From the Head and the Heart

With Gratitude and Goodbyes

Yes, it is time to say a final goodbye. Everyone will be spending the next few days signing yearbooks, wishing each other well, exchanging contact information, hugging and kissing goodbye or just ‘zaijian.’ (see you again). This is the annual tradition at all schools, but at international schools it is particularly poignant, as we are saying goodbye for more than a summer. In many cases, we are saying goodbye for the long term.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my 4 years in Beijing, in China and at BISS. I can honestly say that I have taken full advantage of sights and sounds of this marvelous city and have travelled across the length and breadth of China and to the neighboring countries. I have learned so much about Asia’s history, geography and all the cultures in this country and on this continent.

I have even learned to converse in Chinese, which was one of my major goals. I have enjoyed meeting and knowing so many wonderful Chinese people, and I have always been treated well here. For these reasons, I will leave China with a part of the country in my heart and in my soul forever.

I have also enjoyed leading BISS and its community. I have come to know many outstanding professionals who give their expertise, their heart and their soul to the school. I have also interacted with so many amazing students, who I am sure will become wonderful adults and leaders. I have also learned so much here about how to best prepare our youth for the 21st century; it is truly a paradigm shift in education and I am glad to be a part of it. We have experimented and implemented some of the best practices in education and we have seen immediate results in our students. However, the results which are yet unknown are those which will develop in 10+ years time. While we are sure that we have influenced our students to be lifelong learners and mature and balanced adults, we would still love to hear from you about your future successes.

Please remain in touch with us. Our students are our life’s work.
Stay safe, be good to one another.......... and READ, READ, READ.

With gratitude, love, respect and appreciation.

Ettie Zilber
Head of School
EZilber@biss.com.cn

Upcoming Dates

- June 10th: Reports sent home
- June 11th: Last day of school for students (early finish)
- August 9th: New student orientation
- August 12th: First day of classes - whole school

READ, READ, READ.

With gratitude, love, respect and appreciation.

Ettie Zilber
Head of School
EZilber@biss.com.cn
Dear Parents,

Well, we’re almost there! I think I speak for both teachers and parents when I say that this has been a long and rewarding year.

As a school, we take some pride in the energy and buzz that exists at BISS. We have had a number of visitors over the course of the year - teachers, administrators, and prospective parents – and each person has commented on the positive atmosphere. In fact, just recently, one said to me as she was leaving, “wow, this is a special place.” So, how is this so? For me, it is the combination of teachers, students and parents who not only care about the school, but care about each other in the community. As I always say to visiting parents, besides the website, the statistics, and the brochures, the school has to feel right. This is a difficult thing to quantify or even articulate, but it’s no less valid. So, on behalf of all of us at BISS, thank you for your support and contribution to our community, and I wish you all a safe and happy vacation.

Our high school graduation was held on May 24th. It was a special day for us: a day to celebrate the achievements and say good-byes to the Grade 12 students. My sincere congratulations to all of our graduating seniors and their families!

In the life of any international school, students are constantly coming and going. It is a situation that is tinged with both excitement and sadness. The sadness is obvious as the students say goodbye to friends and teachers, but we are excited to welcome new students into our community. As an administrator, we realize that the affection leaving students feel for BISS means that we are doing something right for our students. To those students and families leaving us, thank you for helping to make BISS a great school and good luck in your next post. Please keep in contact and remember that you are always welcome here.

The semester two reports will be sent home with your child on June 10th. This will give you an opportunity to contact the school on June 11th if you require a reprint due an error or want further clarifications about your child’s grades.

The annual secondary school awards ceremony will be held in the annex on Tuesday, June 11th from 10.00am to 11.50am. A number of awards for both middle and high school will be awarded. Parents are welcome to attend the ceremony if possible.

Please note that June 11th is also the last day of school for students. We will have an early finish on this day. The students will spend the first session in homerooms, cleaning out lockers, completing the clearance forms and getting their yearbooks signed before the final awards assembly. Students will be dismissed at 12:00 pm, and school buses will leave campus at 12.15pm.

Best wishes,

Mr. D. Vithayathil

Associate Secondary School Principal

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Why our BISS English Language Learners Thrive in the International Baccalaureate Curriculum

The three International Baccalaureate programmes (PYP, MYP & DP) provide the framework for a very challenging, comprehensive and rigorous curriculum. At BISS, many of our students come from backgrounds where English is not their first language. You can imagine that helping these students to perform at grade level in the context of a rigorous academic programme might be, to say the least, challenging. That being said, BISS is a place where we rise to that challenge. We are a school that has an excellent international reputation for helping our students access challenging content, and to perform on par with their native English speaking grade level peers, whilst quickly developing their English language acquisition. There are many reasons for this success. I will write here about three of them.

The first reason is our rigorous assessment of our English language learners. For ten years, we have been assessing our students using a standardized English test called the MAC II. This test evaluates student progress in a variety of areas related to reading, writing, speaking and listening acquisition. We record student results on a database. BISS teachers analyze student results and differentiate their instruction accordingly to meet individual learning needs. This process is called ‘data-driven’ instruction. It is a process that allows us to efficiently improve language acquisition.

Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge, BISS is the only international school in Beijing to offer its teachers a locally designed teacher training course with the theme How to teach students who have limited English. As you may know, BISS invests in the hiring of a large number of highly trained ESOL Support Teachers. These teachers help our English language learners by supporting them in class and through specialized lessons. A couple of years ago, our Head of School, Dr. Ettie Zilber commissioned some of these teachers to use their expertise, to design a 15 hour course for teachers new to BISS. This course trains our teachers in theory and practical teaching strategies to ensure our teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the specific needs of English language learners in an international school context. As you can imagine, this gives us a leg up in helping our students acquire English and meet grade level expectations effectively.

The final advantage that I would like to write about is that the very nature of our IB curriculum models, inherently foster the fast acquisition of the English language. It is no secret that IB programmes encourage students to ask questions and find the answers to these questions. It is well known that helping students to develop their social and communications skills through inquiry learning is fundamental to IB pedagogy. It is also a reality that IB students will actively problem solve, think critically and work in teams to create products and apply their learning. All of these aspects of the IB curriculum provide the perfect recipe for students to use and develop their language quickly.

Sometimes people suggest that a traditional educational model, where students sit in rows and teachers do all the talking, is a superior model for language acquisition. This kind of thinking goes against all that the research has taught us about language acquisition over the past 30 years. The reality is that students learn from being interactive, and having the opportunity to negotiate meaning with their peers and teachers. They learn from having lots of opportunity to speak and to have their voice valued.

As someone who has worked as K-12 ESOL Coordinator, and now as the Elementary School PYP Coordinator, I have been in a lot of BISS classrooms.

Continued on page 4.
It is my pleasure to report that, day in and day out, I see teachers doing all the right things to help our learners succeed with language and content. It is no wonder our English language learners thrive. I haven't discussed in this article our ESOL Programme. I haven't talked about the great work our Language Coordinators (Antony Geralis in the Secondary School and Shannon O'Dwyer in the Elementary School) do of leading a highly effective team of skilled ESOL support specialist teachers. That is an article for another time, but their contributions cannot be ignored when looking at our school's success in this area. I hope, in this article, I have managed to show you just how much we value the highest standard of teaching when it comes to helping our English language learners thrive.

Justin Jarman

IB PYP Coordinator and ESOL Teacher

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Two BISS students explain their research to younger students
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!

Grade 4 has just completed an environmental conservation campaign. They conducted extensive research into the impact of deforestation and the power of recycling. As a result, they were determined to reduce, reuse and recycle paper at BISS.

After auditing the school, the students made special bins for classrooms without paper recycling systems. Then, they visited each class to explain how to separate trash and why recycling is important. The students shared their research and answered questions. It was tricky to explain these concepts to the very young Pre-K students, but now the little ones are our best recyclers!

Each day, the Grade 4 students collected used paper and card from the elementary classrooms. They observed a reduction in waste and increased awareness throughout the campaign. On Friday, they will deliver all the materials to a recycling plant.

But that’s not all!

They also made a music video to deliver a more persuasive, enduring message about sustainability. Inspired by Joni Mitchell’s “Big Yellow Taxi”, the students created their own song, entitled “Big Green World”. Thank you Mr Papaseit for helping us to plan our shots, use the green screen and edit the video.

Check out the music video here:

www.blogs.biss.com.cn/sodwyer

We hope you are inspired to save the trees!

Ms. S. O’Dwyer

Grade 4 Teacher

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K-3 Field Trip at Chaoyang Park

The Kindergarten to Grade 3 classes went on a field trip to Chaoyang Park last June 4th to have a multi-grade activity as an end of the year event from PE.

The children played hide and seek (hiding behind trees and bushes); food-chain game was popular as they were grouped into red-ants, yellow-frogs, green-snakes and blue-eagles.

Break time was even popular as they sat on the grass, ate their packed snacks and even bought themselves an ice cream to cool their bodies from the activities. They even enjoyed playing soccer amongst each other in the wide open and green spaces.

It was a fun day for everyone. Check out our photos!

Mr. E. Reyes

Elementary Athletics

EREyes@biss.com.cn
Elementary Art Corner

This week in Elementary Art the Grade 2’s finished their ‘Paper Sculpture World’ assignment. Look closely and see if you can spot Lily, Hyun Ji and Tiffany in their world’s.

A Davies

Elementary Art Teacher

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**Elementary BISS Idol**

Enjoy these highlights from Thursday's Elementary BISS Idol. Congratulations to Manu (Grade 1) and Jian Min (Kindergarten) whose wonderful performances earned them equal first place! Thank you to all involved.
BISS means Business!
3rd Annual Young Entrepreneurs Competition

The 3rd Annual Young Entrepreneur Competition took place on Thursday May 23rd at Harrow International School, with 28 teams from all over Beijing and Shanghai.

The Young Entrepreneurs Competition is a one-of-a-kind entrepreneur competition focused on empowering our students with leadership skills and business basics. The insight into the world of entrepreneurship that high school students receive over the course of the program at BISS, gives them a sense of preparedness that will be invaluable for their future success in the business world.

There are three categories the students compete in this competition: Best Pitch - chance to pitch their business plan idea to a panel of judges in an attempt to attract investors, Best Commercial – TV commercial to attract customers, Best Poster – an advertisement poster for their product in order to attract customers. The finals of the competition was judged by a panel of CEOs, business leaders and educators.

This is the third year in a row that BISS has taken top honours in this competition. The winners this year is:

**Best Pitch**
Team “Aqua Wagon” (JungEun, Seo Gyeong and Seo Yeon) won the competition for their innovative idea that launched a new concept of water filters for the people living in LEDCs.
Team “Relique” (Vidisha, Amy, Iskandar, Panyatree and Steven Yun) came second in this section for their line of paintbrushes, an idea that impressed the judges.

**Best Commercial**
Team “Yumster” (Ana, Zekre, Diane, Marlena, Sonia) finished second in this section of the competition with a fantastic commercial on food flavoring. This video is a “must watch” for all students entering this competition next year!
Team “Lighk 1” (Jessie, Jordan, Anita, Julia, Sophia) placed third in this category with their animated commercial on a range of pens that had multiple functions.

**Best Poster**
1st Place - Team “Relique” (Vidisha, Amy, Iskandar, Panyatree and Steven Yun)
2nd Place - Team “Lighk 1” (Jessie, Jordan, Anita, Julia, Sophia)

Team “Goal” received an honorable mention and was presented with a trophy for their product that had the potential to be very successful and was designed for a good cause.

“Teams from BISS are by far the best dressed, best behaved and the best presenters in the competition” said one of the judges at the competition. These honors were achieved because of the dedication of our students here at BISS and also the guidance they received from their mentors Ms. DeGreef and Ms. Copeland.

Congratulations to all the students who made BISS proud!

Mr. Daiju Vithayathil
Diploma Program Coordinator

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Grade 11 Theatre Class Exploring Physical Theatre: Butoh and Suzuki Methods

On Tuesday 21st and Friday 24th May, BISS grade 11 Theatre students had a special opportunity to work with Mark Hill, an actor and performer who specializes in Physical Theatre. On Tuesday we worked with the amazing Japanese avant-garde dance form of Butoh, the “Dance of Darkness” which we had been studying in class. Mark has studied, trained and danced with some of the top Butoh companies both in Japan and other countries around the world for many years. He explained to us that it takes at least ten years to become a Butoh master.

On Friday BISS invited WAB and BCIS Theatre students to join us for a workshop looking at Tadashi Suzuki methods of performance to enhance both our understanding of this style and how to implement elements of it into our own performances. We were challenged to use our whole body to undertake exercises and physical tasks that required an intense amount of performance focus and trust – trust in the process as well as the peers that we were working with.

In Theatre students are constantly called upon to take “risks” – the kind of risks that extends their comfort zones by trying new things. These “risks” also give them the opportunity to explore their world and their understanding of their world in new and dynamic ways.

It was fantastic to see the way the BISS students worked as both the Theatre class group on Tuesday and again on Friday when they collaborated with the WAB and BCIS students and teachers. The opportunity to work with a performer of Mark’s caliber was an enriching, stimulating and authentic workshop experience for every student.

Next school year watch this space for information on an upcoming performance of the grade 11 Theatre class (who will then be the grade 12s!) incorporating Eastern elements of Butoh performance skills and themes with a famous Western play based on real life trials of witchcraft!

Ms. K. Howell

MYP and DP Drama/Theatre teacher

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What I like to do in my free time: 
Grade 6 and 7 Spanish

In our last unit of the year the Grade 6&7 students created a video for this language scenario:

“This summer, in order to improve your Spanish, you have decided to travel to Guatemala to spend 4 weeks with a host family. In order to get to know you better, they have asked you to send a video where you will have the opportunity to introduce yourself before your arrival.”

Students collated their learning to speak about what they like doing in their free time, what they do during the week, arranging excursions, talking about what they are going to do at the weekend and saying how they help at home. All in Spanish!

Offering my students a variety of opportunities to practice their language and demonstrate their understanding is hugely beneficial, it cements their learning and it is engaging.

The students have done a fantastic job. Here are the links to their videos, please enjoy:

Zimei and Chelsea’s [https://vimeo.com/67613487](https://vimeo.com/67613487)
Maurice’s [https://vimeo.com/67615042](https://vimeo.com/67615042)
Tiphaine’s [https://vimeo.com/67616879](https://vimeo.com/67616879)
Tina’s [https://vimeo.com/67623675](https://vimeo.com/67623675)

Mr. X. Rojas

MYP and DP Spanish Teacher

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Friday, June 7, 2013
Music News

On May 16, BISS was alive with the sound of SPIZZWINKS!!! The Yale SPIZZWINKS entertained the students at BISS with two concerts and a master class for the students in the afternoon. The SPIZZWINKS were enjoyable and entertaining. The students really enjoyed the music they had to perform. It was a great sight to see students so excited about acapella (singing without accompaniment) singing.

Mrs. S. Clark

MYP Music

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Thank you from the PTA President

The PTA celebrated the end of the school year at our last PTA lunch on May 31st. We had an incredible time as 25 of our parents joined us. It was fantastic! We want to especially thank Alice Wang and Yi Hong Zhang for their work as PTA officers. Thank you to all the parents who contributed to this successful school year!

Sincerely,

BISS Administration
On Monday, June 3, the BISS staff soccer players continued their dominance of opposing schools with a 12-5 victory over the BCIS staff on the BCIS pitch. The team was led once again by great play on both ends of the field. Elmer Reyes was stellar in goal. He allowed only three goals while in net; two of the three were defensive miscues when the opposing players pulled a switcheroo which left Elmer’s defenders looking for new mentorship and coaching guidance. With the game well in hand, Coach Dryer took to the goal. After allowing two goals in 4 minutes, and afraid of more to come after watching this goal space, she returned to the sidelines to provide energizers for her team. On the far end of the field John He put on a show with numerous goals including an extended head dribble and headshot goal. Andy Ellmers contributed a beautiful headshot goal of his own and Xavier Rojas put on a dazzling display of footwork that left the kiddos from BCIS mystified.

At the celebration of achievements dinner following the victory, Mark Saunders leaned into the teammate he was rubbing elbows with to brag about his goal and the team: “The best way to describe this team is with a metaphor—We felt we were simply the Little Engine That Could, but now we’ve become the Barcelona of Beijing International schools.”

A mixed, yet apt comparison, but more importantly, this team of inter-cultural soccer misfits is having fun and spreading the good oil to other schools. I’m of the mind that with the core members of the team returning in the fall, next year promises to allow more opportunities to publish stories of the team’s success.

Mr. D. Krengel

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