

FIS WORLD

School Year 2013/2014

Volume 1 / October 2013

Welcome New Families

In this Issue:

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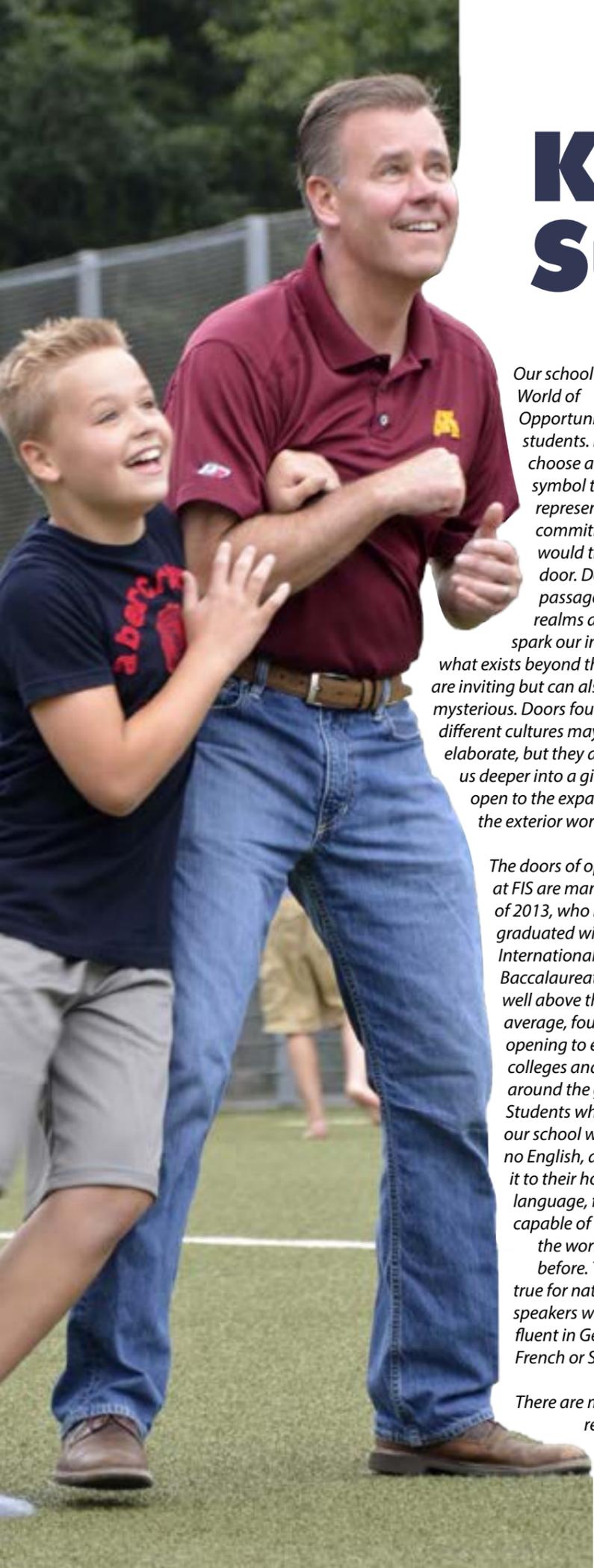


Our mission is to be the leading, culturally diverse and family-oriented international school with English as the principal language of instruction. We inspire individuals to develop their intellect, creativity and character to become independent, adaptable, socially responsible and internationally minded 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.



Keys to Success

Our school promises “A World of Opportunities” for its students. If I had to choose a single symbol that represented this commitment it would be that of a door. Doors are passages into new realms and can spark our interest as to what exists beyond them. They are inviting but can also be mysterious. Doors found in different cultures may be plain or elaborate, but they all either lead us deeper into a given area or open to the expansiveness of the exterior world.

The doors of opportunity at FIS are many. Our Class of 2013, who recently graduated with International Baccalaureate scores well above the world average, found doors opening to exceptional colleges and universities around the globe. Students who come to our school with little or no English, and then add it to their home language, find they are capable of navigating the world as never before. The same is true for native English-speakers who become fluent in German, French or Spanish.

There are many reasons our school is a

leader in international education, but a key factor is the number of “doors to discovery” that we offer students. Do you want to be a concert cellist? An FIS door is open. Interested in creating product prototypes in Design and Technology using a 3D printer? Another door awaits. Want an early taste of life as a scientific researcher through an internship at the Max Plank Institute? Knock and enter.

FIS was not created to fit students into a certain mold. We are not a franchise where workers punch time-clocks to produce graduates with dreams of uniform shapes and sizes as they line up to walk through a prescribed door. At our school, students burst forth like multi-colored fireworks in pursuit of their passion, opening doors to fields in marine biology, engineering, business or theater.

When I was a young science teacher in the early ‘90s, I spent two hours each week volunteering at a nursing home on the island of Guam with patients who had Alzheimer’s disease. One of the patient’s favorite television programs was a game show called “The Price is Right.” At the end of each show, the winning contestant had to choose between “Door Number 1, Door Number 2 or Door Number 3” to find the grand prize. At FIS, the Grand Prize is not behind a single door, but rather is a key that students are given that will unlock any number of doors they choose to enter as they pursue their dreams.

*Paul Fochtman,
Head of School*



Mike McKay meets two recent FIS alumnae

A School for Families

The cover of this issue of FIS World celebrates the arrival of our new FIS families. Although it’s been many years since my family first arrived at the FISW campus, I still remember the warmth and welcome that was immediately extended to us. Within a matter of days, we were embraced by the FIS community, which remains our extended family in the Frankfurt region.

The success we have with integrating new families is clearly a team effort. I must first take my hat off to our new PTG Presidents, Sonia Yoon and Erin Maten. Along with their PTG teams in Oberursel and Naurod, they have rolled out the FIS welcome mat to make each new family feel at home. They have been present at numerous events on both campuses to offer newcomer advice, opportunities to

become involved and, most importantly, a smile that says “you belong here with us.”

Our division principals and counselors also go out of their way to see that families are prepared for the school year. Through orientation programs, new student gatherings and an open-door policy to address adjustment concerns, parents and students have been given the tools necessary for a successful school year. I can remember that the most important factor in allowing me to adjust to a new school was the confidence that my children were in good hands, and I know our faculty has given all our new families this assurance.

If I were to offer only one piece of advice to our new families it would

be this: get involved. Visit with your child’s teachers, volunteer for an event, attend information events, coach a team, or simply find the time to engage with other FIS parents while on campus. The FIS mission proclaims that we are a “family-oriented” school and we achieve this aim because we make an active choice to be engaged with our students and with one another.

On behalf of our Board of Trustees, we look forward to joining you on the FIS journey.

*Mike McKay,
Chair Board of Trustees*



Building Blocks for Success

The Primary School recently discovered that a simple hammer has more than just one purpose. In addition to pounding nails, a hammer can be used to teach math, science, language skills, and much more.

In September, Pete Moorhouse, a visiting artist from Bristol, set up a small woodshop in the Primary School. He spent three days at FIS instructing teachers and assistants on how to leverage simple hand tools in the classroom. In addition, he taught several children in First Steps, Pre-Primary and Primary far more than just how to use tools safely. "Woodworking is one of the richest activities we offer children. There are many opportunities in woodwork to learn problem solving, creative thinking and much more," said Mr. Moorhouse.

It was the creative thinking of Kelly Wedin, a Primary grade teacher, that brought Mr. Moorhouse to FIS. Ms. Wedin successfully persuaded her Primary Team colleagues and Dr. Weaver, the Primary School Principal, that woodworking is a safe and highly enjoyable approach to teaching many important lessons. "Woodworking encompasses several learning areas. First and foremost, children are using their creativity and problem solving skills...and these are all skills that help children become well-rounded learners," said Ms. Wedin. She offered a long list of subjects covered through woodworking, and spoke with particular attention about teaching children to focus better on their work. Through woodworking, "Students are increasing their ability to focus on a task for a longer period of time," said Ms. Wedin.

Several students expressed their desire for more time to learn woodworking with Mr. Moorhouse. "He found it challenging at first, and now he is unstoppable," said Mr. Moorhouse of 3-year-old Dylan from England. Dylan, a First Steps student in Claudia Foerschler's homeroom, quickly learned how to attach two wooden blocks with nails. He later admitted that his father is better at using a hammer.



Ms. Foerschler worked closely with Dylan and several other students on woodworking. "I am a little surprised," she said and added, "I didn't think they could accomplish so much, so fast." Fien, a 3-year-old Dutch girl in First Steps, clearly enjoyed the activity. Ms. Foerschler said of Fien, "Look at her whole posture. She even has her tongue sticking out. She is very focused."

Mr. Moorhouse watched Dylan and Fien leave the room with their creations in hand and offered the comment, "Their self-esteem is sky high now." Dr. Weaver, who was also observing this session, said, "If children have the opportunity to learn a new task through minimal adult support, they will have learned important lessons about resilience and confidence. We teach so that they will carry their increased self-esteem through to their next, new challenge."

*Emmett Kelly,
FIS Parent*



Ready



Set



Grow



FISW Adding Higher Grades

The FIS Wiesbaden Campus is set to grow as the school expands to serve students in First Steps through Grade 8. Next year will mark the beginning of Grade 6 for new and continuing students at FISW. The expected success of this added grade level will set the stage for the further addition of Grade 7 in 2015-16 and Grade 8 in 2016-17.

One wing of the FISW campus will eventually be dedicated solely to Grades 6-8 with the same high-quality core subject classes as the Oberursel Campus, but with additional programs and elective offerings made possible by the campus's unique location and flexible small school dynamics.

Principal Andrea Rosinger and the FISW team are thrilled with the new development. "Over the years many of our parents have hoped that we would expand to higher grades in order to offer greater stability for their children and to continue to take advantage of the ideal learning environment at FISW," she said. "We are delighted we are now able to do this and plan on developing an outstanding program."

Yolanda Barrena, Grade 6-8 Assistant Principal at the Oberursel Campus, has been a key contributor in the planning process, particularly in ensuring that the curricular alignment between the two campuses provides a successful transition to Grade 9 at FIS Oberursel. Ms. Barrena shared her enthusiasm for the project. "Beginning a program like this from the ground up allows the school to use the most recent

research on middle-years programs and develop a top-notch program. The smaller size and unique location of the FISW Campus will allow for an individualized and creative approach to learning that may also draw the interest of those who would normally have applied to the Oberursel Campus."

Ms. Rosinger and Ms. Barrena recently returned from a trip to New York where they met with the leadership of the United Nations International School, a similar two-campus school that offered many great ideas for consideration. A trip is also scheduled to Zurich International School given its multiple campuses and the recent opening of a new building for its grades K-8 division.

"We are going to do everything possible to create a dynamic and challenging program that will offer our students the best preparation for their future," added Ms. Rosinger. "This new venture will provide a quality FIS educational option for students through Grade 8 at the Wiesbaden Campus. It will particularly suit those who flourish in a small school setting and who can take advantage of being a key member of a small community."

Interested parents in Oberursel and Wiesbaden can expect more information to be shared in the coming months.



Sowing The Seeds of Education in the Desert



Looking back at my time in the desert, it all seems like a haze. It was not long ago, but it was a very intense, rigorous, and at times, disorienting trip. I landed in South Africa, taught some middle school kids, and, before I knew it, was flying back to Germany. I wish I could have spent more time with the kind and stoic kids I taught.

With these experiences in mind, I interviewed Pete Sinclair, Assistant Principal of the Upper School, on the

Kalahari Education Experience Project (KEEP) he coordinates.

When and how did KEEP start?

"The best part about the Kalahari is that it's a student-led project, even though it's highly teacher-directed. It grew out of the students' ideas. In 1991, there was a teacher Ambrose Kelly who started at the school. He had been living in the Kalahari for some time in the late 80s, and worked with young people down

there in developing schools. So one summer his former students wanted to go down there for their senior trip. In 1991, he got a group together of teachers, parents, and students. In 1992, they went down for the first time. It really started in 1991, but the first presence down there for FIS was in 1992."

What, to you, is KEEP about?

"It's hard to pin down. I've been involved with it now for nine years.

really had to put it down to one thing, it's children helping children. I think that works both ways, kids from the desert helping kids from the international environment and vice-versa."

How has it developed over the years?

"It started with the building and renovation of facilities, and in 2005 and 2006 it moved to teaching. Now it has moved to teaching and some building. We just finished building a weekly boarding house for orphans that live too far away from the village to be able to come to school. Now they can stay in the boarding house right next to the primary school, and then go home and be with their families on the weekends. So it is things like that that have changed. The next phase of the project is looking at teen mothers and how to provide on-going education and skills for them so that they can raise their babies while still getting an education."

Do you have any upcoming events or plans concerning KEEP?

"It's really interesting how things have developed. We have a young woman, Georgia Germein, who is now a singer/songwriter. She went to the Kalahari about six years ago, and has been down three times. She has performed one concert here and in October is doing another concert for us. The difference with this concert is that we've aligned with the Ustinov foundation. The Ustinov foundation has sponsored kids from other parts of the world, and they are all coming here to the Oberurseler Stadthalle in October to put on an international concert that will raise awareness for our joint projects. We've also started to align with another group called *PfefferminzGreen*, which is a foundation in Bad Homburg. Furthermore, we are looking at promoting the Tswana children's choirs from the local school where young people will be performing traditional songs that have been taught to them by the local children from the desert communities."

How do other schools become involved in the project?

"Ambrose Kelly, one of the founders, is an Australian. Some of his Australian friends are also involved with the Kalahari Project. The key school in Australia is Concordia College, and the teacher that introduced it to Concordia College was a counselor at FIS about ten years ago. She got them interested. They lead four other Australian schools. About 40 schools come each Australian winter. The Institut Le Rosey, a school in Switzerland, became involved because of work that I had done with them in leadership and other service projects. They are now doing their third trip. Mark Ulfers (previous Head of School at FIS) has continued his work in the project area by introducing the American School of Paris, and he has done three trips with them. We expand through contact like that."

Do you have an interesting KEEP-related anecdote?

"There are people you meet in your life, where stuff just happens to them. Ambrose Kelly is one such person. He seems to always be in the right place at the right time. He has done emergency dashes to hospitals, all sorts of things. He has delivered babies on the side of the road, one of which is named after him. Once, Ambrose drove to the project area with the Bishop sitting in the back of the buggy. He forgot that the Bishop was sitting there, took a corner too fast, and the Bishop tumbled out of the back of the buggy. The Bishop then dusted himself off, climbed back into the buggy, and off they went. So that's how the road was named Bishop's Corner. It's a funny sort of place. When a person like Ambrose has been involved with a project for nearly 30 years, there are a lot of stories hidden there somewhere."

*Thomas Shipley,
FIS Alumnus '12
and FIS summer intern 2013*

Worlds Away

Caring for Elderly Parents from Abroad

Being on the other side of the world from your aging parent can be stressful. Making sure your parent is well cared for can be a daunting task when you are far away. What do

that my father passed away unexpectedly. It was that phone call in the middle of the night. The one that wakes you and you know something is just not quite right. I knew my parents were getting older. I didn't want to admit that to myself but it was true. Being the youngest of five children and the only one that lives such a distance away I didn't know what to do. The amazing thing is as an expat and living a continent away from family, you have an immediate network. That old

ments notice, no matter what time of day or night. My family in the U.S. took care of the details and kept me updated on my dad. This meant even getting texts as I boarded the eight hour flight home. I was lucky.

you do in an emergency? Who do you call if your parent needs help? What resources are available where your parent lives? How can I get there if they need me? This hits close to home with so many FIS families. The following stories highlight experiences that three of our FIS families have had in caring for aging parents.

Amy Schmidt – "I have aging parents. Actually it was just over a year ago

saying, "been there, done that" holds true. Friends become your family. You find people that have experienced this same thing and are willing to help. Friends take the helm at a mo-

When my father got sick it didn't matter if I was 200 or 2,000 miles away. The expat community was a great support!

My friends helped with juggling kids and schedules, and I found myself on a plane less than 24 hours after the phone call. I made it in time to see my dad before he passed. For me, that was the comfort I needed."

Head Of School, Dr. Paul Fochtman has lived abroad for over 21 years. He shared his thoughts losing his dad while being so far away.

Paul Fochtman – "When my father passed away last year, my immediate thought was wishing that I could have been there. I questioned if my overseas lifestyle had been an impediment to my family's relationship with my parents. But when my daughter read her thoughts at his funeral, and when we all shared memories gathered over the years, I realized without a doubt that the loving bonds between our extended and immediate family were incredibly strong. In fact, our expatriate life probably allowed us to spend more time with my parents than other family members living in the USA, and that time seemed to be filled with a focus on quality sharing that may not have developed if we occasionally visited from a neighboring city."

Watching our parents age is one of the most difficult things we go through. FIS Parent, Martha Boston-Majetic also has dealt with being away from family in challenging situations.

Martha Boston-Majetic – "Having contended with Alzheimer's Disease and near fatal heart attacks amongst other complications, I fully understand the challenges that go along with having aging parents living thousands of miles away. I've too, had my share of middle of the night telephone calls followed by the necessity to quickly board an airplane. While it is never easy to be so far away, I have taken solace in knowing that the nursing staff has ample time to discuss the progress of a patient at 2:00 am especially when they are keeping a European-based family member up to date. Moreover, technology has played a gratifying role in the quest to balance the demands of multiple

'It was that phone call in the middle of the night. The one that wakes you and you know something is just not quite right.'

generations. On a positive note, I've experienced an even more robust relationship with my only sibling as we've worked together to best address the needs of our parents. Finally, like so many others, I am grateful for the support and empathy of the extended FIS community."

As our parents age, the roles reverse. We are the caretakers now, the ones who take on the heavy load of responsibility. We do it willingly and with love, but it's a challenge, and at times heartbreaking. Our parents want to control their own lives. They may get angry at our "interference" and arguments happen because of so many emotions. It's hard to see the people that were your whole world while growing up, grow smaller, weaker, and more in need of help.

The only thing to do is continue loving them and supporting them as you can. And all you can do is hold on a little tighter, a little longer and continue to love them as they've always loved you.

Communicate with each other about the future. Candor may be uncomfortable, but is key to know what they want from the rest of their lives. Conversations that you never wanted to have with your parents are now taking place.

China recently enacted a law called "Protection of the Rights and Interests of Elderly People." It requires children to meet the emotional and physical needs of their parents, and to visit them often or face fines or possible jail time.

Maud Purcell, a psychotherapist and executive director of the Life Solution Center of Darien in Connecticut, offers a laundry list of emotions that adult children are likely to experience when parents age and their health declines. Among them:

* Fear, when you realize that the roles have reversed and that you may now have to care for your parents

* Grief, as a once-robust parent's ability to function independently declines abruptly or little by little

* Anger, frustration and impatience, when a parent's needs interfere with your life

* Guilt, in response to the above feelings or because you are unable to spend enough time with your parent because of distance or other life demands

I recently finished a book by Martha Beck and this passage resonated with me. "Even as you grapple with the logistical and psychological stress of eldercare, there will be moments when you find yourself on the 'blessing path.' Rather than a long day's journey into night, you'll feel yourself making a long night's journey into day: through fear and confusion to courage and wisdom. Receive this gift, the final one your parents can offer before they take off their shoes, jump out the window, and fly home."

Amy Schmidt,
FIS Parent



A new school year brings a host of new families, new smiles and new opportunities. FIS is proud of the way such a diverse community, from more than 50 nationalities and speaking over 30 languages, comes together as a cohesive group united in its passion to provide the best possible learning experience for our students. To all of our new FIS families, we extend our gratitude for the unique talents and interests you bring to our school, and encourage you to join our existing families by becoming involved with FIS.



FIS Mad Scientists



Let me begin this article with a note of clarification: my Grade 12 son is a bona fide science geek. Where I see a messy room in need of cleaning, he sees an array of particles to be studied. I see a recipe for dinner, he sees a combination of elements whose structure is changed at a heightened temperature thereby creating new gastronomical compounds. Yes, I'm exaggerating, but not by much.

I am incredibly proud of my son's love of science and, in particular, I am grateful to the school's willingness to employ "mad scientists" that encourage students' passion in this field. My son's current Chemistry teacher, Keith Wilkinson, is one such gifted faculty member. I think what makes him and other FIS science teachers so capable is that they were probably science nuts when they were kids as well.

My son, Noah, comes home with stories of how Mr. Wilkinson, aka "Wilko," takes particular pleasure in transforming a beaker of clear liquid into a colorful bubbling brew of chemicals. He stares into his science cupboard like a boy looking into his toy box. Listening to my son describe his current extended essay project of reactor design with the help of his teacher, Noah sounds and acts more like an eight year-old playing with his LEGOS than engaging in university-level experiments. Clearly, his teacher's passion for such things has been contagious.

I know Mr. Wilkinson is not alone. The FIS science department is full of teachers who get students excited about dissecting sheep hearts, investigating scientific data to solve

"CSI-styled" crimes, engaging in "fieldwork" studies beyond school, or creating various explosions and eruptions to the delight of their classes. If given the choice between learning from Dr. Frankenstein or Dr. Sleepytime, I know my son would choose the former. He likes the fast-paced, sometimes frenzied exposure to exciting ideas. I suppose one could say there is great "chemistry" between my son and 'Wilko'.

Thank you FIS for hiring teachers whose expertise in their field is only exceeded by their infectious enthusiasm for learning.

*Monica Pecoraro,
FIS Parent*

**Where I see
a messy room
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Language Leads to Learning

One of the key responsibilities of an international school to students from other language backgrounds is to teach them English so that they may actively engage in classroom learning as quickly and as fully as possible. Over the past 50 years, FIS has developed a strong English as a Second Language (ESL) program using well-established instructional methods, and by employing qualified and experienced teachers. And what a difference dedicated teachers make!

The case in point is an initiative championed by the Primary School's ESL and Grade 1 teachers. The team wondered how they might help beginning ESL learners better understand the concepts presented in the Units of Inquiry and engage more meaningfully in classroom work during Unit study.

Together the Grade 1 team decided to try a new approach. They first asked for parent volunteers to come and facilitate a discussion about the

Unit with ESL students in their own native language. These mother tongue sessions were an eye-opener for the teachers. During the sessions, groups were charged with energy and students eagerly shared what they already knew about the topic, asking thoughtful questions and reflecting on what they had been learning in their homerooms.

Interestingly enough, as the mother tongue sessions gained momentum, teachers realized that the ESL students had a wealth of prior knowledge, which their limited English had prevented from sharing in detail. What had started as a way to help students with limited English engage more in the Unit work, turned out to have further-reaching benefits. The discussion of the Unit's concepts in their home languages stimulated the interest of all the ESL students, even those already comfortable with English. It also helped to reinforce what they had already learned in the homeroom.

One particularly precious benefit became apparent when Grade 1 Students came to the Unit of Inquiry called Now and Long Ago, in which they look at the lives of children in their grandparents' generation. Grade 1 teachers had always wanted to introduce a stronger cultural component into the Unit and the mother tongue sessions proved to be the perfect vehicle. Traditionally, English-speaking grandparents had been invited to speak to the students in English about their lives as children. However, they could not always paint a picture that resonated with many of the nationalities in the room due to cultural differences. With the mother tongue sessions in place, it was a natural step to invite grandparents from other national backgrounds to speak to the children as well – this time in their own languages.

The task of finding grandparents – especially from distant countries – to visit Germany in mid-February turned out to be somewhat difficult.



However, the resulting mother tongue sessions were such a rich experience for the children that the teachers felt they were worth every effort. The guest speakers last year included three sets of wonderful German grandparents, among them a retired school inspector. Travelling the greatest distance was a lively Korean woman who was visiting her son's family in Oberursel.

Since September 2011, when the idea was first put to test, 11 mother tongue sessions have taken place in languages including German, Korean, Japanese, Dutch, Russian, Swedish, Arabic, French, Hindi and Chinese. "An initiative of these dimensions would not have been possible without strong support from ESL parents", says Kasia Pomykol, Grade 1 ESL teacher and the sessions' coordinator.

"The logistics of running five to seven concurrent sessions involving up to 45 first graders without causing a disruption in their homerooms, requires lots of planning and a reliable team. It's immensely reassuring to know that I can rely on our ESL parents to answer our call for volunteers, come on the appointed day and do a wonderful job. The mothers leading the sessions have been the true heroes of the program."

The Grade 1 team's initiative has been a great success. In addition to raising the involvement and interest of ESL students in the Unit work, it has been a great opportunity for parents – and grandparents – to contribute to their children's learning in a rewarding way while forging a stronger bond between home and school. Word about the benefits of the approach is

spreading in the Primary School. This year, many of the students flocking to their first mother tongue session in Grade 1 exclaimed "It's like what we did in Primary!" For them, activities in their home languages have already become a familiar feature of their learning environment.



Having Fun

The Key to Turning a Child Into a Reader

Ever heard those real estate agents say location, location, location? When it comes to turning a child into a reader, I could tell you fun4U2, fun4U2, fun4U2. Reading to your child must be fun for you, too. You must also enjoy the book you are reading to your kids. Not vicariously through your child's experience, but as your own experience. And you don't have to like it simply because it is considered a great book. There are

many great kids' books around, but some will resonate with you, and many won't. Whitney Houston was the most awarded female artist of all time, but she sings what I call "screaming songs": these dramatic crescendo louder and louder song acts that just plain wreck my nerves. Great books by exceptionally talented authors don't necessarily work for each and everyone. You need to find your own 'Reading for My Child(ren)'

books. And then practice some tricks on top:

Trick #1: Bedtime

Bedtime is a mutually peaceful, practical window in which to read regularly. It is soothing for both of us at the end of the day, and very limited in time, which makes it feasible to keep up. Most days, I read between five and 15 minutes to my child. If a story is hard to put down, I exercise my parental prerogative to break the strict lights out time and read five more minutes. Exceptions like this also make books and reading more desirable.

I rarely read graphic novels or comics at bedtime. I find that the simple

reading-listening interaction is not as peaceful or as rich as picture-less books where the only way to see what the words tell, is to imagine them – something that feels especially good in the dreamy pre-sleep slumber. I reserve comics and graphic novels for daytime, and never as a way to get into denser books.

Trick #2: Dethroning the Must-Have-Color-Pictures Appeal

Over time, I moved from picture books with few or no words to big picture books with more words. At this point, I embarked on a gradual picture elimination mission without sugar-coated coercion, as in, "aren't you getting a little too old for these picture books?" Pictures are good and fun. Books without pictures look dull.

The only way to debunk the "must have color pictures" myth is to find a really fun and colorless book. I was lucky: the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series had arrived. Lots of illustrations, zero color. After that, it was easy to get into slim chapter books with few illustrations (e.g., *The Story of Dr. Doolittle*) and thicker books with small chapter introduction sketches (e.g., *One Dog and His Boy*.) Finally, this year, I made the move to dense, picture-less books. End of the road. It took nine years.

Trick #3: It's an Audition

"Mommy, you know what I like about your reading? It's all the voices you make," says my child. I have always made different voices for different characters (e.g., the old lady, the fire brigade chief, the police officer, and the wolves in *The Little Old Lady Who Cried Wolf*.) I am not an actress, but love to act out for my child what I read. I am also no musician, but make up little tunes on the fly (as when various characters say "sody-sody-sody-sallyratus" - which I learned means "baking soda" - on the way to the store in *Epossumondas Saves the Day*.) It's really fun – and effective fun. My child went on to read like that to others at school. Kids have loved it. Teachers have loved it. My kid loves it.

Trick #4: Serial Cutoff

Finally, I use a slightly nasty trick: I cut off my reading at a really, really exciting point in the story. It's what I call the TV Series cutoff trick: a point you can hardly wait to get back to and find out more. I will make cutoffs at mildly sad points, as I believe it unhealthy to eliminate sadness from the panel of normal emotions in life. However, I don't make cutoffs at very negative exciting points. Then, I read on, even if it means going past the lights out time. I read just enough to give a calming sense of hope of things becoming alright again in an uncertain chapter future.

Off the Beaten Path: Three Children's Books Fun for Grown-ups too

Currently, I am reading this book to my child (aged 9): *Wonder* by R.J.

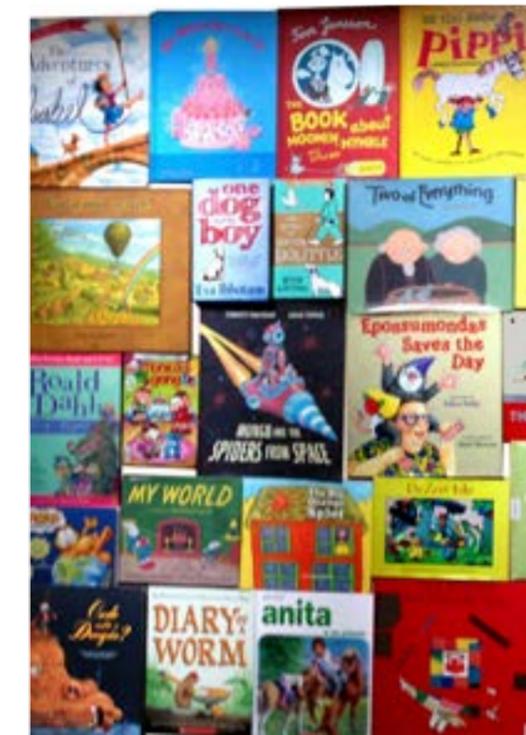
Palacio. The title caption reads: You can't blend in when you were born to stand out. It's an outstanding first book by a book cover designer, about a 10 year old boy about to start Grade 5. This is all I will say in order not to spoil the surprise. If you don't have the time to read for your child, go buy it for yourself.

The Big Orange Splot by D. Manus Pinkwater is a simple, childish illustrated book for anyone aged 5-105. "This book is about the courage to follow your dreams, even when everyone is against your idea. Because you have a right to have differences", says my child. And, lastly, is the best book of all.

DeZert Isle by Claude Ponti. A wonderfully wacky book about an island inhabited by Zerts, and one Zert, Jules, who is in love with an unresponsive Brick, and afraid of being swallowed by BigMouths or captured by SmotherHen. My child's review: "Everyone has a fear. And it's not easy to conquer that fear, and when you do, it feels like you can do anything! But then another fear takes its place. But now you know that you can do what you are afraid of."

If I do all this, will it work for sure? No. But at least YOU had a great time going at it.

Maria Monteiro,
FIS Parent & Volunteer



An Ongoing SOAP at FIS

2013 Soap Box Derby Prototype Will be Followed by Student Models in 2014



As far as the curriculum, school calendar and time constraints allow, FIS does its best to be involved in community events. Sometimes it can take a while for an idea to become reality, but in any and all cases, for an idea to succeed, there needs to be a champion. As far as the recent FIS participation in the Oberursel Soap Box Derby is concerned, there were actually two champions: Head of School, Paul Fochtman, who expressed his belief that “we should be able to make this happen” and FIS Design and Technology teacher,

Robin McIntosh, who replied “Yes, we can” (although he is neither an American nor a Democrat), and proceeded to build the first FIS soap box racing car*.

Even with some resources available via the internet, it still takes reflection, practical skills, and more than a bit of chutzpa to envision and design a model which could win - or at least hold its own - in a race against the competition. In comparison to the children’s race, in the adult category there were no

**Rumor has it that FIS had entered cars in the past, but we have nothing in the archives to prove it, so until evidence to the contrary is provided, we will consider the 2013 vehicle our FIS prototype.*



Soap Box Derby Facts

The Soap Box Derby race in Oberursel is even older than the American race which has been held nationally since 1934. The first mention of boys racing unpowered cars made of wood was in the local Oberursel newspaper in 1904! They had prizes for the best looking and the fastest car – and charged an entrance fee of 20 cents.

weight restrictions. Just the same, the construction needed to be stable enough to carry the +/- 100 kg weight of the driver without falling apart, yet not so heavy that it remained inert at the start.

Despite the fact that he had no practical examples on which to base his construction plan, Mr. McIntosh came up with a design that evoked ‘oohs and aahs’ from the admiring soap box fans as the FIS team unveiled the car on the night of the race. Its sophisticated round wooden

form, the FIS logo lasered upon the side, and the carved and polished steering wheel had all been produced in the Design and Technology workshop at FIS. It was undoubtedly the most handsome car in the race, but alas, not the fastest. The FIS driving team, consisting of builder/designer Robin McIntosh, technical advisor Fionan O’Loingsigh, and patron Paul Fochtman, finished fourth out of 18 entries, took home a lovely little consolation trophy which now stands proudly alongside other FIS team trophies.

The greatest consolation, though, is the fact that we will be back next year... with three more cars! Having learned the tricks of the trade this year, Mr. McIntosh and Mr. O’Loingsigh are currently working with students in a special Design and Technology course to create new hotrods that will amaze the competition with their speed and design in next year’s Soap Box Derby.

*Vera Thiers,
Marketing & Outreach*

Alumnus Returns to Oberursel

In-hyeok Jang attended FIS for five years, from Grade 4 to 8. He came to Germany in 2002 and went to German school for a year before attending FIS until 2007. Some of his fondest memories include “playing soccer with my foreign friends and science experiments. In Korea, except for special high schools, we just learned science by textbook, so it was quite hard to understand. At FIS, it

was really nice that I could actually carry out what was learned.”

In-hyeok settled into Korean school with ease after preparation from FIS. While he needed to adapt to the Korean school environment and the level of math, “the establishment of Korean language skills at FIS in Grade 6” was very helpful to him. The Korean textbook, which was the same one that is used in Korea, “helped [him] a lot”. In-hyeok liked the fact that FIS did not force its students to stay in school after 15:10, which used to be a requirement for high school students in Korea. He also realized that, “overall, Korean schools need to adopt after school activities.” Another aspect of FIS that he appreciated was the flexibility in

choice of subjects. He says: “In Korean schools, the schools make up the schedules. At FIS you could choose the subjects that you wanted to take, the ones that were more related to your future. I think that’s way better.” The single subject at FIS that influenced In-hyeok the most was science, especially classes taught by Mr. Cordwell in Grade 8 and Mr. Moncrief in Grade 6. Their styles of teaching fed into my interest in environmental science.

Looking back at his own experience, he gives students returning to Korea after FIS the following advice: “Although it might take a long time to adjust to a new environment, don’t worry. Just be persistent and you will settle in eventually. A positive attitude is important.” During his studies at university, he has noticed that “being educated at FIS for a few years gave [him] the ability to speak English really well”, as well as a “more global mindset”. If he could go back, he “would make more foreign friends. Friendship is so important!”

*Thomas Shipley, FIS Alumnus '12
and FIS summer intern 2013*

In-Hyeok takes in the view of the Alps on his return visit to Germany and his Alma Mater



MAPping Student Success

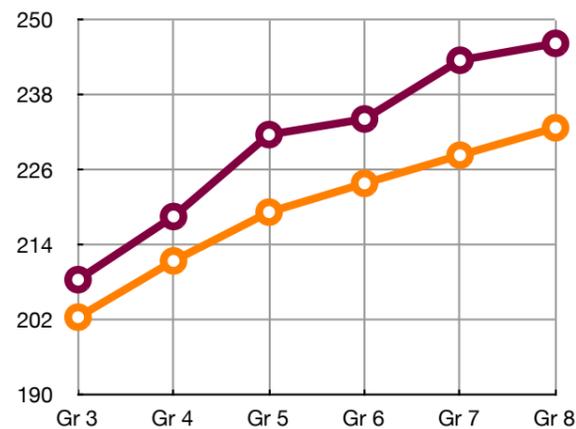
FIS consistently achieves high IB results that are well above the world average and represent the culmination of many years of dedication to achieving high academic standards at FIS. This long history of success does not begin for students in Grade 11 but starts through creating high expectations for all of our learners. When these expectations are created we take into account developmental readiness and remain focused on educating the whole child, while also establishing academic goals that will allow for current and future success as a learner.

Beginning in our Early Years and Elementary School program and continuing through the start of the IBDP program, FIS has established rigorous standards calling for our students to develop essential skills, knowledge and understanding as readers, writers, public speakers, mathematicians, scientific thinkers, historians and more. We measure a student's achievement of our goals and expectations through a variety of classroom based assessments and standardized assessments.

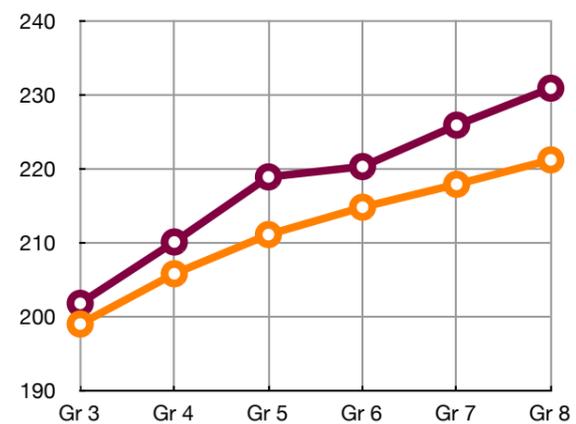
The standardized assessment used in Grade 3 to Grade 8 is published by MAP (Measurement of Academic Progress), a company that works with International Schools and schools throughout the USA. There are over three million students world-wide taking this assessment. MAP testing is a unique assessment as it provides an assessment of learning (end of year) and an assessment for learning (beginning of the school year).

Assessment of learning allows us to compare our students' results with other schools around the world. Assessment for learning provides our teachers with information that is ex-

Mathematics	Gr 3	Gr 4	Gr 5	Gr 6	Gr 7	Gr 8
MAP Mean	202.4	211.4	219.2	223.8	228.3	232.7
FIS Mean	208.4	218.5	231.6	234.1	243.5	246.2



Reading	Gr 3	Gr 4	Gr 5	Gr 6	Gr 7	Gr 8
MAP Mean	199	205.8	211.1	214.8	217.9	221.2
FIS Mean	201.8	210.1	218.9	220.3	225.9	230.9



Spring 2013 ○ MAP Mean ● FIS Mean

tremely helpful for differentiating instruction. As you can see from the results above, FIS can be just as proud of our academic progress and achievement in our lower grades as we can be of our IB scores.

We encourage all parents to contact their child's teacher or principal for more information about our academic expectations, use of assessment data or assessment results.

Events Calendar

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

When	What	Where
29/30 Oct.	FIS US "Dance in the Studio 186"	FIS US Room 186
1 November	FIS US Parent/Teacher Conferences	No School for US students
2 November	FISW Harvest Party	Wiesbaden Campus
11 November	FIS Winter Sports Try-Outs	Sports Field
12 November	Athletic Booster Club Meeting	ABC Office
14 November	FISW PTG Meeting	Wiesbaden Campus
16 November	FIS Flea Market	FIS Sports Hall
18 November	Board of Trustees Meeting	Parkhotel Waldlust
20-24 Nov.	FIS REAL Family Ski Trip	Off-Site
21-24 Nov.	Fall Break II	No School
27-29 Nov.	FIS US Joseph Musical Performance	FIS Auditorium
29 Nov.-1 Dec	FIS Gr 9-12 MUN	Paris
2 December	FIS REAL Term 2 Registration Begins	
3 December	FIS ES Holiday Choir and Strings Concert	FIS Auditorium
6 December	FISW Winter Market and Performance	Wiesbaden Campus
7 December	Breakfast with Santa	Primary School Cafeteria
9 December	FISW Winter Concert	Wiesbaden Campus
10 December	Athletic Booster Club Meeting	ABC Office
10 December	FIS US Chamber Orchestra	Christuskirche, Oberursel
11 December	FIS ES Gr 2 Build It Exhibition	ES Classrooms
12 December	FISW PTG Meeting	Wiesbaden Campus
14 December	Winter Break	No School

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

Editorial Team: Alec Aspinwall, Anita Buß, Martha Boston-Majetic, Ryan Karr, Emmett Kelly, Maria Monteiro, Amy Schmidt, Tina Shealy, Thomas Shipley, Vera Thiers, Ranko Tripkovic, BT Zimpel

Production & Layout: BT Zimpel

Cover Photo: Vera Thiers

Photos: Paola Webber, Stefan Marquardt, FIS Community

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

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International
School

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