

Middle School Newsletter

February 2003

Ice Skating

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It is with pleasure that I send you this update of our activities. It has been very busy since our return after the holidays. Faculty members are once more joining me in describing some of our activities.

I hope to see you all at the Parent-Teacher Conference - April 2nd between 2:00pm - 6:00pm.

Lucy Corsi - Middle School Principal

On Valentine's Day the Middle School went on an ice-skating excursion. On the bus, the excitement was evident from the constant chatter and smiling faces. After everyone was fitted with skates, the real fun began. Mr Drivas and Ms Voulgaris skated like pros on the ice. Ms Venieris who had not skated in years was soon gliding past everyone. Finally, Ms Milioni although hesitant at first, soon caught on. Amongst our students there was a range of expertise. Excellent skaters helped others gain confidence on the ice. After skating, food and drink were enjoyed by all. Both teachers and students had a fantastic time and look forward to going again next year!

Constantina Venieris

Middle School Trip to Athens International Airport "El. Venizelos"

On Monday February 17th Grades 6, 7 and 8 visited the Athens International Airport, "El. Venizelos" as part of their Information Technology course.

The visit to the airport proved very useful and interesting as the students themselves are designing an airport using computer graphic and design programmes.

The tour included a visit to the departures terminal, the weather bureau office where pilots get informed about weather conditions and the check-in areas. The most exciting feature of the trip proved to be the live demonstration by the airport's fire brigade spraying foam on the field from one of the up-to-date fire trucks.

A nice lunch and some shopping from the Duty Free shops brought the trip to an end.

Roberto Scilipoti - Information Technology

Health and Social Education

In the area of Health and Social Education of MYP, a Health and Science Week was organised from February 24th - 28th in co-operation with the Science Department and the Homo Faber Area. The purpose was to raise the student's awareness and promote their understanding of various health issues. Students researched and presented health oriented Science projects in class. In addition, guest speakers gave lectures to grades 6 - 9 on the topics of: *NUTRITION and HEALTHY EATING, ADDICTIONS and SELF ESTEEM.*

During the last two days students competed in the General Knowledge Quiz and went on a field trip to Antipolis Park where they participated in ecological and athletic activities.

Group discussions by grade have been planned for each month starting from February. These discussions give students the opportunity to explore topics pertaining to health and social life and to examine their beliefs, behaviours and relationships to others.

Maria Protopapa - Health and Science Education - Area Leader

Middle School TASIS Athletics

The Under 14 Boys and Girls Soccer teams continue to practice once a week and are looking forward to the Under 14's Soccer Tournament that will take place Tuesday March 18th, 2003.

News: The teams participated in a few friendly games, and the results were:

1. TASIS Under 14 Boys vs. TASIS Saturday School
3 - 1
2. TASIS Under 14 Boys vs. St. Catherine's
3 - 2
3. TASIS Under 14 Girls vs. St. Catherine's
0 - 2

The Middle School students are also taking part in the Table Tennis Intramural Tournament that began on Wednesday, February 26th, 2003. The winner will be announced in the next newsletter.

Zoy Piriohos - PE Department

Approaches to Learning

With a great sigh of relief, our MYP students returned to their classes the first week in February having successfully put the mid term exams behind them.

Upon the students' return to school after the Winter holiday break, they began a series of activities within their classes, which helped them prepare for the exams that they would take. The first step was to look over the study guides that each subject area teacher had prepared. Parallel to this, students were told to look through their folders, notebooks and handout material and 'put their house in order'. They were to place information in chronological order and to 'be on the look out' and check various exercises for any time period, which seemed to be missing notes or critical details.

When I asked them to tell me what they should do if things seemed to be missing, they were quick to mention checking with a friend, borrowing someone's notebook and also speaking with the teacher to fill in gaps. Certainly these were all good ATL problem solving ideas!

Once the materials were in order and guides had been annotated for key points, a variety of activities took place in the appropriate classes. Some students used graphic organizers to plot stories in English, many did 'lots of' problem solving and drills to practice mathematical expertise, some others constructed timelines to place historical events in chronological order, and still others made up 'quiz' questions and tested each other on facts along with producing answer keys for correcting the quiz. All these activities and more were devices to keep students actively engaged in revision of information and reassure them that they had been studying with care to detail.

Ninth graders worked through a series of survey questions about their learning styles, interests and their activities outside school. Next they tried to pinpoint how they accommodate their own learning needs, where and how they did their homework and how much time they use for these activities.

Ms Boundy, co-ordinator for IGCSE exams, teamed up with me as we met with the tenth graders in all programmes. They were asked to consider the budgeting of their time for preparation and revision. They were asked to consider which subjects they thought were their most challenging or which seemed most under control. With the two extremes identified, they could see how much time needed to be allotted for the *other* subjects and they filled in an agenda calendar to show the physical layout of their study regiment.

Two underlining factors, which must always be kept in mind in regards to exams, are the areas of stress-management and the organizing of one's time. Both the areas of ATL and Health worked through exercises with students to help them keep in control and stay focused on their studying without the 'butterflies' fluttering around in stomach effect. These factors are of equal consequence to both the sixth grader taking his/her exams for the first time, and to the tenth grader who will sit the external exams for the first time.

Last, but certainly not least, of all techniques one considers in the realm of ATL is that referred to as *reflection*. Reflection is the careful 'looking back' over the work one has produced. It is a mindful sieving of the successfully answered questions and others less successfully answered.

The process doesn't stop here. The students also must examine what they need to do better, to drastically alter for the next time, or to keep doing to provide equally successful results. With this reviewing and meditating came the writing out of exam reflections which have now been carefully tucked away into portfolios until late May when they will be reached for and re-read for their suggestions as a new cycle of preparation for exams begins.

Meg Matsaganis - Area Leader