

SSIS NEWSLETTER

Suzhou Singapore International School

February 2024 • Issue 8



UPCOMING EVENTS (Whole School)

3-18 FEBRUARY

Chinese New Year Holidays

MON 19 FEBRUARY

First Day Back to School

20-28 FEBRUARY

**Grades 2-10 MAP Assessment for
Reading & Math**

FRI 23 FEBRUARY

Student Casual Dress Day

TUE 27 FEBRUARY

9:00 AM @ BS101

**Head of School @ PSP Welcome
New Parents**

TUE 27 FEBRUARY

10:15 AM @ MEDIA CENTRE

**PSP Parent Event: Lunar New
Year Morning Tea**

4-8 MARCH

SSIS Book Week

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL

Happy New Year of the Dragon, New Year and a New Vision:

Dear Families and members of the SSIS community,

We take this wonderful opportunity to wish all our families and members of the SSIS community a joyous and happy new year. May the new year bring everyone safety, calmness, and much-needed world peace. We hope it will be the year when the world will start to be kind.

One delight of being in an International School carrying an International curriculum is to bring together people from all different nationalities, celebrate what brings us together, and hopefully bring in a new generation who is more tolerant and able to do a better job than we did so far.

With that in mind, we have noticed that we will be working on revising the school's vision statement over the past two years. The time is here; as soon as we return, we will look for your input and that of the students and every community member.

WE NEED YOUR VOICE:

-

At SSIS, we are now ready to review our Vision Statement. Over the last four years, we have taken considerable steps to focus on the needs of our students and formulate a vision for what we aspire for them to be in the future.

We would appreciate your help. Your involvement and voice are essential in creating what will, by far, have the most impact on our children.

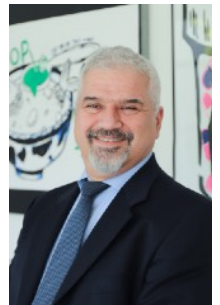
THE HISTORY AND WORK SO FAR:

So far, we have built our work around two principles:

At SSIS:

We believe that every child can learn.

We are all responsible for all the children all the time.



SSIS NEWSLETTER

Suzhou Singapore International School

February 2024 • Issue 8

MESSAGE FROM **HEAD OF SCHOOL**

We have also agreed to focus on differentiation, inclusion, and collaboration.

In addition, we will build on what we already have: the school's guiding statements and the SSIS definition of learning.

THE GOAL:

- When we return, we will start revising our current guiding statements, and We will use them as well as the Definition of Learning, both of which are available on the website, as we aim to summarize our work into three or four words representing who we are and what we aspire for our children to be.

WHAT WE NEED YOU TO DO:

- We need you to participate. We will send a very short survey and hold parent meetings to encourage everyone to participate. This will include every member of the community. We hope this work will be the first building block in creating a greater sense of community with a clear shared vision.

I wish you a wonderful new year and a happy and safe holiday.

Happy New Year of the Dragon.

Samer Khouri



ELEMENTARY NEWS

FROM ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

Understanding Culture

Belonging to an international school provides many advantages for students. The diverse cultural backgrounds of our students and families, together with our clear understanding as a school of the importance of valuing multiculturalism, helps guide purposeful opportunities for our students to see and examine culture on a much deeper level.



Throughout the year, our students in each grade take a closer look at the concepts of culture and global citizenship. As a school that uses the PYP framework to guide much of our planning within and across subject areas, we are always searching to implement chances for students to interact and reflect deeply around cultures: Their own culture, and the cultures of others.

Recently, students in Grade 2 and 4 shared some of their learning with the parent community.

Grade 2 students focused on exploring and presenting their own culture. For many students in the school, asking them where they're from, or asking them to tell you about "their culture", can produce complicated answers! Students in Grade 2 answered questions such as:

- "What are the differences between nationality and culture?"
- "What do you value most about your culture and your family's culture?"

Students welcomed parents and guests into the SSIS Foyer on Wednesday with a massive folkloric dance performance. They then invited families to see the Culture Boards they had prepared, answering questions that demonstrated their learning from the unit.

Last week, our Grade 4 students also welcomed parents into the school to see their presentations on the traditions, artwork, games, dances, and other practices that UNESCO refers to as "Intangible Cultural Heritage". From



UPCOMING EVENTS (Primary)

FRI 23 FEBRUARY
8:30 AM @ THEATRE
**100th Day Activities; Assembly
for Grades 4 and 5,
hosted by 5ST**

THU 29 FEBRUARY
Grade 2 Field Trip: Aeon Mall

FRI 1 MARCH
8:30 AM @ THEATRE
**Assembly for Grades 2 and 3,
hosted by 2KC**

FRI 8 MARCH
Book Character Costume Parade!

FRI 29 MARCH
Primary Dragon Day!



ELEMENTARY NEWS

FROM ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

Tango and churros to Yut Nori and needlepoint, students shared their research and highlighted the need for humanity to protect practices that are part of our shared global cultural heritage.

Every day at SSIS, students develop their language, math, science, artistic, and physical skills. They also become more collaborative, more courageous, and better communicators. All of this learning is connected to large themes, concepts, and questions that drive student inquiry and interest.

Having students who know more about the world and know more about themselves is one of the reasons why many of our learning opportunities start with the very important question, "What is culture?"



ELEMENTARY NEWS

FROM ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

The Lunar New Year is one of the most important social and economic holiday for billions of people around the world. The holiday is tied to the lunar-solar Chinese calendar and was originally observed as a time to honor household and heavenly deities and ancestors.

The New Year celebration is centred around removing the bad and the old, and welcoming the new and the good. It's a time to worship ancestors, exorcise evil spirits and pray for good harvest.



10 Facts About Chinese New Year

- Chinese New Year is the longest Chinese holiday.
- You may also hear Chinese New Year being called the Spring Festival.
- Monsters are fought off.
- You spend time with family.
- No showering, sweeping, or throwing out garbage. (old traditional)
- Children receive lucky money in red envelopes.
- Eat lots of dumplings.

A key feature and moreover an essential dimension of international education, is for a school to recognize and celebrate its "host country." The Council of International Schools recognizes that the use of the culture and environment of the host country should provide students with an authentic learning experience.

The PYP promotes learning additional languages to support the development of international mindedness, a key aspect of all the IB programmes. Additional language learning might be the language of the host country or another language that is part of the curriculum or community.

Children are naturally curious about other languages. Through Chinese lessons in the Early Years, we provide opportunities to explore language and stimulate curiosity and open-mindedness through inquiry. Our explorations include sharing our local



UPCOMING EVENTS (Early Years)

FRI 15 MARCH

Early Years Arts Extravaganza



ELEMENTARY NEWS

FROM ELEMENTARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

language, Chinese, through speaking, listening and singing. This develops skills and understanding as they make connections between Chinese and their mother tongue languages.

This week we held our biggest Early Years Chinese New Year Celebration. Our Early Years Chinese Team worked hard to provide and deliver authentic, festive experiences for our youngest members of SSIS and their families to enjoy. Like many Early Years events, it was a celebration of learning, so all learning engagements that students were sharing with their families had already been visited in class time. This meant our students were little leaders, leading their families through the many, authentic CNY learning engagements. The Early Years Corridors were bustling with laughter, noise (to scare those monsters away) and excited children sharing their learning.

We had little CNY ambassadors (experts) help us better understand the event during our parent information workshop and these wee experts led the families to their children's classrooms in a dragon parade scaring all those monsters away.

When this questions was asked to a 5 year old expert:

"What do the fire crackers do when we set them off,"
... in my mind I was hoping for "to scare the monsters away" – silly teacher to put my preconceived ideas and thinking in the way of a child.

From the innocent thinking of a child:

"They go BOOM!"

Xīnnián kuàilè everyone



SECONDARY NEWS

FROM SECONDARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

January is a time of both beginnings and endings. It is the beginning of a new calendar year and a chance to take on new challenges in the coming 12 months. It is also the end of the first semester of schoolwork and a chance for reflection on the learning that has happened and how we can all continue to do our best in the second semester. It is a new beginning for many families at SSIS, where we had more than a dozen new students join us in January. Our SSIS students gave them all their usual, positive, and inclusive welcome. We are so happy to see our community continue to grow.



Student work and evidence of learning in a variety of ways was on display all this month. The Foyer was full of the various Design projects that students have created in the first semester. Student designed shoes, models and machines showed the creativity and inventive minds of SSIS students. Visual Arts work was on display in the hallways over the past month. Currently, the Grade 7 Visual Arts projects from their unit on Surrealism can be seen in the BN corridor, just off the foyer.

The Middle School Student council continues to be an active engine of special events for our students. The House Representatives work together to come up with unique ideas for student engagement. The Yellow House has sponsored an Art Contest for Middle School students throughout the month of January. Students will submit original artworks by Feb 2 to compete for prizes. Everyone who enters will be recognized and there will be prizes for top artists, as judged by our Art Teachers and DP Visual Arts students. In February, the Green House leaders will be hosting the first ever SSIS Middle School Cooking Contest. This will be an after-school event for students who want to show off their culinary arts skills and work together with members of their House teams to create delicious food for us all to enjoy.

Lunar New Year is upon us and we are looking forward to seeing everyone back after their holiday, rested and ready to take on the Second Semester. Enjoy the holidays. Xīnnián kuàilè and saehae bok mani badeuseyo.



UPCOMING EVENTS (Middle School)

TUE 27 FEBRUARY

3:30 PM

MS STUCO Cooking Competition

THU 29 FEBRUARY

9:30 AM @ BS101

**Parent Meeting: MYP
Assessment**



SECONDARY NEWS

FROM SECONDARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

We started the second semester with many new members of our community (and more arriving after the break). It is fantastic to see new faces amongst our students and the excitement of our “old” students in welcoming in new peers. Starting a new school can be daunting, particularly for those joining us in the High School, and gives us an excellent opportunity to show our kind sides. With so many new students regularly joining us, it is important that welcoming, guiding and helping new students to settle in is something we are known to do well at SSIS.



It is unusual to start a new semester and then after a week have a pause, but essential for us to celebrate this most significant celebration of our host culture. Although it's not long since our last break, it's also a good time to pause for breath to prepare for busy times ahead with all of the High School Grade levels having significant landmarks in their learning journeys.

Starting with our most senior students, our Grade 12's will need no reminding that significant things await them after the holiday. The first two weeks immediately after the break are our mock examinations to help prepare for the final DP exams in the late spring. Whilst this is a good opportunity for students to show their understanding of their subjects, it is a significant learning experience in itself. Mocks help students understand what they are preparing for. They can help students identify gaps in their knowledge and areas of confidence that they can work on before their examinations. They are also useful for evaluating review and revision strategies, managing your time inside the examinations themselves and they also act to remove potential surprises when the final exams come a few months later. We wish all of our G12's the best of luck in their exams and encourage them to utilize the full value of these practice events.

For Grade 11's meanwhile, Semester two represents a push on the accelerator pedal, particularly in the writing of their Extended Essays. The Extended Essay is a significant piece of work and should be a challenge for all students. We are always working to help students manage and excel in



UPCOMING EVENTS (High School)

20-29 FEBRUARY

Grade 12 Mock Exams

TUE 20 FEBRUARY

9:30 AM @ BS101

**Parent Meeting: University
Counsellors**

FRI 23 FEBRUARY

**Grade 10 Personal Project Final
Report Deadline**



SECONDARY NEWS

FROM **SECONDARY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**

this large academic writing task. This year, students will have a number of smaller deadlines to ensure that supervisors can have regular check in points with their students. In March the students will hand in their first 1000 words, followed in April by their first 2000 words. These are part of the building process with students manageably adding to their work over time with support and guidance from their supervisors. Being an EE supervisor is one of the best parts of teaching in the IB Diploma. It enables you to have specific and significant impact on the learning of a student, and hopefully help them realise a passion and interest in a field that they might continue to follow in their future.

Our Grade 9's will be starting out on their project journey by beginning their Personal Projects. These are in depth, personal interest investigations that will begin during Semester 2 and stretch into their Grade 10, lasting around 9 months. Similar to the EE mentioned above, students work closely with a supervisor who is there, not to be the expert in the subject but to guide the students in the process of how to work through a larger project. The Grade 10's are at the end of their PP journey and will be completing their projects after the break and preparing to present their work at the PP Exhibition in April. We will also be holding conversations with Grade 10's to look through their DP Option choices for next year.

First of all in looking forward, we hope everyone enjoys the rest and festivities over the break and we look forward to helping students meet these and other amazing challenges in the coming semester. The good news is that we are entering the year of the dragon, so power, strength and good fortune lie ahead.



RECENT NEWS & EVENTS

Kindergarten Students Host Spectacular Book Store Event

The kindergarten students organized a super fun book store event to celebrate their love for writing on 26th January. It was the perfect way to wrap up their writers' workshop unit. Each student got to show off their very own books and share their incredible storytelling skills.

Throughout the unit, these little authors poured their hearts into planning, writing, and editing their books. They honed their writing skills and ensured their books were reader-friendly. Students sorted their books into different categories, such as **Toys/ Games, People/Characters, Food, Places, Nature, Shapes, Holidays, and Animals**. And they transformed their classroom into a buzzing marketplace, complete with a bakery, a cashier, and even a cozy coffee shop where people could chill and enjoy a good read. These mini entrepreneurs didn't stop there - they also invited Pre Kindergarten friends and teachers to come and check out their literary masterpieces.



SSIS Students broke 3 records in ACAMIS Swim Championships

Congratulations to SSIS students Susan Guan, Shutong Guan, and Fuyan Dai, for not only winning two individual gold medals and one silver medal at ACAMIS Swimming competitions at ISB in Decemebr, but for also breaking three ACAMIS records!

The event brought together 26 international schools from across China. Susan, Shutong, and Fuyan showcased their outstanding skills in their respective categories. Susan



clinched the gold medal in the 100m breaststroke for girls in the 13/14 age group, while Shutong won the gold in the 100m breaststroke for girls in the 15 and above age group. Fuyan secured the silver medal in the 100m breaststroke for boys in the 13/14 age group.

Please visit our website at www.suzhousinternationalschool.com/community/news or follow us on Wechat to receive the latest school news.

