

US WEEKLY BULLETIN

Weekly Bulletin 4 | September 9, 2016 | Frank Volpe & Naomi Shanks

Important Dates

September 10th: Welcome Back BBQ
September 12th: Upper School ASAs
Begin
September 15th: Mid-Autumn Festival
Holiday (no school)
October 10th-14th: China Go Trips
October 18th-19th: Parent-Student-
Teacher Conferences

Important Contacts

US Principal/MYP Coordinator:
[Frank Volpe](#)

US Vice Principal/DP Coordinator:
[Naomi Shanks](#)

US Secretary: [Jelly Ling](#)

US PAFA Rep: [Trish Castillo](#)

Important Links

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Principal's Message



Dear SCIS Families,

Thank you to all of the parents who attended the PAFA meeting this past Tuesday. It was a great opportunity to get to know many of you. We encourage everyone to participate in the PAFA events and activities. They are excellent opportunities to stay informed regarding school events and network with other parents.

This has been another busy week in the Upper School. Upper School students signed-up for After School Activities (ASAs) this past Thursday. We strongly encourage all Upper School students to participate in an extracurricular activity. If your student has not yet sign up for an activity or sport, please encourage them to do so. Students and parents have all been emailed the ASA guide. SCIS has a wide variety of ways for students to grow and develop beyond the classroom. Participation in these activities is an important part of the balanced student experience at SCIS.

It was great to see the Dragon Spirit up and down the hallways today in the first "Greens and Jeans Day" of the school year. Watch this space for more information about Spirit Days throughout the year.

In closing, we would like to encourage everyone to attend the Welcome Back BBQ this Saturday. This will be the first of many opportunities to participate in the SCIS community.

Kind Regards,

Frank Volpe
Upper School Principal

Naomi Shanks
Upper School Vice Principal

MYP Matters: What is Concept-Based Instruction?

by Dr Volpe

Concept-based instruction and learning is at the core of the philosophy of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP). Concept-based instruction promotes the generalization of what students learn in one context to a new and novel context. It emphasizes the higher order thinking aspects of the how and the why more than the who and the what.

Traditionally, education has focused on facts and skills. While these remain essential aspects of what our students learn, they are not enough. In a rapidly changing world where facts and statistics are available with a simple internet search or may become quickly out of date, developing in-depth conceptual understanding is essential. The difference between traditional fact and skill based education and concept-based learning is best illustrated by an example.

Concept-Based Learning

Topic of Study	Immigration
Unit Debatable Question	Is immigration a net benefit for those countries and cities that receive them?
Unit Activities	Students would inquire into various migration patterns around the world and identify common causes. Students may also investigate how the migration changes the receiving destination's economy, culture, etc.
Unit Summative Assessment	Essay: Identify and describe a major migration pattern. Evaluate the benefits and challenges the receiving country or city has experienced.

By evaluating topics conceptually, students can take what they learn and apply it to new situations. In the example above, students may learn about immigration in China but be required to research and write about an immigration pattern in their home country. Focusing on the conceptual promotes higher-order thinking and allows students to take what they have learning in one context and apply to another.

Further Reading: This is only a brief introduction to concept-based instruction and learning. For those interested in learning more, Lynn Ericson's article, "Concept-Based Teaching and Learning" is an excellent introduction for learning more about the benefits of concept-based instruction and learning. It is available at the following URL:
http://www.ibmidatlantic.org/Concept_Based_Teaching_Learning.pdf

Notes

Dress Code

Please help your child follow the SCIS dress code. Specific information regarding the dress code can be found in the SCIS family handbook on page 25. As a reminder, students in grades 9-12 should remember to button up their SCIS shirts and ensure that shorts are of an appropriate length. As a guiding principle, shorts should be lower than a student's finger tips when their arms are flat against their sides. Thank you for your help supporting dress code!

New SCIS Parent Email accounts

By now, you should have received an invitation to access your new SCIS email account. If you haven't, first check your inbox and spam or junk folders and then contact Barry Johnson at pd-technology@scis-china.org immediately for more information. If you've received this welcome letter, then please make sure you follow the instructions to sign in, reporting any issues you experience to Barry. After *Back to School Night*, all communication from SCIS will only be sent to your SCIS parent email account.

ManageBac

Another big change for SCIS this year is the move from PowerSchool to ManageBac. A welcome email with instructions on how to sign in was sent to your new parent email address so if you haven't seen it, contact Barry Johnson. ManageBac is a web-based software that will allow you to see your child's academic information like PowerSchool did, and it is widely used by IB schools worldwide.

ASA Signup

Upper School ASA signups have begun. Please review the ASA and Athletic options offered at SCIS with your child. We encourage students to participate in at least one sport or activity per semester.

Attendance

Please email or call the Upper School Secretary if your student will be absent. Jelly can be reached at jling@scis-china.org

Substitute Teachers Wanted

With a new year, the SCIS has many new faces. As a school, we are always on the lookout for quality individuals in our community who might be able to substitute teach at school for a day or two. If you are a certified teacher or have experience in the classroom (or even if you know someone we could contact), we encourage you to contact the Joanna Zhou at jzhou@scis-china.org so that we can set up an interview. With a high-quality bank of substitutes, we are able to better serve our students. Our Dragon Community is a great asset, and this is one way you can help make our school a stronger one in 2016-17.