

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

