

# LS WEEKLY BULLETIN

Weekly Bulletin 15 | December 2, 2016 | Elizabeth Gale

## Important Dates

- **December 6:** Lower School Principal's Coffee Morning at 9:00am in room 310 & PAFA General Meeting at 10:00am including a Q&A with Mr. Luebbe
- **December 8:** Grades 2-5 Winter Concert starting at 4:30pm until 5:30pm.
- **December 9:**
  - Prekindergarten "Art and Artists" Gallery Walk Learning Celebration at 12:00pm.
  - Prekindergarten through Grade 1 Winter Concert starting at 1:00pm until 2:00pm
  - Winterfest from 2:00pm-4:30pm
- **December 14:** Grade 1 "Personal Histories" Learning Celebration
- **December 16:** End of first semester. Students will be dismissed at 11:30am. Report cards distributed via email.



*Congratulations to all students in KG for their excellent assembly performance. Students taught the audience about their Unit of Inquiry on Play Around the World. The class introduced their favorite games and the many things that can be learned from games. Fantastic Job KG!*

Dear Families,

Next Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, students in grades 2-5 will perform at their Winter Concert titled, *The Reindeer Whisperer* which is scheduled to begin at 4:30pm in the Theater. Students in Grades 2, 3, 4, and 5 have been invited to stay after school from 3:00pm until the performance begins, however parents will need to complete the

permission form that was sent home earlier this week, if you would like to have your child(ren) remain at school prior to the concert. If you haven't completed the permission form, please do so immediately to help us ensure that all students are accounted for.

Similarly, parents will need to complete the permission indicating their child's after school departure plan for Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. On this day, students in Prekindergarten, Kindergarten and Grade 1 will perform their Winter Concert titled *Winter Wonderland*. This event will begin at 1:00pm and last approximately one hour until 2:00pm at which point students will return to their classrooms. From 2:00pm until 4:30pm **Winterfest** will take place in the

in the Cafeteria. Parents will be able to pick their child(ren) up from their classroom(s) at 2:00pm to attend Winterfest. Children whose parents will not be attending Winterfest will have an opportunity to participate in the arts and crafts available under the direct supervision of their classroom teacher. Students whose parents are not in attendance will take their regular bus home at 3:00pm.

SCIS-Pudong will once again host the **SANTA SPLASH** this year. This event will take place on Saturday, December 3 from 8:00am – 5:30pm during which swimmers from around the city will compete in fun-filled holiday swim meet. We wish Ms. Tarsi and our swimmers great luck!

Next Tuesday, December 6 at 9:00am there will be a **Lower School Principal's Coffee Morning**. The topic will be "Inquiry Based Learning and the PYP." During this Coffee Morning, I will be discussing the various components of the Primary Years Program (PYP) including the written, taught and assessed curriculum, as well as the differences between traditional learning and inquiry-based learning. This event will take place in room 310 on the third floor (the last room on the left of the middle school hallway). There will be signs posted showing the way. I look forward to seeing many parents in attendance!

Wishing all SCIS Families, a Wonderful Weekend!

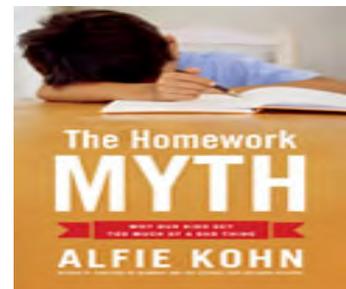
Liz Gale  
Lower School Principal



## The Great Homework Debate

While every school day brings a myriad of new happenings, there is one learning experience that many parents expect their child to encounter each day: homework. As the old saying goes *practice makes perfect* and many believe that homework is a necessity and extremely important to the learning process. However, others feel homework is a waste of time that produces no actual benefits for the child.

Thus, the homework debate arises. Is homework more harmful than helpful or does it actually enhance and extend the student's learning outside of school? According to Alfie Kohn, author of *The Homework Myth: Why Our Kids Get Too Much of a Bad Thing* there are both positive and negative effects to assigning homework.



The negative effects of homework have almost certainly been experienced by most parents, including, increased frustration, lack of time for other activities, and possible loss of interest in learning. Parents may resent the idea of having to play the role of *homework enforcer* and worry that they or their child may be criticized for not completing the homework to a high standard. On the other hand, many educators stress that homework which is specifically aligned to the learning experiences in the classroom enhance student understanding, improve study habits, attitudes toward school, self-discipline and independent problem solving skills.

The most comprehensive and recent research on homework comes from Duke University psychology professor Harris Cooper. While Cooper found there is a positive correlation between homework and student achievement in grades 7 and above, he found little evidence that supported a direct correlation between homework and student achievement at the elementary level, in fact his research revealed a weak relationship between homework and student performance.



Similarly, Cathy Vatterott, an education professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, thinks there is not sufficient proof that homework is helpful for students in elementary school. She believes there should be more emphasis on improving the quality of homework tasks as opposed to focusing on the quantity of homework assigned. She also supports efforts to eliminate homework for younger kids and has noticed a trend toward limiting, if not eliminating, homework entirely in elementary school.

At SCIS, teachers aim to only assign meaningful, relevant and authentic homework that will strengthen the connection between what the children are learning in school and what takes place in their environment outside of the school walls. Homework will not be assigned just for the sake of having homework and homework may be differentiated based upon the needs of each individual students. Within the Lower School Within the Lower School homework will typically serve one of three purposes: *practice, extension or preparation*. Therefore, homework may consist of:

- Additional practice for skill development
- Assignments that the student was not able to complete during the school day
- Extension of a topic or lesson covered in class by completing a parallel learning experience at home
- Preparing for a future unit of inquiry or lesson by interviewing a family member or conducting independent research on a topic
- Reading

The total homework time for any given night will vary and there may be many nights where students will not have “assigned homework.” Instead, they will be encouraged to discuss their learning experiences at school or simply read for pleasure for a set period of time. Nevertheless, there are a variety of activities such as exploring new places, helping cook dinner, reading books for enjoyment and working on projects of self-interest that regardless of whether or not they directly related to what is being studied in the classroom will have a positive effect on the child’s growth and development as a learner.

#### **Sources**

- Cooper, H. *Synthesis of research on homework*. Educational Leadership
- Robert J. Marzano and Debra J. Pickering. Educational Leadership: *Special Topic / The Case For and Against Homework*.
- Corno. *Homework is a complicated thing*. Educational Researcher
- Epstein, J. *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*.
- Hattie, J. A. *Measuring the effects of schooling*. Australian Journal of Education.
- Kohn, Alphonse. *THE HOMEWORK MYTH: Why Our Kids Get Too Much of a Bad Thing*
- J. Alleman, J. Brophy, B. Knighton, R. Ley, B. Botwinski, and S. Middlestead. *Homework done right: Power learning in real-life situations*