



News in the HS @ ISP

June 15, 2009



Congratulations to the Class of 2009!

A school year flies. Throughout the first semester, and into the second, the school is a buzz of activity, all of it going off in dozens of different directions, with momentum waxing and waning at different times of the year. And much more quickly than you can ever imagine, you are into final exams and wrapping up an academic year.

At ISP a lot went on this year. I regret that I have not had the regular news for you - the parents - that I would have liked. Next year you will see this newsletter more frequently. I know that most of you have heard from your sons and daughters throughout the year about a few intense and worthwhile events and activities: AASCA, MUN, Group 4 Science project, CAS service activities, Mock IB exams, the real IB exams, talent show, student council elections, field trips, papers, assessments, projects, tests.

It has been an invigorating and intense first year for me at ISP. I can honestly say that I feel proud now to be fully part of it. ISP is an excellent school, like very few, and an imperfect school, like all others. There are pieces that need to work better; there are pieces of which we are rightfully and fiercely proud. But the work is ongoing. It is time for a brief rest and pause, and then it will be time to get back to it. We have much to do next year - and all of it with the student in mind.

Can each student be turned on to learning? Can each student reach his or her potential? Can each student travel his or her days at ISP fired up and inspired by the learning experience here? Yes.

But we have a lot of work to do because this is no easy task.

And so before we take a rest in July, and before we start up again in August, here are a few bits of news and information for the parents of high school students.

Daniel McKee **HS Principal**

Year End Awards & Graduation

We had a proud and emotional Graduation Ceremony on May 30 and sent off the Class of 2009. So many fine students, so many outstanding accomplishments. There are now 49 new alumni of the International School of Panama, and they are off next year to all corners of the world. Many of them had been honored a few days prior to the Graduation, in our annual Senior Awards Lunch at the Club de Golf. We also held our Underclass Awards Ceremony a few days ago, and gave out the annual ISP awards in all the subject areas; for Academic Excellence and Improvement; for CAS, MUN and AASCA sports; and for Citizenship, Service and Cooperative Spirit. Many of you saw the certificates given out to your sons and daughters that Friday, June 5. We congratulate all the worthy award winners!

Schedules for students

The HS Counselor, Mr. Seedorf, Sharon Johnson and I have been working for several weeks, and have now put the final touches on the Master Schedule for next year. Next year's 12th and 11th graders will go home this summer already holding their own draft schedule of classes for August 10. We hope to also complete the schedules for the 10th and incoming 9th in the early days of the summer as well. All students will receive their official schedule upon arrival for the first day of classes on August 10. As in most high schools, we will have the first couple of weeks of the school year as the Drop/Add period, when students can make slight alterations to their schedule of classes, based on their interests, needs and graduation requirements. Please know that all student schedules are being made based on the course selection forms that the students filled out and turned in to the HS office.

HS Advisory

I am very proud to say that next year the high school will be piloting an Advisory Program, and re-starting a feature that used to be part of the HS and has long been part of the middle school at ISP. 18 HS teachers will serve as grade-level advisors and meet regularly with a group of 12 or 13 students in their Advisory class. The Advisory group will have a weekly meeting on Wednesdays, for the group to discuss important school issues and receive important information, and a student can also count on his or her Advisor to meet during the week individually as needed. The Advisor is meant to be a guide and coach to the Advisee (as well as a teacher), and also serves as a valuable contact for the parents – someone who really gets to know your son or daughter. We know this is such an important piece in attending to our students' well-being, and we are committed to implementing an effective Advisory Program, and a program built to last for years to come.

The IB Experience Begins for 11th Graders

Our rising 11th graders will be welcomed into the IB Program - whether as a full Diploma student, or as a Certificate candidate. It will be an intense and rigorous experience, and it will require steady, good study habits, persistence, and an ability to juggle the competing demands of the program. And this junior class has more IB Diploma candidates among them than any class in the history of ISP! We know they can do well. But make no mistake about it – the IB is a very demanding program and good habits of study are essential.

PANAMUN

The 17th annual PANAMUN conference will be held at ISP on October 28, 29 and 30. The student leaders - Secretary General, DSG, Committee Chairs - have already been putting in hours and hours in preparation. Under the guidance of Mr. David Swartwout, the MUN Director and Social Studies Department Chair, and with the direction of the student Secretary General Saad Ishtiaq, we are expecting an excellent conference. All HS students participate in the conference - a fact that makes PANAMUN unique, and makes us quite proud of our tradition with debate. For three days in October, and many days prior in preparation, our high school students grapple fiercely with the problems that face the world. It is a simulation, but it is also one of the most "real life" experiences that our students will have in the school year. And we know that the experience helps shape our students into the thoughtful and responsible citizens they are becoming.

AASCA

As a proud member of the Association of American Schools of Central America, we are expecting to send student participants to a number of regional events next year. These will likely include the Leadership conference in September, the basketball tournament in October, the Knowledge Bowl in November, the soccer tournament in March, and more. The AASCA events are always exciting and eagerly anticipated events in the school year, as they are a chance to make connections with other students in Central America, and a chance to engage in friendly competition as each school pursues excellence in a number of distinct arenas. 2009-2010 will be a busy year for ISP in the AASCA arena.

Year–End Report Cards

Parents will be receiving the final, year-end report card electronically on Friday, June 19. The official hard copy will be available for pick up in the main administrative office on Monday, June 22. The office remains open during the summer as well.

Upcoming Dates for HS

August 10 First day of the 2009-2010 School Year

Para Español

Si algun padre de familia necesita una traducción del contenido de esta carta, por favor comuníquese con Sharon Johnson en la oficina del HS.

We wish you a restful and enjoyable vacation! See you in August!