

FIS WORLD

School Year 2014/2015

Volume 3 / May 2015

Music is Instrumental

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Our mission is to be the leading, culturally diverse and family-oriented international school with English as the principal language of instruction.

We inspire individuals to develop their intellect, creativity and character to become independent, adaptable, socially responsible and internationally minded citizens, by ensuring a dynamic, inquiry-driven education of the highest standard.



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FIS World is made possible through the efforts of our volunteer team of writers, photographers and editors. If you are an FIS parent and would like to join our team and contribute to this magazine, contact Alec Aspinwall at alec_aspinwall@fis.edu. The only experience required is a passion for our students and their education.





From Point A to B Through Q

It is frequently noted that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. While this geometric fact may work well when planning public roads, it doesn't always work when planning the personal path of a student. While straight lines are often favored because they are usually both precise and predictable, the lives of students are often a messy affair that, if graphed, would look like a wild ride on a roller coaster.

This reality of our children's lives can be difficult for parents. Often when our children are still at an early age we envision them growing up with good grades, entering reputable universities, embarking on ambitious careers and finding the perfect partner. Then the process is expected to repeat itself as they provide us with grandchildren that are also destined for the same trajectory of success. Often parents will expend great energy trying to keep their children on this path, encouraging the "right" choice of friends and the "appropriate" areas of study.

As a parent, I must admit that I have fallen into this trap at times with my own son and daughter. Fortunately, I am in a profession that surrounds me with colleagues who remind me that while there may be correct answers on a multiple-choice math exam, there are no correct answers when our students choose their direction in life. Furthermore, this path is ever-changing as they constantly encounter crossroads that provide them with a choice in developing their emerging identities.

At no time of the school year is the aforementioned reality more clear than at graduation. As FIS parents see their children walk across the stage and accept their diplomas, I expect almost all are somewhat mystified that the young man or woman in the cap and gown

was the same boy or girl that was, in some ways, so very different as a child. Is that impressive student walking across the stage the same son who was sent to the principal's office for drawing an unflattering picture of his teacher in his notebook? Is that young woman the same daughter who said she hated math and is now entering college as an engineer?

It is appropriate that we have graduation in the spring because it is the same time of year that birds are nudged from their nests and encouraged to fly on their own. And, we should take note that it is not expected that these birds, once evicted, will always fly in a straight line from one branch to the next. They may at first fall to the ground or weakly flutter about until their wings and confidence grow strong, and even into adulthood these birds may choose to fly in lazy figure eights and swoop high and low simply for the joy of riding the winds.

My children are still years away from graduation, but I continue to practice the art of letting them find their own path. And while there is a remote possibility that they will move from Point A to Point B in a straight line, more than likely there will be detours through Q and other points that will plot their unique and wonderfully unique journey in life. May all of us parents find a way to simply enjoy this mysterious and joyful ride!



Paul Fochtman
Head of School



Thank You, FIS!

To misquote the title of Douglas Adam's fourth book in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* "trilogy", the time has come for me to say:

"So Long, and Thanks for All the FIS!"

Whether reading The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy or working at the European Space Agency, time can be a strange concept. While it is the regular metronome by which we understand the music of our Universe, it is too often perceived as an extremely compressible entity, particularly when we are having fun and fill it full of activities and wonderful memories. With our youngest child graduating from FIS in June, I will hand over my role on the Board of Trustees to very capable hands and my wife and I will join the ranks of FIS alumni parents around the world. My 13 years serving on the Board of Trustees have truly been packed with great memories and working with wonderful people, and that is why it seems to have passed in the blink of an eye.

FIS is a unique galaxy made up of many different stars. I would like to pause and look upwards to these stars and express my thanks. First, to the teachers that so generously gave of their time and their wisdom to my three children. I will forever be indebted for the way in which they inspired them to learn, to grow and to achieve beyond what they thought was possible. I could not ask for better inspiration for my children during their most formative years.

My children's peers have been their teachers too. Our children are so fortunate to have been immersed in such a diverse and talented learning community while at FIS. Their friends and classmates brought just the right balance of laughter and learning to each day, and sometimes tinged with some of life's realities. I have no doubt my children will look back on their time at FIS and appreciate what a special environment it has been to grow and learn in.

The coaches that my children have had during their many sports seasons at FIS have taught them the importance of a healthy body and to push towards ever-higher levels achievement both on and off the field. Thank you for teaching them focus and determination. At FIS, the field, court, track and pool are also classrooms where incredible learning takes place.

My work with the Board has allowed me to see how very indebted we all should be to the people who work "behind the scenes," such as our hausmeisters, security personnel, accounting and food service staff. They are talented professionals who are critical in making FIS a special place. They may be often overlooked because they make things work so smoothly, but their contribution to the school cannot be overstated.

While my children have been mentored by their teachers, I have had the great fortune to have the Heads of School and their teams of fellow administrators as my mentors. Over the years, these capable leaders have shared their wisdom and passion for education and their commitment to our school's mission. During my weekly meetings with the Head of School and in Board meetings and workshops with the entire administrative team, I have learned an immeasurable amount about what it means to work with a great team of professionals who place student needs at the center of all our decisions. I am deeply indebted to you all for sharing your passion and insights that have enabled us to achieve great things together.

Finally, my thanks go to the many fellow Board members I have worked with over the years. I will likely never again work with such a selfless group of individuals who care so deeply about our school and our students. I have sat around a table with you, literally hundreds of times, and we have discussed, sometimes in quite heated debates, what is best for our children. I will miss these exchanges because they constantly reminded me of that which is most important: the commitment and focus in providing a bright future for the next generation of leaders. I know the school governance will continue to remain in good hands.

I may be leaving the Board, but expect to see me at a Worldfest or Applefest enjoying the unique atmosphere of a truly great International School and sharing FIS memories with friends for many years to come!

So Long,



Michael McKay

The Reasons Behind Recess

Playtime = Learning

FIS does offer its children a world of opportunities, but if you ask these children, many will inform you that recess is their favorite "opportunity" of the day. FIS does an incredible job of providing age-appropriate playtime for students. Recess is an integral part of the school day - providing countless opportunities for social development, sensory input, and getting those wiggles out so that children can focus academically in the classroom. Moreover, it allows children time to role-play and improve physical coordination as well as develop perseverance, self-control, and social maturity.

FIS has facilities that enable children to play athletically, on climbing structures or swings, enjoy zip-lining, or just run. FIS Primary School children have amazing sandbox areas and tricycles of varying sizes. We are fortunate to have such wonderful choices for our children during recess.

FIS Primary School children get at least two recess times per day on the playground, and one "whole school recess" period where children have the freedom to roam anywhere they choose on the grounds, which are all monitored by staff to ensure safety. This is an opportunity for children to have freedom to choose where and how to play, and with whom. Siblings can spend time together and older and younger children can interact with and learn from each other. FIS Elementary School children also get two recess times, on the playgrounds and soccer fields. Children of varying ages can be seen playing soccer, practicing



Students at the FIS Zip Line

FIS does an incredible job of providing age-appropriate playtime for students.

gymnastics, playing tag, chatting, and running free.

Recess, however, is not always all fun and games. One of the most important aspects of recess is that it is

an opportunity for children to resolve disputes and advance their empathetic and problem-solving skills. Tricky situations arise on a daily basis regarding issues such as children playing fairly and including others. FIS staff is on hand at designated locations, in all playing areas, to both ensure that children are playing safely, as well as to help resolve such issues. They can listen to students, determine if they need a cooling off period or a suggestion to redirect their play, and ask questions such as, "How would you feel if this happened to you?" The resolution of a sticky situation can help children to reflect and develop greater social intelligence.

Many schools around the world are choosing to forgo recess and spend more time on academic learning, or frequently restricting recess for punitive measures. Experts in child development unanimously agree that recess is an integral part of a child's day, with the American Academy of Pediatrics recently releasing a policy statement urging schools to not reduce recess time due to recess being such a critical aspect of a child's education.

FIS appreciates the need for children to play, and supports children in their play, by providing wonderful play areas, staff to ensure safety and help resolve disputes, and a culture that respects the need for children to have the opportunity to develop life-long social skills.

*Amy MacDougall,
FIS Parent*

No Gratitude Too Great

Retiring FIS Teachers Leave a Legacy

The retirement of a faculty member is a special event. It marks the end of a career dedicated to the most important task imaginable: the passing on of wisdom from one generation to the next. Even before there were classrooms, before there was a written language, it was the role of the tribe elders to teach the next generation to gather, hunt, speak, read, write, and, maybe most importantly, to continually seek new knowledge and understanding.

If we were to count the number of student lives that have been touched by these individuals, the number would reach tens of thousands. They have taught across disciplines and age levels. Undoubtedly, many students have gone on to choose careers because of being inspired by one of these teachers. Others have been touched not only by their teaching, but by their willingness to listen to a student and offer support on critical

personal issues beyond the scope of their academic expertise.

It is simply not possible to adequately thank a teacher for dedicating their professional lives to preparing the next generation for the challenges that lie ahead. They are the reason our school continues to uphold its excellent reputation and their long-term commitment to FIS and its students leaves an inspiring legacy.



Top Row: Tom Callahan, Peter Moston, Ian Gulliford
Bottom Row: Steve Crowley, Stephen Hall, Greg Williams

Parents in the Classroom

Parent Expertise Fuels Student Learning

If you are an FIS parent reading this, I suspect that at some time you left an event at FIS thinking, "Gee, I wish I could go to FIS, too!" (I base this suspicion on personal experience and having heard numerous other parents also voice this sentiment). FIS offers students an amazing variety of experiences, both in classroom learning and in extracurricular activity offerings, which can leave a parent both admiring and possibly a tiny bit envious, too.

Did you know as an FIS parent (or grandparent or community member), you can make a meaningful contribution to your child's education by coming in to speak to his/her class about your personal experiences - about your workplace, or other areas

of interest, related to their course curriculum? This means, that yes, you too can "go" to FIS, and contribute to learning there, if you wish!

As a scientist working in the consumer products industry, I have had a great time coming in to speak at the school about different aspects of my work as related to the Units of Inquiry in my sons' classrooms - "Start to Finish" in Grade 1, "The Way We Work" in Grade 2, and the Inventor's unit in Grade 3.

In my experience, the teachers are very willing to speak with parents about the Units of Inquiry, and try to find a fit for a parent led topic to enhance student learning in the

classroom. As a parent I very much appreciate the inquiry-driven learning at FIS, and the way FIS encourages students to look beyond the classroom to support their learning. My children have benefited from classroom talks and workplace tours given by other parents - from tours of a dental office, to a manufacturing facility, to, my goodness, the European Space Agency (Gee, I wish I could go to FIS, too!)

Do you have experience in advertising or marketing? Perhaps you could talk to a Grade 4 class during the "Convince Me" unit. A background in finance? I bet a Grade 5 class would love to hear from you during their "Money" unit. When recently speaking

Ms. Claire-Zimmet talking to students



with Dawn Darling, the Elementary School Assistant Principal and PYP Coordinator about this article, she mentioned that the Grade 5 Exhibition is a fantastic time for parents to come and engage within the classroom curriculum.

From showing science experiments in a Pre-Primary classroom, to how train cars are built to Grade 1, to the magic of super absorbent materials to Grade 3...the possibilities are endless! I definitely encourage you to take a look at your children's Unit of Inquiry topics for the year, and reach out to their teachers if you have an idea for a talk that might fit into the lesson plan.

*Karen Claire-Zimmet,
FIS Parent*

"Having parents come in to help with what's going on in the classroom is so good because it motivates the children and makes them excited about what we are learning. Involving the family can only be beneficial I feel, as what's going on in the class then gets discussed at home and the concepts we are teaching are reinforced. This is also beneficial to ESL children or children who are in a bilingual family, as they get to talk about everything in another language and learn the vocabulary in a language other than English." -

Angela Lenk,
Grade 1 teacher

"It is an important aspect of the PYP to emphasise parent involvement. The curriculum is designed to educate the child as a part of the community, both local and international. Students benefit from seeing their parents getting involved in their education. The content we teach comes to life once students get to see and experience a topic in the 'real world'. But above all, I appreciate the help and support we get from parents when sharing their expertise with the students and us." -

Meyke Jauernig,
Grade 3 teacher

Ernesto Bianchi, FISW parent, working with students



Music is Instrumental

Research Supports Benefits of Music Study

Music is vibrantly resonating at FIS! On any given day, violins and violas, cellos and double basses, flutes, trombones and saxophones, clarinets and trumpets, and vocal cords too, can be seen marching into school. Stroll along FIS's hallways and you can observe backpacks side-by-side with musical

instruments. With a rich tradition in music education starting at the Primary School, a blossoming choir of 250 students in the Elementary School, stellar programs in orchestral and band instruments, hands-on general music classes and choirs in the Upper School, FIS engages all its students in music education where

programs interrelate and support each other.

Recent research on neuroscience describes a beneficial cycle between music study and the positive impacts it has on a person's academic, social and emotional well-being. Music study plays an instrumental role in activating

Elementary School Choir Students





Students learning to play the violin

the inner workings of our brains. It is a workout for the brain that leads to an improved, larger cerebral structure. Music training also helps the brain function better by improving its neuroplasticity which strengthens neural pathways and synapses.

A Kansas University study* linked the success of "students at schools with superior music programs (who) consistently scored higher in standardized tests." Yet, the results go far beyond test scoring. Music education translates into real life benefits: improved language abilities, improved performance in mathematical calculations, improved auditory capacity leading to greater empathy, greater self-confidence, and greater emotional resilience.

An investment in music study - playing an instrument, singing, or actively listening - benefits students while they are young and in the future, when old. Studies have shown that music has health benefits; music relieves stress and mitigates depression. Music helps children with autism and can even delay dementia in the elderly. The enjoyment of music is ageless and can be instrumental to a healthy and happy you.

Sarah Woodburn, ES Music and Choir teacher, recommends valuing music for what it is: "Play the piano, sing in a choir, attend a concert, put

on your favorite song and turn the volume up - WAY UP!" Parents and educators are advised "teach your children to enjoy and value music. They will thank you for it!" Furthermore, "When children sing and play together, children are cooperating, listening, responding and supporting one another."

Music study plays an instrumental role in activating the inner workings of our brains.

Music teaches practical life skills that transfer to all realms. Adrienne Blaquier, the Upper School Head of Performing Arts, states that music education promotes skills such as teamwork, organization and good timekeeping. Participation in a music ensemble is "like being in a sports team" where all students are "working together to create something. There are different roles - the flute and the tuba player do different things, just like the center forward and the goalkeeper do - with one missing, then the whole enterprise will suffer." Music teaches students responsibility, reliability and resilience.

Music education promotes intrinsic delight, love of music in itself as a real in-the-present and long-term benefit. Travel opportunities, friendships, careers and healthy competition are part of the musical world. Julie Borsodi, Director of the ES-US Orchestra, states that FIS is a member of the Association of Music in International Schools (AMIS) with many Middle and Upper School students participating in festivals in Europe and beyond! Before the Spring Break, FIS Orchestra and Band students who had auditioned successfully flew to Singapore to join in the High School Honor Orchestra and Band Festival. Learning their music skills at FIS, many students have carried on their music studies into their professions - musicologists, teachers in school orchestras and principal violinists in prestigious institutions, all have found that music benefited their lives.

Let us applaud and ask for an encore. Music education is thriving at FIS! Pluck away, carry your child's double bass with pride, make time for practice, hum a tune and yes! Let us "turn up the volume" to the instrumental benefits gained by music.

*Deirdre Harriet-Welsh,
FIS Parent*

*Source: <http://archive.news.ku.edu/2007/june/28/music.shtml>

Safety First at FIS

School Leaders Solve Safety Puzzle on Campus



New security booth at the Primary School

"With no exception, student safety is the first priority of our school's leadership team," said Peter Baker, the Elementary School Principal and Co-Chair of FIS' Safety and Security Committee. "It covers so many dimensions. Emotional safety as well as physical safety on the playground, in the classroom and in the neighborhood."

Fortunately for Mr. Baker, this "first priority" with "many dimensions" is not his responsibility alone. Teresa Dupre, Assistant Head of School and Chair of the FIS Traffic and Transportation Committee, said, "Safety is everyone's responsibility. Safety is like a puzzle that is only completed when all the pieces successfully fit together." Ms. Dupre is focused on two difficult puzzle pieces, traffic and transportation. "Traffic is the biggest risk to safety," said Ms. Dupre.

"With no exception, student safety is the first priority of our school's leadership team."

Peter Baker

"Fortunately, it is something we can control when everyone follows the rules. We have made great progress in reducing hazardous situations." The movement of students on campus and on the busses is also a priority for Ms. Dupre. "When it comes to safety, everything is prescribed...nothing is

left to chance." Currently, seven staff members are assigned to ride the shuttle buses between the main campus and the Primary School to enhance safety. Additionally, there is supervision on the bridge every morning to create a safer journey for those students walking between campuses.

Despite great efforts, hazards unfortunately still exist. Last fall an Upper School student was injured by a car, as he crossed An der Waldlust, during heavy traffic at dismissal time. This incident contributed to two significant safety initiatives at FIS. In January, the Board of Trustees made it official school policy that all students, staff and parents must follow the school's traffic policies. This change allows the administration to take actions to enforce the regulations. The

second initiative is that the city of Oberursel will install an official crosswalk across An der Waldlust.

Detlev Siebrecht, the FIS Business Manager and Co-Chair of the Safety and Security Committee, is responsible for working with the city on safety issues. He said, "The new crosswalk will increase safety significantly." Mr. Siebrecht expressed his strong support for the city's decision, and emphasizes the hard work of the school's security team. He explained "Stéphane Deal, FIS Security Officer, is responsible for the day-to-day safety and security on campus. I understand his efforts occasionally put him in conflict with students and parents, but I fully support his efforts because I know his efforts are creating a safer environment."

Mr. Deal leads a team of approximately ten dedicated safety professionals to help him protect the property and the safety of nearly 1,800 people each day. He clearly enjoys the challenge. A nine-year veteran of FIS, Mr. Deal said, "I have difficult days and it has nothing to do with the weather. Too often I have to remind parents about the traffic rules." Mr. Deal is encouraged by the recent progress and proud of his role. "We have made great progress in nine years. I am happy I can help protect children, faculty, staff and parents."

In addition to the new crosswalk, the school also recently built a new security station at the Primary School to better identify and monitor visitors to campus. Another similar effort to improve safety and security is the implementation of photo IDs. Under Peter Baker's leadership, the school has started the process of switching every person on campus to color coded security IDs. By fall of 2015, all students, staff, faculty, parents and visitors to campus will be easily identified by distinct colors assigned to each group. According to Mr. Baker, "The ability to identify and distinguish groups will significantly increase our supervision of the campus."



Paul Fochtman, Head of School, leads by example. He wears his ID on campus demonstrating his belief that every person has to follow the safety and security rules to make the system work. He said, "As Head of School and a parent, I make student safety the highest priority. I implore every adult and child to follow the rules so that we have a safer environment for our entire community."

*Emmett Kelly,
FIS Parent*



Slytherins and Gryffindors at FIS?

An Introduction to the House System

As we work to prepare the house system for next year, some of you are doubtlessly familiar with them, and others may be wondering what they are. House systems originated in English boarding schools as a way of ensuring that older students were taking an active role in helping younger students adapt to the challenges of life at school and away from home. The houses were literally a boarding house, and the traditions and expectations of the school were upheld by the students and teachers in charge of the house.

Of course Harry Potter books and movies have recently popularized them, with house

The sorting hat from Harry Potter which magically determines to which of the school houses each new student is to be assigned

Source: harrypotter.wikia.com



names like Slytherin and Gryffindor, but many state and international schools all over the world have long held traditions with house systems. A common use for houses in schools is to use them to organize intramural sports. I can still remember playing floor hockey for the Leopards when I was in fifth grade in Canada. Big school wide events, like sports day, or a quiz, or an arts extravaganza can also be enhanced through house system organization.

In the Upper School at FIS, we look forward to using the house system to help engage students in opportunities to participate in a diverse range of house activities. We will look to ensure that the activities enable students to be active, creative and engaged in service learning. A major goal of the house system is to build leadership capacity in our older students by giving them the opportunity to help plan and run house events, as well as mentoring and encouraging younger students. This will also help students

meet their Grade 11 and 12 IB Creativity, Action, and Service (CAS) requirements.

While we look forward to healthy rivalries building up over the years, not all aspects of the house system will be competitive. We will endeavour to provide many opportunities for students to perform, play, create and volunteer. Our goal is to have the house activities reflect the passions and interests of our students, while encouraging them to try things outside of their comfort zone at times too. A vibrant house system can enhance all students' experience at school by bringing them an added sense of belonging, and an intrinsic motivation to get involved in the life of the school.

*Daniel Cowan,
Upper School Assistant Principal*

Another Step Forward

Grade 7 Coming to FISW

In true FIS spirit, our Wiesbaden campus continues to develop a world of opportunities for students to continue their middle school years' education! Andrea Rosinger, Principal of FIS Wiesbaden, is "delighted about the next stage of development" in her division. Building upon the successful year with Grade 6, the Wiesbaden campus will offer Grade 7 starting next school year. Ms. Rosinger is particularly pleased that most of the current Grade 6 students will be staying for Grade 7.

Scott Hardgrove, Grade 6-8 Coordinator, will use the valuable experience from this year to refine the goals for both grade levels. He emphasizes that while the expectations, learning outcomes and assessments are in line with the FIS Oberursel campus, the curriculum is delivered in a slightly different way at the Wiesbaden campus. Especially in Grade 6 where it is more interdisciplinary in the core subjects and provides a good transition from the Primary Years Programme (PYP) offered in Elementary School). Mr. Hardgrove is convinced that this allows for a little extra time in Grade 6 to concentrate on learning needs and not just content and will produce better results in the long run.

At this stage of middle school education there is a natural emphasis on academics and critical thinking. At FISW, project-based learning encourages students to combine learning across disciplines and to make genuine connections in their learning. Coupled with this is the significant value placed on supporting students to become more self-aware and develop a positive self-identity. To facilitate this growth and development there is a strong homeroom program, which includes study skills, but also a purpose

designed personal health education on themes like friendship, being a teenager, building resiliency and dealing with change. The students will also be offered leadership training to support their role as the older students in the school.

We are looking forward to developing the students' leadership roles in the school, particularly as they support the new Grade 6 students, but also as we start to consider the role of the older students in our FS-Grade 8 campus.

Andrea Rosinger

One of the strengths of a smaller campus, especially an innovative one like FISW, is that the students can have unique school experiences. For example, in addition to the regular class trip, as a small group they can go camping and take many regional field trips to support classroom learning. Students can also choose from nine exciting physical education electives, which include horseback riding,



Sue Havilland, FISW teacher

biking, wall climbing, golf and yoga among others. And with courses in media, journalism, dance, drama and technology the curriculum itself offers very attractive opportunities for students of this age.

But what exactly is in store for Grade 7 students when the new school year starts? First of all, they will have an outstanding new homeroom teacher, Sue Havilland, who will also teach math and science in both grades. Ms. Havilland also brings expertise in outdoor education and interdisciplinary learning with her. Mr. Hardgrove will be the Grade 6 homeroom teacher, and teach English and Humanities in both grades, in addition to maintaining his coordinator role.

If the success of this year's Grade 6 program is anything to judge by, next year is set to be another definite step forward for FISW, to be followed by the addition of Grade 8 in the 2016/2017 school year.



Greg and Teresa Dupre

Dupres Departing

Each year FIS has a relatively small percentage of its faculty who retires or departs for new adventures beyond Germany. FIS World rarely singles out departing faculty or staff members because all FIS colleagues make meaningful contributions to the school's mission and are greatly missed.

However, an exception must be made, as the school bids farewell to Greg and Teresa Dupre. These two individuals have made such an impact on the school from First Steps through Grade 12 that we simply can't let them depart without this brief FIS World send-off after their nine years of service to our community. Together they have made an impact on our school that cannot be underestimated.

Greg Dupre's official title is 'Elementary School Physical Education teacher', but a more appropriate title would be 'Keeper of the FIS Spirit'. Early each school day, Mr. Dupre can be found on the bridge walkway offering

"high fives" to the students, both young and old, as they enter the campus to begin their day. He offers the same greeting when they arrive for his PE class, along with a smile that gives each student his unmistakable message: "I'm glad you're here." While he works with elementary students during the day, he becomes "Coach D" after school for upper school basketball and softball players. One student summed it up well in saying, "Mr. D has a way of making you feel special."

Beginning at FIS as the Primary School Principal, Teresa Dupre leaves FIS as its first Assistant Head of School. Her leadership skills and her understanding of curriculum that strengthened the Primary School, quickly caught the attention of Dr. Fochtman when he arrived at FIS. Her move to the Assistant Head of School position has allowed her to play a pivotal role in Strategic Planning, Professional Development and Curriculum Leadership throughout the

school. Dr. Fochtman shared, "Ms. Dupre is an incredibly talented educator and has been recruited to lead a school district back in the United States. We'll miss her wit and wisdom and the sound judgment she has given our school during her tenure."

Returning to their home in Minnesota, Mr. Dupre said that he is looking forward to retirement, and returning to his favorite pastimes of hunting and fishing. Ms. Dupre will take on the role of Superintendent of the Rush City School District. Both have remarked that FIS has been an incredibly special place for them both on a personal and a professional level.

Gute Reise Dupres! You will be missed but never forgotten!

Lessons for the Lifeboat

Tips for Parents of College-Bound Students

A son or daughter's graduation from FIS signals a new stage of life for a student. When a child moves out of the home and moves hundreds or thousands of miles away to a university campus, it can pose new challenges for a parent.

Fortunately, FIS has many parents who have already gone through this process. FIS World decided to ask a few of the school's faculty and staff, who currently have children away at college, for a few tips that they could offer on how to support this important transition period.

Mary Beth Steidl,
Elementary School Librarian



I found Skype™ to be a wonderful means of communicating with my children at university, especially as they were both in another country. While I love hearing their voices, seeing their faces is much more satisfying and I really can "see" how they are doing. In addition to adjusting to university life, both have had to navigate through many new experiences, such as banking, or negotiating a rental agreement. Using Skype to screen share made it possible for us to support them real time and reduced everyone's stress. Right from the start, I made it a personal goal to wait for them to initiate contact, rather than calling. I think practicing this restraint, when we really can contact them at any time and place, is crucial. While we want our children to know we are always there for them, giving them time to deal with situations on their own is one way to support their growth into independent young adults.

Gareth Brewster, IT Director



As parents, we can be so concerned about maintaining our relationship with our children attending college that we may forget about the importance of supporting their relationship with their siblings. We have a younger son and his relationship with his older sister is incredibly important. Make sure that calls or Skype sessions involve siblings as well, include them if possible when visiting a distant college student, and plan family holidays that allow everyone to get together and keep these bonds strong. In some ways a sibling can offer a form of emotional support that cannot be provided by a parent. The same is true for grandparents and other extended family members. Build a support network for your college bound student that extends beyond mom and dad so that your son or daughter still feels an integral part of the family and also has multiple choices for someone to talk to if support is needed.

Beate Zimpel, Publications



We felt it was important to keep our kids rooms at home intact when they went off to college. Some families may jump at the chance to turn a college-bound daughter's bedroom into a home office or transform it into some other usable space. At least for the first year, I would recommend that the room remain unchanged for the college student to return to and feel that they have not been "erased" from the family. The familiarity of their own

room may be especially comforting if the first semester of college brought with it a large dose of homesickness. I would also encourage parents to get on a plane (if necessary) and visit the campus sometime during the first year. You can learn so much from meeting your child's friends, seeing their dorm and putting into context many of the people and places they talk about on the phone. Some may say this is too invasive but I think it shows a parent's willingness to continue to be an integral part of their child's life.

Caroline Joslin-Callahan,
Primary School Principal



One tip I would offer parents is to help their college-bound students create a warm and nurturing dorm room. Encourage them to take items from their current room that are meaningful and comforting. It could be a group of special pictures, a favorite pillow or a musical instrument. If you are assisting them move into their new room, go with them to buy items that will also make their space comfortable and efficient. Bulletin Boards and items to help them organize their limited space are very helpful. While you are helping them personalize their new living space, you are also giving it a special touch of "home" through your involvement in the process. Finally, don't forget to arrange for their own credit card. It may be a frightening thought, but that small piece of plastic can be crucial when traveling or in an emergency!

Admission of Guilt

As the Director of Admissions, you would think I should have an advantage when the time came for my own child's USA college admission. I would understand the pitfalls of thinking that my child is "special," having heard thousands of such claims myself. You would think my decades as a professional would prevent me from trying to "sell" my child on the college market, conjuring ways to polish his experiences so that they would have an added glimmer as his application was reviewed and stand out among a sea of his aspiring peers.

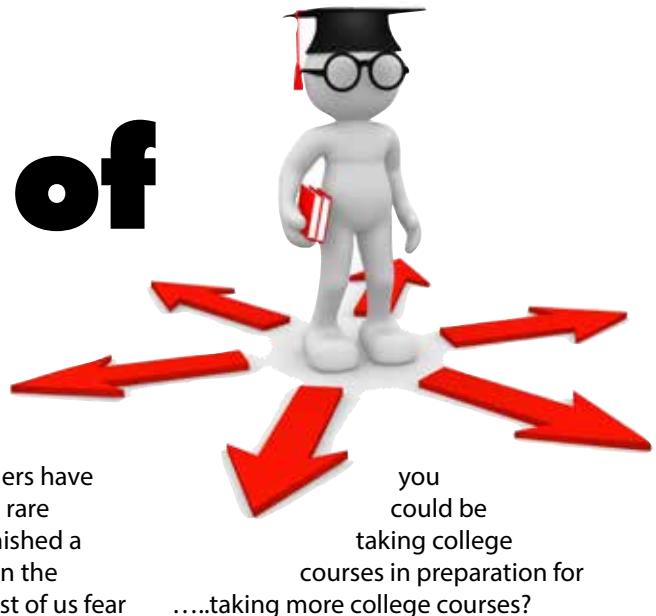
Unfortunately for both of us, you would be wrong. Today's college admission process often does not encourage parents to make rational decisions. As the press constantly reports data showing that a competitive American college annually denies tens of thousands of capable students, parents find their protective instincts activated. Just as we rushed to the aid of our toddler when he waddled toward a dangerous flight of stairs, the thought of our child receiving stacks of college rejection letters transforms us into the proverbial bear protecting its cub. To prepare for battle, we immerse ourselves in the "dark arts" associated with college admissions like a glamour magazine armed with Photoshop.

In the United States, the college admission process can have the feel of a beauty pageant. Students are compared to other "contestants" from multiple perspectives: standardized test scores, grade point average, leadership experiences, volunteerism, athletic prowess, financial backing, cultural background, artistic ability, and how many endangered species they have saved from extinction. We parents hear news of other contenders who can simultaneously juggle sharp intellectual pursuits and weighty

leadership responsibilities while blindfolded. Others have learned to fluently speak a rare Amazon dialect or have finished a fruitful archeological dig on the school playground. The rest of us fear our child's talent of playing the kazoo and experimenting with new uses for catsup will not impress the judges who separate those who are warmly welcomed from those left out in the cold.

Today's parents are told by educators (like me) that the responsibility of the college admission process should rest primarily with the student and not the parent. Yet, on a daily basis, moms and dads (like me) witness our teenage children unable to accomplish the simple tasks of cleaning their room, emptying the dishwasher, or simply getting out of bed in the morning. How can we then expect them to take charge of a decision that may cost us a six-figure sum? Our children sometimes have difficulty finding matching socks, but we are going to trust them to find out how to best spend our retirement money living on the other side of the planet in a place they distractedly toured for 45 minutes?

Further confirming the strange state of USA college admissions, a whole new industry of consultants has arisen to take charge of the process. It is advised that these experts be hired years before the college application process begins so they can help arrange summer experiences for our children from an early age that will ideally supplement a child's academic background. Students may be encouraged to use the month of July to become a published author instead of simply reading for pleasure, or dressing in a lab coat for an internship instead of a bathing suit for the beach. Why waste time watching clouds change shape in a summer sky when



you could be taking college courses in preparation fortaking more college courses?

As a parent of a soon-to-be graduate who is bound for a USA college, here is my closing advice after enjoying a cathartic release in penning this intentionally sardonic article. It's better to laugh at the process than to be stressed by it. We do not have to allow ourselves to be emotionally consumed by all of the media "hype." In actual fact, we DO have highly capable kids who are able to make good choices for their future, even though it may defy our understanding. At FIS, we also have capable college counselors who highly skilled at guiding students in their decision process.

In the end, the college that students choose is far less important than their choice to give their best wherever they are transplanted, and they'll be more able to succeed if they sense our confidence in their abilities. Join me in taking a deep breath and remembering that our children's destiny rests not upon a college sweatshirt insignia but in their capacity to find joy in simply being themselves.

Post Script: A month after I wrote this article, my son made his college decision. Was he accepted into one of the highly competitive US News and World Report Top 20 National Schools? Yes. Will he be accepting their offer? No. He has instead chosen to accept a generous offer from a smaller and lesser-known school that better fits his personality, interests and long-term goals. Thank you FIS!

Alec Aspinwall,
Director of Admissions and Advancement

Responding to Change

A Shift to Responsive Design is in the Works for the FIS Website



New website feature: Responsive Design to fit computer-, tablet- and phone screens

Ours is increasingly becoming a mobile-driven world. And with an estimated 1.9 billion* smart phone users across the globe, chances are that you are one of them.

In 2012, the first full year following our current website's launch, more than 13,000 users accessed the FIS site with a mobile device. Fast forward to today, and that number has more than tripled.

Because of this shift in user behavior – and because the typical design lifespan of a website is between three and four years – FIS is redesigning its website to meet the demands of its users. The new responsive design of the site will auto-detect a user's device and adapt the content to perfectly fit their screen, whether it's a desktop, tablet or phone. This means no more pinching

and pulling to adjust content on a phone – and a better overall online experience for desktop and tablet users as well.

While the responsive nature of the site will be the most notable change, other new design elements will include a deeper home page with more content out front; fresh photos; more media and less text; and increased options for alerts and subscriptions to calendars, news and announcements.

While the redesign promises to add a fresh face to FIS's online presence, the benefits will also stretch beyond aesthetics. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is an important part of the school's marketing strategy and the new responsive website will have built-in SEO capabilities to help potential families better find FIS in

their web searches – a timely fix considering Google's recent introduction of a new algorithm, which dramatically favors responsive websites in searches conducted from mobile platforms.

Input from FIS community groups including faculty, staff, parents and the Board's Trustees Committee, has helped steer design and development of the new site, and we're excited about introducing it to the FIS Community – and the world – when school begins in August 2015. Feedback on the school's website is always welcome at webmaster@fis.edu

Ryan Karr,
Webmaster

*SOURCE: <http://www.emarketer.com/Article/2-Billion-Consumers-Worldwide-Smartphones-by-2016/101>

Good Goodbyes



Faculty and staff waving good bye to the busses on the last day of school

Spring brings budding trees, flowering bulbs, and warmer weather, but it also is a time when many of our expatriate families are forced to say goodbye to FIS and the friends they have made here. For many it is a bittersweet time because even though they may be excited about their next assignment or returning home, bidding farewell to people and places that have been meaningful is often difficult. Below are a few tips for departing families to consider.

First, give yourself and your children ample time to prepare for the transition. Parents may feel that "we've done this many times before" but they must also realize that their children may be at a very different developmental stage during this move than they were in past moves. Waiting until the last minute to tell your child about a move will not likely spare them from prolonged grief, but instead may make them feel like "part of the luggage" that is being shipped. Consider talking with a school counselor if you think your children may have difficulty with the move and involve older children in discussions

Before leaving, consider if there are feelings you need to share in person with those who are important to you.

on how to leave Germany on a positive note.

Before leaving, consider if there are feelings you need to share in person with those who are important to you. Often we assume that a teacher or special friend knows the important role that they have played in our lives, but that is not always the case. You may have other relationships where reconciliation is needed and healing a rift in a relationship is much easier to accomplish in person than long distance. In short, make sure your "house is in order" not only with

packed boxes but also with your personal relationships.

It is important to bid farewell not only to people, but also to places as well. Discuss with your family if there is a favorite hike, restaurant or town that you want to experience once again before you leave the area. Just as a smell can bring back important memories, returning to a special place and reliving why it is important to you can make "moving on" easier and reminds us why Germany has been such a special place.

Finally, build strong bridges for future communication. Make sure you share your future contact information with special friends. Take the initiative to be the first to write a personal note to these people once you arrive at your new destination. Offer invitations for special friends to visit and consider making arrangements for get-togethers for children or families during the summer.

Remember, an end to one aspect of our lives is simply a new beginning to another.

Events Calendar

For up-to-date information on school events please visit our website at www.fis.edu

When	What	Where
10 May	Worldfest	Main Campus
10 May	10-, 25-, and 40 Year Alumni Reunion	Main Campus
10 May	Vision for India Holi Fun Run	Main Campus
11 May	Board of Trustees Meeting	TBD
14, 15 May	Ascension Day, Ascension Day Bridge Day	No School
20 May	FIS Leavers Transition Meeting	FIS Auditorium
20, 22 May	PTG Language Cafés	FIS Cafeteria
24 May	FIS Flea Market	FIS Cafeteria, Foyer
26 May	FIS Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast	PS Assembly Room
27 May	FIS PTG General Membership Meeting	PS Assembly Room
28 May	ES Matinee Performance	FIS Auditorium
28 May	ES Choir Concert	FIS Auditorium
28-30 May	ISST Spring Competition	Various
31 May	FISW Summer Fete	Wiesbaden Campus
4, 5 June	Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi Bridge Day	No School
6 June	FIS Graduation	Stadthalle Oberursel
10 June	FISW Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast	Wiesbaden Campus
11 June	ES Strings Concert	FIS Auditorium
17 June	US Band Concert	Stadthalle Oberursel
18 June	FISW Summer Concert	Wiesbaden Campus
25 June - 18 August Summer Break - No School		

FIS World is a production of Frankfurt International School e.V.

Editorial Team: Alec Aspinwall, Anita Buß, Martha Boston-Majetic, Karen Claire-Zimmet, Daniel Cowan, Deirdre Harriet-Welsh, Ryan Karr, Emmett Kelly, Amy MacDougal, Maria Monteiro, Vera Thiers, BT Zimpel

Production & Layout: BT Zimpel

Cover Photo: Paola Webber

Photos: FIS Community and Paola Webber

Print: printmedia Frankfurt a. M. printmedia-solutions.de

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