

The International School of Panama

Middle School News

Important Dates:

6th grade coffee
Tuesday, Feb. 2 -
9:30 cafeteria

7th grade coffee
Thursday, Feb. 4 -
8:00 cafeteria

8th grade coffee
Friday Feb—5
8:00 cafeteria

Spirit Week
Feb. 8-12

PTA Ice-Breaker for
New Parents
Wednesday, Feb. 10,
10-11:45 cafeteria

Middle School Dance
Wednesday, Feb. 10
6—9 Club Union

PTA General Meeting
Thursday, Feb. 11
1:15-2:30 cafeteria

Carnival Break
Feb. 15-19

Progress Reports
Feb. 26

8th Graders Puzzle Over History

One of the many challenges that a teacher faces on a daily basis is engaging students in activities that will motivate and spark their interest about a particular topic.

An effective strategy used by ISP Middle School teachers is a “Jigsaw” activity. In 8th grade, students are learning about Christianity as one of the major world religions.

In order to provide background knowledge students were divided into “expert groups”

and assigned a topic to learn well enough to teach to other classmates. The “experts” practiced note-taking and summarizing skills in order to prepare their oral presentation.

New groups were then formed by joining experts from the various topics so that all students became familiar with the background and ready to move on to the next level.

Eighth grade Social Studies teacher, Helen Villamil, describes this activity as highly



Mixed groups of “experts” share their knowledge.



effective because *all* students are engaged and each student is responsible for learning about a topic and presenting it through meaningful discussion with peers.

New Procedures for Drop Off and Pick Up

We would like to extend our thanks to parents whose children arrive to school and leave in cars.

The new procedures of dropping off students in the morning

and the picking up in the afternoon are beginning to run smoothly. A few of the glitches have been worked out, and we continue to monitor the situation for on-going improvement

opportunities.

Our priority is to ensure the safety of your children and a smooth entrance and exit.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.



Teachers are Students Too



Middle School teachers hard at work preparing for students.

Staff Development is one of the many priorities for ISP. Each Wednesday teachers are engaged in a variety of activities that are designed to strengthen programs, classroom instruction and student learning.

Throughout the first semester and now, during the second,

Middle School teachers have focused on differentiation in the classroom.

Together we are reviewing research and best practices as well as reading and discussing a book by well-known teacher and author, Rick Wormeli, known for his expertise

in the practice of differentiation.

Middle School teachers are putting into practice the theory and strategies put forth by Wormeli and other education experts. The “Jigsaw” activity mentioned on page one is an example.



“Change for Change”

Throughout this week ISP students have been digging through pockets, wallets and purses to contribute to the Haiti relief fund.

The purpose of this drive has been to encourage students

to give spontaneously and from their hearts, giving up that extra bit of change they have handy.

In the near future we will be looking for other opportunities to fund raise for Partners in Health, the organization that

ISP has chosen to support.

We are appreciative of the lead that High School students have taken in this matter and look forward to continued collaboration with them.

Sun Safety



The weather is beautiful this time of year and it’s a great opportunity for our PE classes to enjoy sport and fitness activities outdoors.

We would like to remind students to bring caps and sunscreen for sun protection. *“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”*

