

HEAD OF SCHOOL MONTHLY

| December 2, 2016 | Derek Luebbe

THIS MONTH'S THEME: Giving Thanks

Important Dates

December 3: Santa Splash

December 10:
PAFA Winter Festival

December 16:
End of First Semester

Important Contacts

Derek Luebbe – Head of School

Liz Gale – LS Principal

Frank Volpe – US Principal

Naomi Shanks – US Vice Principal

Joanna Zhou – HoS Secretary

Trish Castillo – PAFA Rep

Stu Ren – Transportation Supervisor

Jelly Ling – US Secretary

Vicky Xu – LS Secretary

Important Links

Weekly Menu

School Calendar

Communitas

Event Calendars

US Activity Calendars

Welcome

Dear Parents, Students and Faculty

It's hard to believe we're already at the half way point. Time is certainly flying by for me. The next few weeks will be busy ones throughout the school. We hope you can attend many of the upcoming showcases, performances, and celebrations.

Since we've reached December, it is a fitting time to update everyone on a number of different issues. The timing of this Head of School Monthly is perfect as many of these issues will be discussed in more detail during the next PAFA meeting on Dec. 6 at 10:00 am. The meeting will also address a few parent questions

which were submitted to our PAFA in advance. If you have questions, you'd like to suggest, please email them to pdpafa.president@scis-china.org. We encourage you to come to hear more by attending the Dec. 6 PAFA meeting.

Before sharing an update, I want to acknowledge that as an American, we recently celebrated (American) Thanksgiving on November 24. Thanksgiving is more than a chance to gather and eat a wonderful meal. (In reality, most of our faculty celebrated on Sunday Nov. 27 with a faculty feast here at school which was a great event in itself!) It is a time to give thanks for all that we have. Both professionally and personally, I want share a few that stand out for me.

A big holiday "Thank you" to our wonderful (and tireless!) PAFA who have transformed our cafeteria over the past week into a Winter Wonderland!

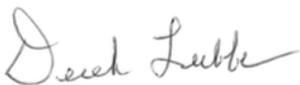


- I love being a part of a school community where students come to school and give high-fives to faculty. I've already received more student hugs at SCIS than my last 5 years combined.
- Our students really care for one another. Yes, there is name-calling and relationship problems which are learning experiences that are a part of growing up. But I am thankful that these instances are very much outside the norm. Our students – as a general rule – are so supportive of one another that it amazes me.
- Parent involvement – and PAFA in particular – has been so helpful in shaping our culture. As I am new to SCIS, they have been so supportive of helping me land on my feet to make my transition and the events we provide more successful. Thank you.
- Our faculty teach more than subjects. They teach children. When that is our starting point, good things happen. They advocate, adjust, and work hard to support each child.
- As a parent, I'm very grateful for the experiences and relationships my children receive. They are surrounded supportive faculty and peers, and challenged to take ownership for their learning.

On behalf of the entire staff, I wish you and your families a warm and restful holiday season.

We will see you back, refreshed and energized, in 2017!

Sincerely,



Derek Luebke
Head of School
SCIS Pudong

High School IB Courses and Student Requests for 2017-18

In early 2017, Dr. Volpe and Ms. Kelly will begin the course request process for our Grade 10 students. Grade 10 is the most important grade as they represent next year's IB Course offerings. Dr. Volpe has worked diligently with his team to create next year's schedule well in advance. This allows us to create a much more informed survey to students, helping us ensure that we can adjust the schedule to best fit the needs of our students. Come out to learn more about our process and our anticipated IB course offerings on Dec. 6.

Enrollment Update

The academic year started with 348 students and enrollment continues to be steady. As is the case with any international school, we will say goodbye to a few Dragons over the next few months; our admissions data suggests that we'll be welcoming many new Dragons. We anticipate a similar enrollment after our new students arrive.

Facility Enhancements

With the completion of the recent lease of the former Lower School Campus, the Pudong Campus is well-situated for focused growth for the next 5 years. Our Board has agreed to two big projects:

1. A re-model to our ECE hallway and the Lower School classrooms. As you know, our current location was originally created as a Middle and High School facility. We have designed the current spaces to accommodate our younger students. Our next step is to take a more strategic look at how we are using the entire floor so that we have a world-class space for our younger learners.
2. Our move to the MYP will mean a more thorough development of an MYP Design Classroom, including equipment, tools, and planning stations that allow for students to take a hands-on exploration of the MYP design process – from planning to creation.

Communication

During the Dec. 6 meeting, we will update our current communication structures and propose next steps. These next steps will be achieved through a parent/school Task Force to help us gather information. We will launch this task force during the Dec. 6 meeting. It is intended to provide an in-depth look over the next three months at our processes and where we can go. Parent involvement in the task force and broader parent input along the way will be an important part of making the process a success.

ManageBac

Closely related to the topic of communication, a few parents have expressed a need to learn more about ManageBac. (ManageBac is our online grade book in use throughout the Upper School.) We are ready to move forward in creating online videos to help train parents and we will devote part of the day on Dec. 6 to speaking with parents to find out which specific aspects of ManageBac would be the top priority. We plan to release our first few videos prior to the holiday break.

MYP and PYP Authorization Update

Over the last five weeks, the school has undergone two separate IB Consultation Visits – one for the PYP and the other for the MYP. These consultation visits are important steps for our school. Outside educators from the IB visit SCIS, meet with constituents, review the work we have achieved thus far, and help us align our future work so that we are ready for our Authorization Visit in the late spring of 2017. Both visits were very successful, gave us clear directions for future work, and will serve us well as we prepare to be a fully authorized (PYP, MYP, and DP) International Baccalaureate school in 2017-18!

A special thank you to the parents and students who were part of the visit and shared their time and perceptions with the consultant.

Upper School Dragon Block

We have introduced a new period to our Upper School schedule called Dragon Block. The Dragon Block occurs two times a month and usually consists of an Upper School assembly to explore topics of 21st Century Learning (and have some fun). Two important aspects of the MYP program are the *Approaches to Learning* and helping students apply their learning to a *Global Context*.

Both of these concepts are targeted during Dragon Block as we explore and explicitly teach topics that are often over-looked in traditional schools. Our goal is to help students recognize their capacity for action and application within and beyond the classroom. Students and faculty self-selected topics of interest, a few of which are shared below.

- Financial Literacy
- Explicit Thinking Skills
- Job Skills: Public Speaking / Interviewing / Presentation / Communication Skills
- Entrepreneurship
- Managing Stress / Time Management / Leading a Balanced Life

We will continue to work through these skills and topics throughout the year to add relevance and personal connection to classroom learning explorations taking place in the classroom.

Student Surveys

Today marked our First Semester Student Survey date. All students in grades 6-12 provided online feedback through 19 questions to each of their teachers during advisory. (Students in grades 3-5 will complete the surveys next week.) These surveys are organized through Panorama Education which works with many school districts in America. These are confidential surveys, but we encourage students - and parents - that the best way to give feedback is to do so directly in person with the teacher or via email. We (parents, students, and teachers) are all working toward the same goal – a successful school experience ready to prepare our students for success at the next level.

Teachers are lifelong learners as well, and by utilizing data in this way we can model that for our students. Teachers will share the big takeaways from their survey data with students. We will conduct the same survey in the spring to help teachers gather additional data to help them improve in the classroom.

Student Performance and Celebrations

Let's not forget that in the midst of all these updates, we are here for our students. There are some fantastic student performances happening as we near the holiday season. Last night, the IB Music students and Jazz Band put on an outstanding show. Many more holiday performances are in store in the next few days as can be seen from the Principals' Weekly newsletters. Come out and support our fantastic students and see all the ways that they are able to showcase their talent.