

# THIS WEEK'S NEWS

Shaping tomorrow's leaders, thinkers and doers.

## Message from Head of School

GEMS Education is a world leader in the PreK to G12 education industry, not simply because we have more than 140,000 students being educated by 11,500 educators around the world. It is the commitment to providing quality education to all families, no matter where they live, that remains a core essence of a global company founded by teachers and still run by the Varkey Family.

A significant reason that many of our staff and families have joined our school community is the mission of the Varkey Foundation to change lives through education. The philanthropic connection to GEMS Education and schools such as GWA (Singapore), the Varkey Foundation is "...a not-for-profit organisation established to improve the standards of education for under privileged children through projects encouraging enrolment in schools, worldwide teacher training programmes and advocacy campaigns". This clear goals achieved through providing access to education, building teacher capacity and being advocates for students and teachers at the highest political levels.

<https://www.varkeyfoundation.org/mission>

As an international school in a privileged location such as Singapore, we have an enormous responsibility to ensure our students understand the challenges of the world around them, explore the greater implications of these challenges, and are encouraged to take action through solution-focused outcomes.

With all of this in mind, we were delighted today to welcome the Chief Executive of Varkey Foundation, Mr Vikas Pota, to the campus. Vikas spoke to students, staff and parents about the vision and mission of the Varkey Foundation, and shared significant insight into the success and challenges of the many programmes driven through his team and their partners. Some of these projects may be reviewed via this link:

<https://varkeyfoundation.org/projects>

Foundations can only succeed through the passion of those who lead and develop the programmes. The Varkey family contributions, in terms of vision, passion and exhaustive undertakings over 55 years, are well-documented. As Chief Executive, it was clear to the audience that the Foundation is in the hands of a man deeply focused upon the execution of a noble, vital cause.

We thank Vikas for his sharing and look forward to providing many opportunities for our families to learn, engage and take action through the Varkey Foundation initiatives.

David Edwards - Head of Education

[d.edwards@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:d.edwards@gwa.edu.sg)

## Family BBQ

Please join the GWA Parents Association for a fun filled afternoon to meet and mingle with other families from our GWA Singapore community.



Enjoy a great BBQ, cold drinks and fun games for the young and old.

**Date:** 6th June 2015

**Time:** 3pm-6:30pm

**Venue:** GEMS World Academy (Singapore)

**RSVP:** GWA Parents Association  
[gwapa.singapore@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:gwapa.singapore@gwa.edu.sg)

## Learning For Tomorrow

Presentation by Tony Little,  
Headmaster Eton College and  
incoming Chief Education Officer

**Tuesday 19th May:**  
**GWA Auditorium**

**9am** (Exclusively for GWA Singapore parents)

Coffee morning with Tony Little

**10am-11am** (Public session)

Excellence in Education - Getting your child into a leading school.

**2pm-3pm** (For Educators)

Panel discussion: Evolution of education - Why educators must stay relevant.

## Arts Update

### ISTA Festival - May 8-10, 2015

Sixteen students from GWA-S participated in our first ever International Schools Theatre Association (ISTA) drama festival last weekend.

The festival spanned over 3 days and involved students from various international schools throughout Singapore. Students explored the theme "A Garden of Me" and kicked off their creative explorations with a trip to Gardens by the Bay as inspiration for their work. They then worked with some very talented ISTA artists, and a mixture of students from the different schools, to explore the ideas of what gardens typically have, what gardens would look like if humans were grown there, and how students can make connections to the natural world and their own experiences.

It was a wonderful success and it definitely left me wondering (and singing the festival song); "What would I be, in a garden of me?"

Keriann O'Rourke - Drama  
[k.orourke@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:k.orourke@gwa.edu.sg)

### Music update - Chris Brandt

On Thursday, May 21st, the Music Department will present two concert events: The **Primary Music Assembly**, at 9am and the **Pop Music Concert** which will begin at 7pm, both in the auditorium. These two concerts will provide a fine opportunity to hear some great music sung and played by our talented GWA musicians. As promised, a new and fascinating instrument will grace our stage and it will form an integral part of both the morning and evening concerts. Everyone is welcome to attend.

[c.brandt@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:c.brandt@gwa.edu.sg)

## Sports Update

Our first GWA swim gala will take place this coming **Friday 9:30am - 12:30pm**. All Students will be swimming in a variety of fun and traditional races. Students will be split into the same teams as Sports day (Huskies, Dolphins, Sharks, Tigers, Lions, Ducks, Roosters, and Leopards) competing to score points for their team. We need more parents to join the staff/parent relay race at - so if you want to make a splash drop me an email.

The 14U Boys Basketball team will compete in the knock out stages of their league this coming Monday, with a quarter final against SAS C Team. The game will take place at SAS and will start at 4:30pm, if you are around, drop in and cheer them on. There is a possibility of a semi final on Wednesday and a final on Saturday at SAS so it could be an amazing week for our Basketball players.

It has once again been a busy sporting week. As always if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me

Ken Barker - Athletics Director/ECA Coordinator  
[k.barker@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:k.barker@gwa.edu.sg)

### Friday 12th June: GWA AWARDS NIGHT

A formal event in which the school showcases high performing student talent and formally recognises outstanding student achievement across sports, arts and academics.

**Please note:** This event is compulsory for Grade 1-8 students.

**12 June, Friday, 6:30pm, GWA Auditorium**

## EY/ PY Curriculum Update

This week we had a focus celebration on reading during our GWA Book week.

The PYP **Language Scope and Sequence (2009)** identifies the strands of **written, oral and visual language**. These strands are represented by four continuums: **listening and speaking, viewing and presenting; reading; writing**.

In the PYP the focus on teaching reading includes these important practices and principles. In the PYP reading is viewed as :

- *a developmental process*
- *involving constructing meaning from text*
- *an interactive process*
- *helping children understand that print conveys meaning*
- *belief that children learn to read by reading*
- *children need extended periods of time to read*
- *helps to clarify our ideas, feelings, thoughts and opinions*

*Primary Years Programme Language Scope and Sequence (2009) p. 15.*

Parents can help at home by providing a range of reading materials- both fiction and non fiction and share their enthusiasm, curiosity and desire to read with their children at home.

Jacqueline McNalty -  
Head of Early Years/PYP Coordinator  
[j.mcnalty@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:j.mcnalty@gwa.edu.sg)



## SY Curriculum Update

On Tuesday evening Grade 5 parents were invited to attend the Grade 5 to Grade 6 transition evening. The purpose of the evening was to outline the differences that students will experience as they move from the Primary Years to the Secondary Years at GWA.

After a short presentation outlining the key differences and similarities between the two different stages, parents were given the opportunity to meet with the Secondary Years teachers to discuss their specific subject areas. The next stage in this important transition process will involve the Grade 5 students visiting Grade 6 classes to experience first hand the Secondary Years programme.

The Grade 8 to 9 transition evening provided an opportunity for parents to find out more information about the IGCSE programme that will commence in August 2015. The information included the purpose for offering a dual programme at GWA, subject option selections and a detailed look at the different Secondary learning pathways available to students from Grade 9-12.

A copy of the presentation has been forwarded to all parents in Grade 8 as a reference. A reminder that one-to-one meetings are available with myself over the coming weeks and that the Grade 9 course selection form is due to be submitted to the Homeroom teacher by Monday 25th May.

Neil White - School Principal  
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