

# SSIS NEWSLETTER

Suzhou Singapore International School

December 2023 • Issue 6



## UPCOMING EVENTS (Whole School)

WED 6 DECEMBER  
5:30 PM @ THEATRE  
**SSIS Piano Concert**

FRI 8 DECEMBER  
10:30 AM @ FOYER  
**Orchestra Mini-Concert**

9-10 DECEMBER  
10:00 AM @ KEMPINSKI HOTEL  
**SSIS Community Event:  
Christmas Market**

MON 11 DECEMBER  
**ECA Season 2 Begins**

TUE 12 DECEMBER  
8:30 AM @ BS101  
**Parent Information Session:  
Ai at SSIS**

WED 13 DECEMBER  
3:30 PM @ POOL  
**Swim Team Meet &  
Christmas Party**

THU 14 DECEMBER  
12:15 PM @ CONF ROOM 4  
**Service Committee Meeting**

THU 14 DECEMBER  
5:30 PM @ THEATRE  
**Orchestra & Choir Concert**

FRI 15 DECEMBER  
**PSP Christmas Package  
Distribution**

## MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL

### Thank you

It is a pleasure for us at SSIS to see our parents at school, not only during the parent-teacher conference or if they are meeting with teachers, but I enjoy seeing many of our parents either early morning, sometimes during the day and many times in the evening sitting in foyer enjoying a cup of coffee or a drink. It makes it more like a home away from home.



We are fortunate to have a very active parent community, with a core Parent School Partnership (PSP) group, primarily moms, who do a fantastic job bringing warmth, care, and a smile to many events. The PSP extends to more than those who are officially part of the PSP, as many moms bring other parents into the activity that they are planning.

We truly appreciate what you do day in and day out. By the time you read this message, we will have celebrated our Christmas tree lighting ceremony, which the PSP organized, the last of the many ways our parents contribute to SSIS for this part of the year.

In addition to the significant events where we have your support, we have many volunteers daily at the school, reading, helping, and supporting wherever you can.

As we approach the holiday season, it is appropriate to take a few minutes to stop and write these words to say thank you for all you do at your school. We very much appreciate it, and we love having you here.

With deepest appreciation,

Samer Khouri



# ELEMENTARY NEWS

## FROM ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

### Seeing and Understanding the SSIS Literacy Program

On Elementary Literacy Day, the doors of Elementary classrooms will be wide open for an opportunity you don't want to miss!

Between 8:30 and 10:50 am on Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, Elementary families and friends are invited to see the SSIS Literacy program in action.



### On the Stage

Watch children of all grade levels bring their literacy skills to life on the theatre stage. See debates, stories, speeches, and reader's theatre performances by our talented students.

### Workshops for Parents

Participate in teacher-led workshop that will help you better understand the literacy program and give you more ideas around how to better help your child at home. Topics will include:

- "How to Engage Your Child With Reading: Asking Good Questions at Home"
- "Writing Chinese Characters"
- "What are 'Patterns of Power'?"
- "How Can We Support EAL Learning At Home?"
- ...and many more!

### Watch the Learning Happen!

Come directly into classrooms and watch key instructional techniques in practice. The strategies you've heard about but never seen: Reader's Workshop, Writer's Workshop, Phonics, Mechanics, Small Group Work, Individual Conferring...



### UPCOMING EVENTS (Primary)

THU 7 DECEMBER  
8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

**Elementary Literacy Day**

WED 13 DECEMBER

**Grade 5 field trip to Shanghai  
Jewish Settlers Museum**

Thursday, December 7th is...

**SSIS ELEMENTARY LITERACY DAY!**


EVERYONE IS INVITED!

See Student Performances!

Parent Workshops!

Visit Classrooms!

Open for SSIS families, friends, and guests!

8:30-10:50 -- Schedule found here: 

# ELEMENTARY NEWS

## FROM ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

### Learn from our Experts

Visit the foyer to learn more about:

- Educational technology
- Reading assessment
- Writing assessment
- EAL Support

Stop by the Library as well to see how students learn to research and stretch their reading skills.

### And See the Results!

From the Elementary Office all the way to the main Foyer, parents can browse a huge display of student writing, from our youngest students all the way to Middle School. All of this will happen in English, Chinese, and German!

SSIS is a community school that believes in inviting families to be an active participant in each child's education. Visitor passes will also be available, so feel free to bring others from your local community to show them the amazing things that your child and their friends are learning. We are proud of the learning happening every day at SSIS!

At 10:30, everyone is invited to the Upper and Lower Canteens for a chance to be together as a community, enjoy something delicious, and celebrate all of the ways in which our children are growing as readers, writers, and communicators.



# ELEMENTARY NEWS

## FROM ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

### **Building positive relationships with families, school, and students: A Recap of Our Prekindergarten Parent Event**

We recently had the pleasure of hosting a special event for our prekindergarten department, where parents had the opportunity to celebrate, together with Little Penguins and Dragonflies, the end of the very important unit - Who We Are - in our IB curriculum. In the past months, PreK thinkers have been sharing stories about themselves and their families, as well as learning about their new family at school.



The "Who We Are" unit aims to instill in students a deep understanding of their own identities, their relationships with others, and the world around them. Therefore, the focus of the initial presentation was on fostering a sense of belonging, family, and strong friendships within our school community, as well as ensuring smooth transitions for our young learners. Parents learned about the importance of creating a nurturing environment, where children feel a sense of belonging and are encouraged to develop strong friendships. The emphasis on family and community was evident as we discussed the ways in which our school serves as a supportive and inclusive space for all students and families.

Parents were invited to visit our prekindergarten classrooms, where their children took on the role of hosts for a variety of engaging, play-based activities. From imaginative play areas to hands-on learning stations, the classrooms were abuzz with excitement as parents had the opportunity to witness firsthand the enriching experiences their children engage in on a daily basis.

The event served as a wonderful opportunity for parents to gain a deeper understanding of the values and practices that underpin our prekindergarten program. It also provided a glimpse into the meaningful connections and experiences that their children are a part of each day.



### UPCOMING EVENTS (EARLY YEARS)

WED 6 DECEMBER

11:45 AM

**Early Years German Xmas  
Celebration**



# ELEMENTARY NEWS

## FROM ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

As the morning came to an end, with a fun and healthy yoga session for all parents and children, wonderful comments were shared about this successful occasion.

"I was impressed with the confidence of the kids while guiding us through their favorite activities. They really own the classroom and almost feel it is their second home. I was surprised to see that they are really eager to contribute to the class (ex: circle time, PE) no one is shy at all, that must be an amazing feeling for you to see them being really enthusiastic. In my case it was a nice learning that the kids are resilient and courageous. They do their best to adapt and integrate to new environments."

"The parents' activities on Tuesday were very enjoyable and all aspects of the experience were great! Thank you for inviting me to enter the classroom with all the students. What surprised me most was that my child spelled out his own name on the spelling board. He felt that he learned a lot in school, and I also greatly appreciate it."

"Thank you so much for opening your classrooms today! It was so much fun to hear about the interactions and learning that takes place in the classroom. My child and I had so much fun exploring the playground and classrooms, and I was thankful to connect with her classmates' parents. Thanks again for making today a huge success! I look forward to PTC to hear more about child's learning. You all are the best!"

"Last Tuesday's activity, let us feel that the children are so happy in school, sports and reading are very good arrangements, my child is a shy child, but to see that she can cooperate with the teacher, and happy with her classmates, really happy for her."

We are grateful for the enthusiastic participation of our parents and the opportunity to showcase the vibrant and nurturing community that is at the heart of our prekindergarten department. We look forward to continuing to work together to support the growth and development of our young learners, as they embark on their educational journey with us.

Thank you to all who joined us for this special event, and we look forward to many more opportunities to come together as a community in the future.



# SECONDARY NEWS

## FROM SECONDARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

### Learning Happening Across the School

Middle School continues to be a busy place as we roll through the middle of the second quarter of the semester. These are the long weeks between holidays that require a lot of focus and energy. When I walk around the school and visit classrooms in all subjects, that energy is very present. Students are engaged in fun, meaningful projects. Here are some examples:



- Grade 6 - Individuals and Societies Research Projects - each student has formulated their own research question and are learning to conduct a research project. The topics being studied are wide ranging from Japanese Anime to the Myers-Briggs Personality Tests to Egyptian Tombs and everything in between. Students are learning valuable research skills. They will be presenting their research findings on **December 8 at 10:45 - 11:40 on the CN3 I&S hallway**. Grade 5 and Grade 7 have been invited to see the projects. Parents are also welcome to join.
- Grade 7 - Science Climate and Weather Projects - students created a large variety of models to demonstrate their understanding of the science of climate and weather. Students made all kinds of models, from 3-D models in the classroom to computer programmed models using Minecraft. Our students showed their creative thinking skills to express their learning in Science.
- Grade 8 - Math Tessellation Investigation - students went beyond understanding just how to get the right answer in their study of shapes and changes in patterns. They had to investigate how the patterns and rules of changes of geometric shapes resulted in patterns called Tessellations. This is an example of how the MYP approach to Maths goes beyond just getting the answer through following the rules, but having students demonstrate that they understand the why behind the rules and what the possibilities are for real world applications.



### UPCOMING EVENTS (Middle School)

6&13 DECEMBER  
10:45 AM @ FIELD

**Middle School Student Council  
Capture the Flag**

FRI 8 DECEMBER  
10:45 AM @ CN 3 HALLWAY

**Grade 6 Research I&S Unit  
Presentation**

TUE 12 DECEMBER  
5:30 PM @ THEATRE

**Middle School Music Concert**

# SECONDARY NEWS

## FROM SECONDARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

### Student Council News

The student council continues to be an active, vibrant group that is making things happen. On Friday November 24, more than 100 students attended the Student Council Movie Night. BS101 was filled with young people enjoying popcorn and student-made cookies while watching the classic film Shrek. This week the Student Council continues its events with a House-based Capture the Flag activity. Houses will vie for House points in a fun, collaborative strategy game. Grade 8 will participate this week, with Grade 7 and 6 having their turn in the upcoming weeks. Mr. Brian Rotunno has done an excellent job guiding the students and getting them to make clear proposals with student engagement at the center. In fact, the student council has been so busy and created so much excitement, Mr. Richard Walker has now joined as a second faculty advisor for the Middle School student council. Their next challenge is to design and lead the assemblies for the Middle School next semester. And there are more special events coming up – like an Art Contest and maybe even a Cooking Competition. Stay tuned for more details.

### Wellbeing

The Wellbeing program at Middle School continues to evolve and adapt to the needs of the students. Working with Ms. Feroza, the Middle School counselor, and the Heads of Grade, each Grade worked on identifying the most important areas of their social-emotional life that they want to work on. Based on this work, Ms. Feroza and the Homeroom teachers are guiding students through lessons on the topics the students chose. These are Time Management and Friendships. This work will continue throughout the year with a focus on giving our students time to reflect and grow skills in these important life skills.

### Service in the Middle School

In exciting news, plans are underway to bring some School Service Groups into the Middle School. Groups like Student Ambassadors and Paws for Cause, just to name two, are keen to branch out and start sections in the Middle School. This will give more Middle School students a chance to practice Service and Action directly. We will be sending out details about how and when these groups will start in the Middle School soon.



# SECONDARY NEWS

## FROM SECONDARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

### High School Production

Friday marks the start of our countdown to the winter holidays here in the school and is part of a series of events aimed at bringing our SSIS community together before we take well earned breaks.

One of these is happening this week and rehearsals are continuing at a furious pace for the last two days in school. Our much anticipated High School Production "The Adventures of Pip and Mimsy" will be showing on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of this week. The students and supporting teachers work very hard on making these events a success, and whilst we'll all enjoy the show the real success comes in the value it gives to the participating students.

The learning and development provided by opportunities such as production are invaluable and unique. I am in admiration of the confidence shown by those who take to the stage to perform and their ability to communicate and stand up in front of an audience is an experience that will be carried forward for many years. Let's also not forget the commitment it takes to get to this stage. All of our production students are also studying full time, in which case, the production also represents a challenge to their ability to self-manage, organize and prioritise.

Productions on this scale comprise a lot more than the 12 students in the cast that we will see on the stage, although many of them may wear multiple hats within the process. Any production is a creative and logistic challenge providing students on and behind stage with a wealth of experience. We have multiple teams for; costume and make up, set and prop design, assistant directors, stage managers, tech crew. All function as disciplined and professional teams

One of the great benefits of all of the arts are that they invite us to think and reflect. Not only do storylines engage and challenge us to think, they require interpretation and consideration on how best they can be delivered to prompt the reactions in our audience. In particular for our international



### UPCOMING EVENTS (High School)

TUE 5 DECEMBER  
9:30 AM @ BS101

**Parent Meeting: University  
Counsellors**

THU 7 DECEMBER  
12:00 PM @ SS LIBRARY

**University Visit: University of  
Nottingham Ningbo**

FRI 15 DECEMBER

**Grade 10 Personal Project Full  
Draft Report Deadline - All  
Criteria**

SSIS HIGH SCHOOL PRODUCTION

- NOV 30TH THURSDAY 6:00 ~ 7:30
- DEC 1ST FRIDAY 6:00 ~ 7:30
- DEC 2ND SATURDAY 3:00 ~ 4:30

 Ticket:  
70RMB for all ages/grades

# SECONDARY NEWS

## FROM **SECONDARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**

students, they offer the opportunity to explore different cultural perspectives, different roles and different personalities, and to express themselves in a fun and safe environment.

We hope you enjoy the Production if you get a chance to see it. We also have a variety of other performances coming up before the break. Please check the upcoming dates and messages through our usual channels for details.



# RECENT NEWS & EVENTS

## Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Adventure Journey Practice and Qualifier



Following the success of the Duke of Edinburgh Silver expedition in October, group of 16 Grade 8 and Grade 9 students recently embarked on their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Adventure Journey, a journey filled with excitement, challenges, and unforgettable experiences.

The journey kicked off with an early start on Tuesday, November 14th, as students were

divided into three groups. Prior to the trip, they underwent a comprehensive DoE workshop, equipping them with essential skills such as route planning, compass navigation, and the art of packing for an extended hiking and camping trip.

The true challenge unfolded within one of the National parks Wuxi, where all groups hiked across diverse terrain covering 9-11km, each carrying their belongings. This demanding experience underscored the importance of team support, both mentally and physically. The first night saw students staying in a local guesthouse, marking the successful completion of the practice journey.



On Wednesday, November 15th, students began the qualifying journey. This time, they would receive no guidance from their supervisors, challenging them to self-navigate and solve problems independently. The hike proved challenging, with blocked routes and the need for quick adjustments. The elevation reached almost 700m, some without any pathway, resulting in numerous wrong turns.

Despite these obstacles, the groups persevered,

reaching the campsite after nearly 9 hours. They displayed exceptional teamwork, quickly setting up camp and preparing their evening meals by themselves.

As G9 student Hyowon Lee shared, "DoE trip is where students get to experience something new outside the classroom. Hiking can be challenging as it requires physical endurance and mental resilience. Carrying our heavy backpacks made the hike intense and harder. Despite the challenges, the end of this experience was very rewarding, being able to understand that sometimes it is important to challenge myself in participating in different activities I haven't done before."



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