

The Future of QISS

By Jeffrey Fischmann, Director

The future is a product of the past. As this school year draws to a close, I look back over the past and marvel at the resilience of the school. We have gone through many challenging times and are poised to enter the future in a strong and stable position. Over the years, many teachers, students and parents have put their best intentions and heartfelt efforts into making QISS a better school. It is with gratitude and respect that I honor those who have served their students and the school so ably during their tenure at QISS. Some of our finest teachers, administrators, students and parents will be moving on to their next adventures. Teachers are heading off to places such as Senegal, Vietnam, Taiwan, Thailand, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Some are also returning to their home countries. Many other teachers are continuing on with QISS to the new campus. We thank them for all their contributions to the school and wish them well in their future endeavors!

The evolution of the school continues. Next year will mark the beginning of a new era. This summer we will be occupying our new campus. We are working now to equip all our classrooms and facilities with new furniture, Smart Boards, computers, and the instruments and supplies they will need. Our new owner, Chen Tou, is the largest government owned investment company in Qingdao. It built our new facility as the first step toward the fulfillment of the city's vision to establish a premier, government sponsored international school as part of Qingdao's infrastructure. Chen Tou has the financial and political resources to enable the school to grow and prosper over the long-term. QISS is currently a small school with approximately 200 students who will be occupying a campus built for 2,000 students. As such, we will be sharing the campus with other separately managed entities who are preparing bright and talented local high school students to attend universities abroad, primarily in England, Canada and the United States. We will be sharing the facility designed specifically for the pre K-KDG students with a group from Singapore who will offer a bilingual Mandarin/English program. QISS will continue to provide its own separate program that is staffed by our own teachers and managed by our administration. Parents will have a choice between enrolling their children in either program. This facility for our youngest students will have very advanced security systems as will the entire campus. In addition to the group from England that is preparing about 50 local students to take the A Level exams for entrance into the premier British universities, Chen Tou is also interested in providing a Canadian program for local high school students who want to attend universities in Canada. Taken together, these separately managed entities will be smaller than QISS in terms of their overall enrollment for several years to come. Over the long-term, there may well be a parity of enrollment. What is envisioned by Chen Tou is an educational park that meets the needs of both the expatriate community and those local students who want to gain admittance to the finest universities around the world.

Sharing the campus presents a challenge and an opportunity for QISS. It will be a challenge to mesh our schedules. However, we can manage this issue without too much difficulty. As the permanent, resident of the campus, QISS has priority usage over the new school's facilities. Sharing the campus will be an opportunity for QISS students to interact in meaningful ways with students from China. An important part of our school's purpose is to cultivate global citizenship among our students. What better way to foster a deeper understanding between nations and

cultures than for our students to interact in the spirit of global friendship. The world has entered an era where international cooperation is needed more than ever before to address the global issues we face as a planet and a species. Those who can successfully work with their counterparts around the world will be the ones who will shape this new era. Let us equip our students with the requisite skills, attitudes and character traits that will enable them to do so.

Although we are going through a transitional phase to our new facilities and new ownership, QISS will retain its distinctly international character and will strive to remain current with best practices in education. Our enrollment practices and the management of the educational program will remain firmly in our hands. There will be no interference by our new owners in this regard. Next year the high school will offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses in calculus, chemistry, literature and economics in addition to providing robust performing arts, athletic and extracurricular programs. We will continue to add more AP courses in the coming years. Scoring well on AP exams will allow our graduates to be accepted to the best American universities. The lower school will continue to move toward authorization by the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program. Next year we will investigate the adoption of the IB Diploma program for our 11th and 12th grade students. The adoption of both IB programs would take years of preparation to achieve authorization. Our goal is to be able to provide those programs that are highly regarded by European and North America universities as well as other schools throughout the world.

In brief, QISS is ready to meet the challenges of the future. It is staffed for the next school year with a highly qualified group of teachers. We encourage you to read the introductions of the new faculty that appear under the 'School' tab on our web site. This new faculty will build upon the fine work of those who came before them. It is fitting that the renewal of school's accreditation with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) is scheduled for next year. WASC is among the premier accreditation agencies world-wide. Based in Burlingame, California, WASC accredits nearly 5,000 schools in California, Hawaii, and most of the major international schools in North, East and Southeast Asia. Next year is the ideal time to re-assess our school's curricular and extracurricular programs through an extensive self-study that is intended to improve the school's operation in all respects. The fruit of our self-study will be a revised three year Action Plan that will guide the school into the future. In summation, I believe the school has a very bright future. It has come a long way over the years and it still has a long way to go to fully realize its mission. Of course, this future depends upon those dedicated individuals who will devote themselves to making the school a better place for our students. We invite you to join us in this worthy effort.