

Weekly School Newsletter

Message from the Head of School

forbes.com recently published a very interesting article, reviewing the growth of online learning. The piece highlighted some interesting data, which I summarise below:

- There is an increased focus by governments to create national models for online education
- Online learning is seen as a way for developing nations to gain ground swiftly
- The Philippines Open Distance Learning Act from 2014 was provided as an example, with the programme in-country growing at an incredible rate in three years (100 to 850,000 users)
- In the Philippines, 60% of students who undertook MOOC were employed

Link to article: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/schmittjason/2016/08/25/the-philippines-and-other-developing-countries-ramp-up-online-education-culture/#cd991db66e54>

As highlighted in previous newsletter articles over the past six months, there can be no doubt of the urgency needed to disrupt the manner and method of education in the K-12 sector, and the Forbes article demonstrates the eagerness in developing countries to utilise online learning as a method to democratise education and better access global opportunities.

Blended Learning is the first of three pillars in our 'GWA: The Future School' initiative. We are incredibly excited to launch this Asia-first approach to teaching and learning with G11 students this academic year. Our goal here is two-fold:

1. To ensure that students undertaking the rigorous IB Diploma Programme are provided with a learning model which gives them greater opportunity for success
2. To 'future-proof' GWA students via an approach to learning which ensures they are guided now, for what their futures will require

The blended learning model is delivered in partnership with a GEMS Education owned company, Pamoja Education. Pamoja is the only certified IBDP online learning platform, which has been providing a range of courses for IB schools around the world over the past 6 years.

Our blended learning model goes far beyond what Pamoja has previously delivered and is only accessible currently to three schools. These schools are GWA (Singapore), GWA (Switzerland) and GEMS Wellington Academy. The programme is the result of a two year pilot project and brings together experts from across GEMS schools, as well as the market leader in IBDP online learning.

For our senior students, they are engaged in a model of learning which has four facets:

1. They are members of a global virtual classroom, joining other GEMS students in their chosen IBDP courses
2. They are taught in these global virtual classrooms by highly experienced IBDP teachers, based around the world
3. They are also co-taught and supported by GWA (Singapore) teachers. This interaction is highly individualised for each student in each of the Blended Learning courses
4. They are also members in GWA (Singapore) classrooms, joining their Singapore peers

For 2016-2017, TOK will be delivered as a Blended Learning course for all G11 students. Their other course selections will remain in the traditional method. From 2017-2018, our incoming G11 students will be engaged in a much broader set of blended course offerings, with approximately 65% of their courses likely to be undertaken in the Blended model.

We are the only school in Singapore and Asia committed to ensuring that our senior students are encompassed in a model which includes two IBDP teachers for each of the blended courses. We are the only company who is investing heavily to ensure that every student, across grade levels, is provided with a learning environment which truly prepares them for likely realities in their future.

It is an incredibly exciting year for GWA and the 'Future School' Initiative will continue to deliver on our promise of providing outstanding opportunities for every family.

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HAZE MONITORING AT GWA (SINGAPORE)



GWA (Singapore) has a very simple and clear matrix for how we respond to this environmental matter. To review, please visit our site via this direct link:

[Haze Procedures at GWA \(Singapore\)](#)

UNIVERSITY VISITS



1. September 5th, 11am:

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (Japan)

2. September 8th, 9am:

Durham Law Department

3. September 9th, 11:15:

UCLA

Please contact **Jonathan Cox** for more information.

j.cox@gwa.edu.sg

Message from the Primary Years Deputy Principal

As we move into the third week of the new semester it is encouraging to see our students become familiar with the new routines we have implemented in our division.



This week the grade 4.1 students led our first student driven assembly. These assemblies are a wonderful opportunity for students to express their ideas, thoughts and

feelings on a broad range of topics. The audience also got a good insight into what grade 4.1 are focusing on in their first unit of inquiry. As students prepare to lead these assemblies they are provided with an opportunity to develop their public speaking skills and confidence.

This week our students also worked on school-wide essential agreements. These agreements are student inspired actions that will help us as a school foster a culture of kindness. The essential agreements will help guide student behaviour during all our snack and lunch times.



Mike Gilmour
Early/Primary Years Deputy Principal
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Message from the Secondary Years Deputy Principal

Thank you to all of the parents who attended the parent coffee morning this week. This week's meeting focused on the use of Managebac. Parents were shown how to access student academic information, assignments, calendars and reports. We will continue to provide support to parents who require any additional assistance using Managebac.

Throughout the school year, teachers will use a variety of strategies to incorporate the core approaches to learning skills and best practices into our instruction of the IB programme. One of the core approaches to learning is self-management skills. This skill category breaks down into two separate areas:

1. Organization skills—managing time and tasks effectively and goal-setting
2. Affective skills—managing state of mind, self-motivation, resilience and mindfulness

Time management is not something we can assume that students will do naturally, it is a specific skill that must be taught and also modelled. If we expect our students to be well organised and punctual, to work methodically throughout the year and to meet all deadlines, then we must model strategies to help them achieve this goal. Students and parents are encouraged to use Managebac as a tool to help students plan and organise upcoming assignments and assessments by utilising effective self-management skills.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.



Arnelle Grundhoefer
Secondary Years Deputy Principal/DP
Coordinator
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6 September

PARENT EVENT

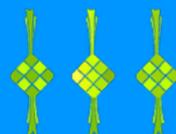
Venue: Tekka Market,
Little India

Contact Judy (PRE) for more
details or to RSVP
j.lee@gwa.edu.sg

12 September

PUBLIC HOLIDAY

Hari Raya Haji



15 September

PARENT EVENT

Chinese tea appreciation
workshop & Moon cake
tasting (*fees apply*)

Contact Judy (PRE) for more
details or to RSVP
j.lee@gwa.edu.sg

21 September

PARENT EVENT

Lunch at EatPlayLove
Craft Cafe

Contact Judy (PRE) for more
details or to RSVP
j.lee@gwa.edu.sg

SPORT AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Thank you for your patience over the past few weeks as we have worked to understand and organise the Sports and ECA options across the school. Our primary aim has been to get the programme started as quickly as possible and try to provide a variety of options for students across the school. Whilst this may not have accommodated everyone this season, it is certainly a focus for the remainder of the year.

The Sports and ECAs will start on Monday 5th September. Confirmations for the ECAs should be with you by now, if not before the end of the weekend.

All competitive sports teams are in action and those with big squads will conduct try-outs during the week to select the players for the relevant league. Please be aware that players selected in our school teams will be required to purchase the team uniform from the school shop. Coaches for each team will notify players and families of the specific details next week.

I look forward to seeing our athletes, artists, musicians, academics, creators, leaders, and innovators in action over the course of the next 9 weeks.



Danny Tauroa
Activities Coordinator
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GWA PARENT ASSOCIATION (GWAPA)

This past Wednesday, we had our GWA Parents join us for the monthly parent engagement workshop. We had a great turnout and our parents had a chance to take part in a ManageBac training session, hosted by our Early, Primary and Secondary Years leadership teams.

Following the coffee morning we had our annual GWA Parents Association AGM, where we voted in our new executive committee. We would like to congratulate the following [2016-2017 GWAPA committee members](#):



President : Claire Forbes



Vice President : Tanya Strinich



Secretary: Malgosia Broda



Treasurer: Kathleen Baccarini



Events Coordinator: Shaily Badkul



Community Service: Paola Samarelli

Please join us for the next parent engagement workshop on Wednesday 28th September at 9am in the Auditorium Lobby.



Judy Lee
Parent Relations Executive (PRE)
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