research. Common themes are from standards and of very high interest to students.

### 2.3 Fall (Measurement of Adequate Progress) MAP Assessment

In September and October of this year all students in Grades 1-10 participated in the Measurement of Adequate Progress test. This assessment is common practice in US national and international school whom deliver CCSS curriculum. At Collegiate American, this data is used to measure progress when compared to prior MAP assessments administered at school and attainment as it is used for the current point of where students are it. All Collegiate American students are then walked through a process of looking at their results and setting goals for the next administration. The winter administration of this will take place the early part of 2016. Please note that the Collegiate American data is inclusive of all students taking this assessment (ELL and SEN). The comparative chart can be found here:

<https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2015/06/2015-MAP-Comparative-Data-One-Sheet-AUG15.pdf>

Some data extracted from the assessment include:

- In the subject of language, Grades 3 (mean RIT of 192) and 8 (mean RIT of 216.4) outperformed the international standard in their RIT scores. Grades 5, 7 and 10 were within 3 points from the international norm.
- In the subject of math, Grades 3 (mean RIT of 193.8) Grade 7 (mean RIT of 223) Grade 8 (mean RIT of 226.4 and Grade 10 (mean RIT of 231.5) all performed as well or better than the international norm. Grades 2 and 5 were within less than two points.
- In science, Grades 3 (mean RIT of 190.6) and Grade 7 (mean RIT of 207.1) were above the international norm.
- In the subject of reading, Grade 3 (188.7) was above the international norm. Reading is a major focus this year based on the indication of the results.

After every MAP assessment, each student receives a score that helps illuminate what he or she knows, is ready to learn, and is projected to achieve. It is a mature, reliable, and stable scale which can be trusted as being both accurate and fair. The RIT (Rasch Unit) scale, is a stable equal-interval vertical scale. The performance of students can be compared with achievement relative to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

MAP assessments use the RIT scale to create a grade-independent RIT score, which indicates the level of question difficulty a given student is capable of answering correctly about 50% of the time. RIT scores help educators understand every student's current achievement level based on their zone of proximal development.

### 3. Accreditation, Authorization and Inspection

- Accreditation by Council of International Schools (CIS) and New England Association of School and Colleges (NEASC) - after the successful preliminary visit by CIS and NEASC last year, Collegiate American School completed its self-study by the end of November 2015 and the accreditation visit by CIS is scheduled for 19-25 February 2016
- KHDA DSIB annual inspection along with accreditation visit by New England Association of School and Colleges (NEASC) – the school has completed extensive data analysis and while using data to inform its teaching and learning plans, the school Self Evaluation Form (SEF) is also being updated.
- International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP) authorization - as the Secondary School continues to grow, Collegiate American School has submitted its application for the IBDP and a visit by the IB team is scheduled for 19-20 April 2016

### 4. Other key highlights

- Technology level has increased in the Secondary School with 3D printing and creation of gaming characters. In music students use technology to podcast.
- Early childhood focuses on discovery play based kinesthetic experiences to build inquiry and curiosity.
- The Elementary School is piloting a tiered ELL program to deliver intense English instruction to be even more inclusive.
- The Secondary School has begun intramurals which will have students competing against sports and academics. The four houses are Ivy League universities in which student representatives from each grade level are teamed up for a heterogeneous grouping. Intramurals take place during the lunch period and Extension time. Recently, the Innoventures Education interschool debating competition was held at Collegiate American School and the Middle School team stood first.

### 5. Facilities and Resources

The school has further enhanced its provision for infrastructure and resources this year, and over the last summer break has made significant investment in this area to further improve the learning environment. Some enhancements include the following:



**Shades for the Secondary School playground** - to enable use of the facility throughout the academic year



**Replacement of turf and shading in KG2 area** – for improved safety and comfort



**New shading** for the big swimming pool has been installed



**Tennis court** resurfaced

### Other enhancements at CAS

- Microsoft Office 365 is implemented for all student accounts on *CASstudents.com* domain and is being extended to staff as well
- BYOD [Bring Your Own Device] program in the middle & high schools extends to directed mobile use
- Parent ID Card Identification system has been effectively implemented
- Plus Portals (Student, parent and Teacher Portal) have been added to the communication and Teachers plus Gradebook is added to the online Assessment Tools

Further enhancements in the area of technology include the following items. Our focus continues to be on ensuring the effective utilization of technology for effective student learning.

- New equipment added:
  - 54 iPads - homerooms in Elementary have been assigned 5 iPads to be used during the Group learning centres time for groups of 5 students
  - 15 more wireless access points installed
  - 13 desktops
  - 10 new projectors
  - 3D printer plus three additional printer/copiers
  - 4 interactive white boards
  - 2 new cameras to boost up the digital photography learning
  - 1 TV trolley installed with Apple TV
  - Multiple new software and iPad apps

### 6. Staffing

We continue to invest in the professional development of its staff to ensure ongoing enhancement of skills and competencies, and raising teaching and assessment standards through the **Leaders of Learning** program. While the number of students is at a similar level as last year, CAS has added the following positions to support learning and bringing **staff student ratio to 1:7**



Key new teaching positions added

- Key new positions added
  - Elementary
    - Arabic – 2
    - Learning Support Teaching Assistant – 1
    - Learning Support Coordinator - 1
  - Secondary
    - Head of Secondary
    - Arabic B and Islamic Education A - 1
    - EAL, Spanish, Mathematics and Humanities – 1 each
    - ICT Coordinator – 1
  - Whole School
    - SEN Coordinator as a member of the Senior Leadership Team
    - Lifeguard – 1

## 7. Focus for academic year 2015-2016

Our focus continues to drive towards excellence by

- Further improving teaching, learning and assessment
- Meeting needs of students of all abilities including special education needs as well as gifted and talented students
- Improvement in Arabic and Islamic education
- Enhancement of extra-curricular and after school activities
- Continued professional development of staff
- Further enhancement of facilities and resources to improve the quality of education

While a lot has been accomplished since the start of the year, we continue in our relentless efforts towards excellence. We take this opportunity to thank all parents for their continued confidence in the school and all staff for their diligence and dedication.

**Poonam Bhojani**

CEO, Innoventures Education

Deputy Chair, CAS Advisory Council