

DEVELOPING A MINDFUL HEART

QISS

QINGDAO NO.1 INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL OF SHANDONG PROVINCE

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First grade students performing their Key Assignment

UNDERSTANDING THE KEY ASSIGNMENTS

By Jeff Fischmann, Director

What is a Key Assignment? To understand this, one must understand the school's theme and mission. Our theme is to 'develop a mindful heart' in each of our students.

Our mission is to "provide a challenging academic program that develops the core characteristics of vitality, courage, sensitivity, intelligence and compassion". What is meant by these terms and what do they have to do with the Key Assignment?

By 'challenging academic program' we mean our students will develop disciplined minds capable of mastering core academic content such as literature, math, science, social studies and foreign languages.

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Upcoming COLLEGE VISITS TO QISS

University of British
Columbia
Visits us on Monday,
November 29th

DATES TO REMEMBER

- NOVEMBER 11-14: ACAMIS Volleyball at ISU Mongolia
 NOVEMBER 19: Lower School report cards sent home with students
 NOVEMBER 25: Changed to a regular school day
 NOVEMBER 26: Thanksgiving Holiday



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Second Step in Grade One

Grade one started the school year with the unit of inquiry, China and Me. Students explored a variety of integrated activities and related topics of interest such as learning how to understand and manage their feelings. Children are learning how to make a friend and be a friend. And they are learning how to solve problems with other children. They are learning these things throughout the day in the classroom and on the playground, and at home. Children are learning by watching and listening to how teachers, family members, and friends interact with each other. But just like reading, writing, and math these areas of learning also have specific skills that need to be

taught. Our class started using a program called Second Step to help us learn and practice these social-emotional skills.

EMPATHY

We talked about learning to identify our own and others' feelings, and we also practiced how to show care to others. We are learning how to use clues to identify how someone else is feeling. The children are learning that faces, bodies, and what is happening are all clues that they can use. They are learning to identify important feelings and their "feelings words": happy, sad, angry, scared, surprised, and disgusted.

SOLVING PROBLEMS

What is the problem?
What are the solutions?
Choose a solution and use it.
Is it working? _____ YES!
If not, what can I do?



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EMOTION MANAGEMENT

The children are learning that they can have strong (intense) feelings, and that when they do, they may act in ways that other people notice. Children learn about frustration, excitement, and disappointment. These are all common feelings for young children. These feelings can easily become very strong—behavior can turn into crying, or children can become restless and out of control.

MANAGING ANGER

Managing anger is often very hard for young children to do. They will need lots of help and encouragement to remember to calm down before they

act in hurtful ways. Children learn by watching. If, when you are angry, you model the above ways to calm down in front of your child, he or she will learn how to do it more quickly. Also, when you see your child beginning to get angry, step in and remind him or her to use the ways to calm down.

Learning to manage anger is like any learning task—it takes time and lots of practice. Let your child know that it will get easier and that with practice, he or she will learn how to do it.

PROBLEM-SOLVING STEPS

Feelings are a clue that there is a problem. If children are very upset

about a problem, they practice ways to calm down. Once they are calm, they can think things through. Children are natural problem solvers, and they like the feeling of being able to figure things out. We can encourage them to solve problems.

We are learning about our own and others' feelings. We are learning how to calm down and manage our anger. We are learning how to solve problems and make and keep friends.

Good, better, best. Never let it rest.

By Joshua Doyle, Kindergarten Teacher



Good, better, best. Never let it rest. Until your good gets better and your better is your best. Not only did my students talk the talk, they walked the walk as they presented their first key assignment. Each student displayed confidence as they stood in front of their audience and taught them how to make something using a "Step by Step" model. While

each child presented to the best of their ability, it wasn't their actual presentation that struck a chord with me, but the character they displayed. They didn't merely talk about friendship; they demonstrated it in a meaningful way. For instance, during Arthur's presentation, Lucy and David took initiative to help the audience, whether it was giving them

paper or paint or a crayon. It was equally impressive observing Arthur teaching others. His patience was incredible as he waited to make sure each individual was finished with the last step before moving on to the next one. It was evident that students truly cared (as good friends do) and wanted everyone to be successful. Then there was the incident; the big distraction that temporarily stopped David's presentation. Rather than getting flustered, he merely waited it out never once losing speed nor composure. Then he proceeded to finish as if nothing happened. Their actions made me feel both proud and enlightened: proud because they showed genuine acts of kindness; enlightened because I know that their actions resembled what I try to model on a daily basis. This time it was them who led by example.



WHAT IS PAC?

By The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) is an organization made up of parents in order to help make improvements to the school.

We are the voice of QISS and this year we have already addressed such issues as the quality of lunch service, campus security and after school activities. We will also take part in assuring that QISS will renew its accreditation status with WASC. The PAC has taken a special interest in the library and has recently donated five new books per grade level.

There are many other things the PAC would like to do for other areas of the school, but this is only possible through fundraising. The PAC organizes fundraisers to provide financial support to the school. We are always looking for new ideas. Any and all suggestions are welcome!



Socially, the PAC works with the school to organize events such as International Day, Halloween, Winter Program, Science Fair etc. We are hoping to develop a tight community among not only the students, but the parents as well. We want to reach out to any new families in the QISS community and ask everyone to come out to our monthly meetings. You can participate as much or as little as you like, but your involvement is important. We are trying to make QISS the best it can be! Please come out to our next meeting on Wednesday November 10, 2010 at 2:00 p.m in Room 504. Come and help us make a difference!

Please contact Marcela Lickova at marcela.lickova@gmail.com or Kim Hartwig at khartwig02@yahoo.com, or anyone else in the Parent Advisory Committee if you want to know more.

Continued from page 1: Understanding the Key Assignments By Jeff Fischmann, Director

VITALITY

By 'vitality' we mean we have engaged our students' natural curiosity for all their subjects including the critical elements such as art, music, PE, and the other special offerings.

COURAGE

By 'courage' we mean our students will develop the self-confidence needed to take risks and to stretch beyond their current capabilities, especially in public forums such as debates, speeches, scientific experiments, athletic contests and other authentic demonstrations.

SENSITIVITY

By 'sensitivity' we mean our students are capable of understanding their world from multiple perspectives and are therefore able to refine their abilities to empathize.

INTELLIGENCE

By 'intelligence' we mean our students can make sound judgments that are informed by their education and firmly rooted in common sense.

COMPASSION

By 'compassion' we mean our students will develop their innate sense of goodness and will naturally reflect upon the moral implications of their actions and thereby develop their ethical natures.



Grade nine students presenting their key assignment to students from grade 7

The Key Assignments are a critical component of this challenge. Key Assignments are defined as 'comprehensive authentic assessments that require students to demonstrate all the elements of the mission statement'. In more precise terms, the students are required to demonstrate their academic proficiency, vitality, courage, sensitivity, intelligence and compassion' as defined above. By doing so, our students will 'develop a mindful heart' and be well prepared for the

social and academic challenges they will face when they enter the colleges and universities of their choice. Beyond schooling, their educations will have equipped them to lead good and fulfilling lives.

...In essence, the QISS program seeks to 'unfold' students rather than mold them.

In essence, the QISS program seeks to 'unfold' students rather than mold them. Real life or 'authentic performances' are used to close the gap between the 'school game' and 'life game' as students are regularly challenged to analyze, reflect, synthesize, imagine, create and then demonstrate understanding beyond the mere recall of facts and information.

This is a challenging mission to fulfill and we know that. As a school, we are trying to better understand how to deliver an education that meets our goals. Our task is to better understand how students learn, how to better teach them to learn and how to better determine whether they have actually understood what they have learned. In



Students gaining understanding from peers during a Key Assignment

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Grade 9 students presenting their Key Assignment

this sense we will always be a work in progress. We invite all parents to be a part of this journey by attending as many of their child's Key Assignments as they can. This is the best way to understand what the school is teaching and what the students are learning.

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Article by Hyun, Grade 12

My Volleyball Experience



Hyun playing volleyball

I'm now a senior at QISS, and this is my third year at this school. For the past three years, I have experienced and learnt lots of things. A 'thing' that I have done each of the three years is volleyball. Before I joined the school volleyball team, I had never played it, knew the rules or wanted to play it. But, now I feel like that joining the team was one of the great and best choices that I have made at QISS. I don't mean that I found my talent in playing volleyball, but I mean that it gave me unforgettable memories. I like to bump, spike, set and serve a ball, and I loved those tense and exciting feelings during every game I have had.

Team members should communicate and know with one another very well to play volleyball games smoothly, which helped me to build support within the team. Now, team members who have played in our school volleyball team

are very thankful and memorable people in my school life. Moreover, I definitely learned sports were very different from exercises; there are spirits in sports. Here, I am talking not only about volleyball, but also about all the other sports students can join. Although individuals have different goals and interests in their lives, they endeavor to accomplish the same goal as soon as they run as a team member. I cannot describe all my feelings and moments from playing volleyball, but what I really want to say to other students is, 'You should at least try out for some sport before you graduate.' I guarantee that you will enjoy your school life more than you did before.



Cady helping Rexton board the bus



Kathy helping Laura off the bus

INTRODUCING *Cady Lu & Kathy Fischmann*

Students are safely transported to QISS and back home because of the purposeful planning and keen collaboration of several people behind the scenes. One of these people is Ms. Cady Lu who takes responsibility for arranging bus schedules, helping students board buses and providing teachers with bus transportation support for multiple school events. Ms. Cady works under the careful guidance of our

office manager, Ms. Kathy Fischmann. Ms. Kathy likes to think of all students as her extended family and treats each student with great compassion as a mother would her own child. Likewise, Ms. Kathy takes great pride in greeting students as they get off the bus each morning, and she sees that children leave safely at the end of the day. Everything Ms. Cady and Ms. Kathy do appears simple, but in fact, it takes a

great amount of planning and making sound intelligent choices to keep kids safe and arrive at their destinations on time. Please give both Ms. Cady and Ms. Kathy a big thank you for their hard work providing an outstanding job for our students as they demonstrate and live our theme for developing a mindful heart in the line of their many responsibilities at QISS.

By Alberto Gutierrez, Lower School Principal

Student Reflections - Habits of the Mind

Article by Frida, Grade 12



Ema and Frida presenting their Key Assignment

This quarter of 9th grade Physics has been mainly dedicated to the study of the habits of mind. The habits of mind are basically a list of 16 work habits that are useful in everyday life, such as being persistent, creative and flexible. The idea was to study them, practice them, and after a while, they would hopefully come to us naturally.

After a few weeks of studying, taking different kinds of surveys and discussing the habits of successful people, we were introduced to our Key Assignment. The task was to split up into groups of two or three, choose one of the habits

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that we were most interested in, and present it with a poster and an essay. Somehow, we had to connect the habit with the five character traits of QISS, and Physics.

In our group we chose to present the idea of thinking interdependently. The idea of working together towards a common goal, and the idea of synergy; that the result should be greater than what is added together seemed worth studying. The idea of fueling each other's ideas and suggestions, creating chain reactions and becoming inspired to work harder was also intriguing to us.

Besides doing a lot of research on this subject, we got to practice working together as a team, which was the point of the project. With enough practice, the habits of mind will become habits to us, and they will come naturally. The habits of mind are keys to developing mindful hearts, the mission of the school. So, with practice, we hope to master the five ESLR's in a better way and become intelligent thinkers.

MESSAGE FROM THE UPPER SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents and Students,

Over the next five months QISS is undergoing an in-depth study and analysis of its governance, curriculum, student services, and facilities. This study and analysis is being completed for the upcoming school's accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The accreditation process can serve as a vehicle to move the school and community members into a meaningful schoolwide improvement and accountability process.

There are five key components of the accreditation self-study process: the involvement and collaboration of the stakeholders; clarification of the school's purpose and schoolwide learning outcome; assessment of actual student programs and schoolwide learning outcomes; development of a schoolwide action plan; and the development and implementation of an accountability system monitoring the accomplishment of the action plan.



QISS teachers are serving on various committees during the accreditation process. We are presently looking for several parents and student representatives to serve on the "Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth" committee. If you are interested please call me at school. We need your assistance!

The accreditation report will be completed by late February and sent to the accreditation team comprised of the Chair of the visiting committee, Dr. Kim Marshall from California, and at least four educators from schools outside of the U.S. They will be at QISS for about five school days and will issue their report in late spring.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
William Corey
Upper School Principal

ACAMIS VOLLEYBALL INTERVIEW

With the ACAMIS volleyball tournament coming up next week, this reporter has invited three volleyball players, Tao Tao, Ema Halikova, and Sabrina Jian to talk about their feelings toward this experience, as well as their worries and expectations. Out of the three, it is Ema's first time attending the ACAMIS volleyball tournament.

Article by Chuck, Grade 12



CHUCK (C): First of all, what are the largest differences between these tournament games and the games you play with the schools around Qingdao?

EMA (E): Of course there are differences between the two. When we play with ISQ or other schools around Qingdao it's mostly just for practice, while the goal of the ACAMIS games is to win.

TAO TAO (T): Yes, when we play with ISQ, it's more like a practice game, but the tournament is what we are actually practicing for—the tournament is the most important event of the season, and concludes the season. The tournament games are also more physically demanding, since we have to play more games in a day.

C: What are some of the things that you guys are most worried about?

E: It's just that sometimes I'm scared that we're going to do a bad job. But I feel that we have a good chance of winning.

SABRINA (S): The most worrying part for me is about losing the tournament, like coming in last place this time again. Of course, definitely, there is this kind of pressure in every game.

C: What about your expectations? The things you're most excited about?

E: I'm excited about meeting new people from other international schools around China. I don't really care that much whether we win—I mean that's the reason we're there—but I think the main thing is still about having fun, and just enjoying the whole experience.

T: This is not my first time, so I know how the whole thing's going to go. For me however, winning is part of equation too, because volleyball is also a part of the reason that we're there, apart from making friends. So I think that we have to do our best in the games we play too.

S: I'm very excited about riding a horse in Mongolia.

(C): Are you sure horse riding's included in the trip?)

C: Girls, do you have confidence that the team can win?

E: I think that we are ready, and we can bring back a trophy this time.

S: I think however, we still need practice, personally I think our team is still not 100% ready. I think it's half-half, because it still always depends on luck.

C: What about the boy's team then?

T: I am confident that we are going to do better this year, than last time, and hopefully we can bring back a trophy this time, the first place trophy ❖