



# The International Admissions Bulletin

March 2019 - Issue 6



*The publication of choice for international school admissions offices*

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## Intercultural Collaboration

*Strategies for building and sustaining strong intercultural teams at an international school.*

page 22

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## Going Green

*An inside look at a unique school grounded in sustainability, educating leaders of the future.*

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## Puzzle Pieces

*A dive into how admissions interacts with both the school's internal and external stakeholders.*

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# Global Research: Data Protection

## The state of data protection in schools

Towards the conclusion of 2018, 9ine Consulting conducted global research into data protection in schools. We undertook this to help demystify the new data protection regulations and to provide a platform for schools around the world, where they can benchmark themselves against others and gain access to a network of best practices.



The ripple effect of the GDPR has resulted in the staggered update or introduction of laws in countries across the globe, with schools demonstrating lower compliance scores the further you move away from Europe

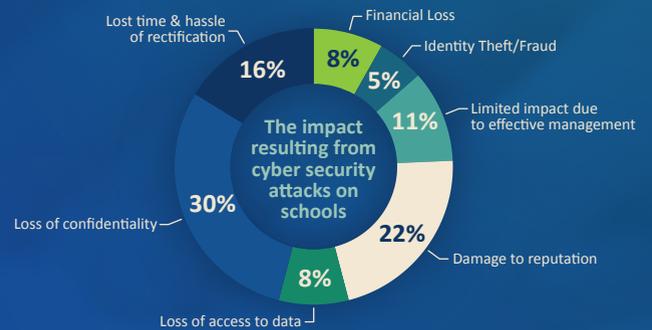


The defining challenge to schools in the current environment is the lack of internal expertise & a lack of understanding surrounding data protection requirements.

Average score (out of 10) for each key action



Of the 10 key actions for compliance, creating a data map & employing DPIAs are the most problematic for schools.



As demonstrated by the numerous headline grabbing data breaches in recent times, data protection and cyber security are intrinsically linked.



Download our Global Data Protection report here:  
[www.9ine.uk.com/dp-report-1](http://www.9ine.uk.com/dp-report-1)



Take part in our Cyber Security Research here:  
[www.9ine.uk.com/research/cyber](http://www.9ine.uk.com/research/cyber)



9ine's independent & objective consultancy supports organisations with creating and sustaining long-term auditing, risk management and compliance strategies for:



Cyber Security



Data Protection



Child Protection



Tech Assurance



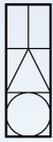
Incident Response

# The International Admissions Bulletin

The Publication of Choice for Admissions Professionals in International Schools

**Issue 6** March 2019

<b>Editor-in-Chief</b>	Kim Meaden-Kendrick
<b>Publisher</b>	Faria Education Group Limited
<b>About</b>	<p>The International Admissions Bulletin is the publication of choice for admissions professionals in international schools. The magazine is edited by Kim Meaden-Kendrick, Registrar at Brighton College Bangkok. The magazine is published and distributed free of charge by Faria Education Group Limited, the world's leading software provider to international schools.</p> <p>To subscribe or unsubscribe, please contact <a href="mailto:bulletin@openapply.com">bulletin@openapply.com</a>.</p>
<b>Editorial Board</b>	<p>We are assembling an editorial board for the 2019-2020 school year. If you are interested in joining us, please write to <a href="mailto:bulletin@openapply.com">bulletin@openapply.com</a>.</p>
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<b>NEWS</b>	<p>Let others know about the latest changes, trends, updates, and news at your school and in your region. (100-500 words)</p>
<b>PROFILES</b>	<p>Are you meeting interesting people in the course of your work, or leading new initiatives at your own school? Write about it! (300-500 words)</p>
<b>FEATURES</b>	<p>Feature articles are 1,000-2,000 words in length, and provide a deep dive into a relevant topic for international school admissions staff.</p>
<b>TIPS &amp; RESOURCES</b>	<p>Your top 10 ways to calm down upset parents, your 5 must-read books, the 3 ways you prepare for back-to-school. What have you learned or used that others will find helpful?</p>
<b>Publication</b>	<p>The International Admissions Bulletin is published twice a year, in September and March.</p>
<b>DIGITAL</b>	<p>Digital copies of the magazine can be accessed here: <a href="http://www.openapply.com/bulletin">http://www.openapply.com/bulletin</a></p>
<b>PHYSICAL</b>	<p>To request physical copies, please e-mail us at <a href="mailto:bulletin@openapply.com">bulletin@openapply.com</a>. If you are hosting a gathering or a conference, we are happy to also ship additional copies at no extra charge.</p>
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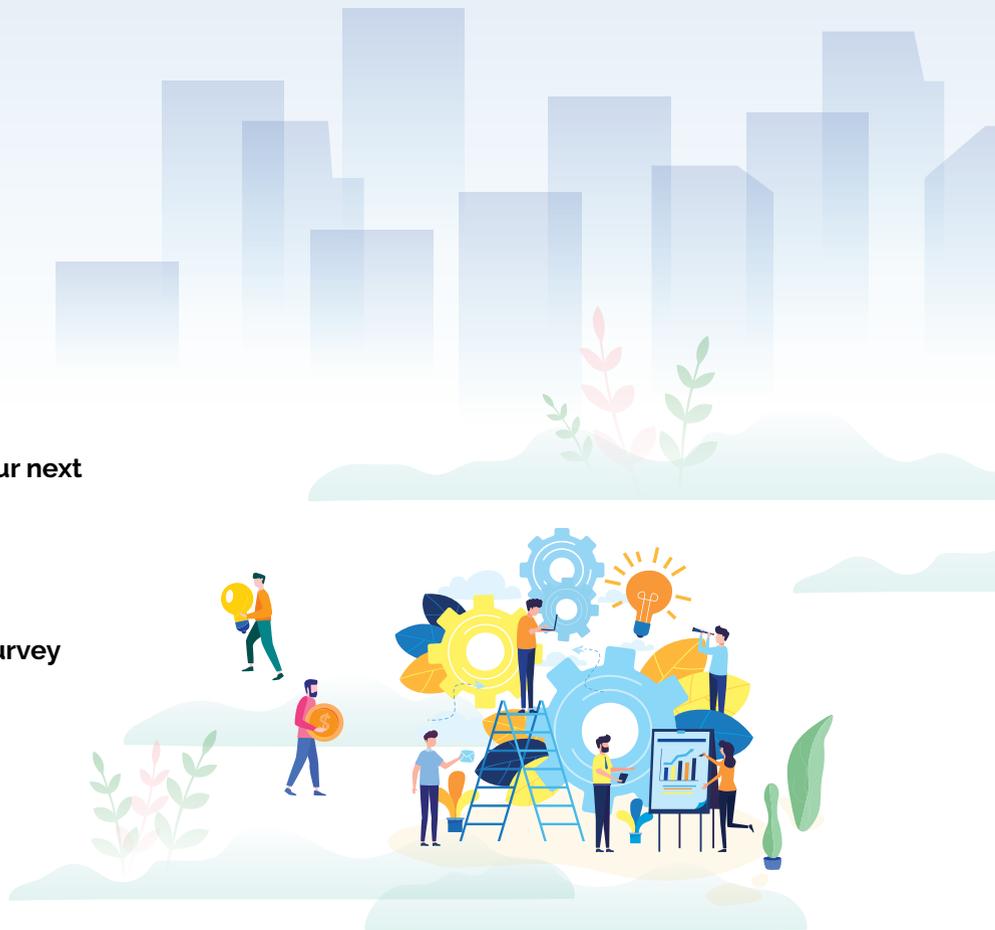
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from The Editor  
**Kim Meaden-Kendrick**

When looking at the spread of great advice, anecdotes and information shared in this edition, it is clear that every individual within a school does have a role to play in admissions. From the very first point of contact with a cheerful Receptionist at the front desk through to teachers within a classroom, every interaction with a prospective parent is a chance to connect with, welcome and 'wow' a family. Even the quiet, non-customer facing graphic designer in the marketing team has a role to play in understanding the school, its aspirations and unique selling points and in producing clear, cohesive graphics that feature in the marketing collateral and on the website, which in turn help drive the very best prospective families to a school. Importantly, one of the most effective ways of marketing schools via our own parents is often overlooked. When you look at the fascinating research from the Enrollment Management Association (p. 10), it is clear that current parents, and not only retaining them, but working closely with them to build your community is one of the most vital channels for growing your school. Happy parents will always recommend a school to their friends!

Whilst our previous edition focused on the digital aspect of our admissions approaches in a wide variety of contexts, this issue has focused much more on the human element – another very key factor of differentiating a school and effectively standing out in increasingly competitive markets globally. The Green School Bali highlights the effectiveness of a unique approach to education and the importance of every person within their school becoming part of the school's own story (p.16). The 'story' of each individual school becomes a very important touchpoint for both current parents and those who are looking for a school to suit their family.

*"Teamwork is the secret that makes common people achieve an uncommon result."*

**Ifeanyi Enoch Onuoha**

Admissions teams can vary so much from school to school and country to country and how to best optimise the admissions processes and connect with the academic side of each school is a complex consideration. Schools like Jakarta Intercultural School (p.22), have found effectiveness in providing training for staff in their mother tongue. Other schools like George Washington Academy (p.24), advise a committee or combined approach with a view to strategically managing enrollment to ensure that the curriculum offered helps grow admissions and in turn that the budget targets are met by the admissions team when seeking to enroll pupils. In this issue Dr. Denry Machin (p.26) also looks into what schools should be thinking about when being rejected by families and gives schools some very practical advice about introspection and strategies to turn a 'no' into a yes. This again is very much a whole school response and team approach to admissions.

I hope that you enjoy this edition and that there is lots of inspiration and ideas sparked by the content provided. It is very good to be reminded that being part of a team and working together effectively is really the best recipe for success in admissions. It is far too easy to become entrenched in day to day tasks and not stop to look at the wider picture from time to time. I found that reading this edition's articles has certainly provided me with some food for thought, and I hope it will for you too!

by Kim Meaden-Kendrick  
Registrar  
**Brighton College Bangkok**



from The Publisher  
**MacKenzie Hovermale**

The makeup of the Admissions office can vary widely from school to school. Some schools have a large team across admissions, advancement, marketing, and communications, while at other schools these responsibilities may all fall to one or two people. Regardless of the size of the team, every admissions office is expected to meet the enrolment goals of the school, whether that involves sifting through hundreds of applications to fill a few dozen seats or trying to generate as much interest as possible to fill brand new programmes or campuses. Whatever the goal, the responsibility generally falls to admissions to achieve it.

That being said, a school admissions office does not exist in a vacuum, and while even though some may envision themselves as all powerful genies (p.32), admissions officers are not actually magic and can't accomplish everything on their own. The most successful admissions offices find ways to collaborate across their school so that everyone is striving to achieve the same enrolment goals. Because after all, it's in everyone's best interest to have a successful admissions office; it would be hard to fulfill the mission of the school without any children in the seats.

At Faria Education Group, promoting collaboration has always been one of our primary goals. Over the past several years we've worked on integrating our systems, OpenApply and ManageBac, with various other school software solutions to make it easier for school departments to work together, instead of in silos. We constantly look for ways that OpenApply can facilitate the admissions office's work with other teams, from internal notes and task management to the new online review mode to anticipated improvements in payment functionality for admissions and finance, collaboration is always top of mind. The spirit of the IAB itself is one of collaboration, allowing international school admissions officers to share with peers from around the globe and grow in their everyday work.

In this 6th issue of the International Admissions Bulletin we discuss how Everyone Plays a Role in admissions. We're excited to feature an array of articles from admissions officers as well as those that work with the admissions office on a daily basis, analysing how and why admissions offices collaborate internally and externally around the world. Kathleen Ngkaion from Jakarta Intercultural School reflects on strategies to collaborate across multicultural teams (p.22); Sowmiya Kasthuri from ACS Doha International School brings us insights into involving the whole school when connecting with international families (p.34); and Paul Davis from Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa gives us a peek at his school's programme to help develop the leaders of tomorrow (p.40).

We hope that you can take the time to reflect on the ideas found in this edition and consider the improvements you can make at your school to increase collaboration across your admissions team, with other departments, and even how you can involve external stakeholders, like parents. Whether it's getting current parents involved in admissions events, rethinking your applicant review process to include the academics team, or improving your communication with the EAL team, this edition includes plenty of ideas to inspire you in your daily work.

Perhaps you can even share these articles with your colleagues in other departments around the school. After all, the ideas presented in this issue show that best practices in admissions and enrolment management should not be practiced only by the Admissions team.

by MacKenzie Hovermale  
OpenApply Director  
**Faria Education Group**



# What will you Be at your next Admissions Event?

How does your admissions event stand out in the sea of competition trying to win over prospective families? What if your admissions event wasn't just about new enrollments, rather, had a clear vision for retention?

Shu Ren International School is an International Baccalaureate PYP Mandarin immersion school located in the incredibly competitive independent school landscape of the greater Bay Area. Our school is located in the heart of Berkeley, California - a hub for creativity, social activism and entrepreneurs. The area and the education ecosystem has long been influenced by this energy and most recently the tech boom of Silicon Valley. Independent schools are seeking to meet the demand for unique education opportunities beyond public and charter options. Schools specializing in languages (such as Shu Ren), art, chamber music, Socratic methods, etc. are abundant throughout the Bay Area. In addition, the Bay Area is the most expensive location in the United States. Despite the high salaries, the choice to pay for private schools (especially with multiple children in a family) can be a financial strain as housing, taxes and the general cost of living can be stressful.

Being a small school (enrollment is 100 from Pre-Kindergarten 2 to Grade 5), admissions is a whole-school initiative and imperative to meeting enrollment targets. The culture of admissions in an ultra competitive market is equally gaining new enrollments, while energizing your school community to work towards a common goal.

There are three main elements that I focus on for each admissions or community event.

## Be Retention Focused

As ironic as this may appear, it's actually what I believe is at the heart of enrollment, especially in a saturated market. Retaining families is less costly than enrolling new ones. Thus, I want to utilize any admissions event as an opportunity to build community culture. One such event at Shu Ren which brings together our entire school is called Sparking Curiosity. This event is a targeted new enrollment and re-enrollment event highlighting our inquiry-based learning framework. Our audience is parents whether prospective or already enrolled. Each class teacher gives a demonstration of an inquiry-based lesson to the parents with the goal to give them insight into how student learning is articulated in the classrooms of Shu Ren.

Sparking Curiosity is a wonderful way to build this culture as parents inform parents. Parents are allowed to attend any grade level they are interested to know more about. Some choose their child's current grade while some are curious about the level one or two grades above. The ideal result is each classroom will have a nice mix of parents with children in different grade levels. This event allows parents (current

and prospective) to break that silo of being conditioned to only your child's grade level. It gives the opportunity to build connections across the school with other parents and different grade level teachers. As much as Sparking Curiosity is an admissions event, it is equally meant to deepen the roots of the school community.

### Be Reaching Out

Not every parent or teacher is the cheerleader type ambassador at Shu Ren. I have a handful of enthusiastic parents who will come alongside the school and support admissions. It's the same with the staff — whereas some events, like Sparking Curiosity involve them quite a bit, for some other smaller events, I may need the assistance of just one or two staff volunteers. However comfortable I am to rely on the same group of people, it's important to consistently reach out to others in the community to support the work of admissions. Each and every event, there is an invitation for anyone in the school community to support. This requires a lot of direct asking and encouragement for some parents to finally decide to volunteer. Kirk, a Shu Ren parent, recently started to get involved with our admissions presentations at our events. As a parent for the last 6 years, Kirk was hesitant to get involved. He's a busy college professor and administrator, and he lives far away. This year, Kirk has integrated into our admission events. As a college professor and administrator responsible for student assessment, Kirk draws the parallel between how Shu Ren's vision and learner outcomes parallel what employers are wanting out of college graduates. Keeping the door open for parents and teachers to access these opportunities to partner with admissions can be a long road, but don't stop asking. The squeaky wheel gets the grease.



### Be Reflective

As an IB World School, we make the effort to also express the IB Learner Profile as professionals. Being Reflective is a fantastic practice to build into any admissions event regardless of how many times you have run it. After any event, take the time to debrief, reflect on the event—the planning, execution and final result. Debrief with the people around you to gain perspective and feedback. Record the suggestions and observations for future reference. Reflection only helps to understand our strengths and weaknesses to inform better decision making the next time around.

Whether you are in a saturated or emerging market, enthusiasm and a culture of admissions is at the heart of your enrollment processes. Establishing your admission events around retention will show the strength of your community. Actively reaching out to your parents and staff and giving them agency in organizing and executing your events will also drive roots deeper into the school. Finally, building reflection with your stakeholders into your admission events will make the next iteration even stronger.



by Maria English  
Director of Admissions  
Shu Ren International School

*Maria English is the Director of Admissions at Shu Ren International School, an IB PYP Mandarin Immersion School located in Berkeley, California. She began her professional career in Enrollment and Marketing in Shanghai, China at Shanghai American School and Western International School of Shanghai.*

### About Shu Ren International School



At Shu Ren, we inspire a love of learning through an inquiry-based, Mandarin immersion program that prepares students with the heart and mind to thrive in an evolving global society. We are an IB World School located in Berkeley, California.

# International School Enrollment Industry Survey Report – Key Findings

International school enrollment leaders are crucial in securing the current and future sustainability of their schools – particularly since most international schools are largely (or entirely) tuition-driven. The rapid growth of international schools in the last two decades has led to the emergence of competition as one of schools' biggest challenges. Economically speaking, changes in the oil and gas industry in

particular have also affected enrollment for many schools. Changing policies regarding company funding of education means that tuition is now an expense that families must factor into their household budgets. Globally, the rise of nationalism, political changes (e.g., Brexit), and the exodus of expatriate families from many countries (e.g., China and the UAE) factor into the equation as well.

Twenty years ago, the admission office was the "hospitality hub" of the school. The modern admission office must be that and more: a research hub, a data hub, a marketing hub. Hiring a successful enrollment leader requires a deep understanding of the broadened range of skills that are needed. Recently, United Nations International School Hanoi created a new position: Director of Enrolment Management and Marketing. This school leader is responsible for "securing \$27 million/year in tuition revenue." Staff management, marketing, forecasting, and predictive modeling are all requisites for the successful candidate. The global search is being run by the director of finance and operations.

To aid school leaders in understanding admission/enrollment management, The Enrollment Management Association (EMA) and ISC-Research collaborated on a global survey of international school admission operations. The inaugural *International School Admission Industry Report*, released in 2016, turned a spotlight on trends and challenges facing international schools around the globe. The second

iteration delves even deeper into the industry.

EMA and ISC-Research thank the following 2018 survey committee professionals for lending their time and expertise to creating a comprehensive survey instrument:

- Nicholas Kent, EMA Trustee
- Julia Love, International School Kuala Lumpur
- TK Ostrom, Colegio Americano de Guatemala
- Katie Rigney-Zimmerman, Saigon South International School
- David Willows, International School of Brussels

Aimee Gruber, EMA, and Katie Rigney-Zimmerman presented preliminary survey findings at the 2018 EARCOS Leadership Conference. The new report will be available in spring 2019 from EMA and ISC-Research. Here you can find a preview of the key findings.

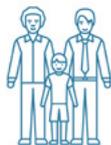
## Biggest Admission Challenges

1. **Competition** from other international schools in the area (39%)
2. Family **reluctance** to disclose children's learning needs (27%)
3. **Marketing** the school effectively (26%)
4. **Pressure** from boards/heads to meet enrollment numbers (24%)
  - Enrolling a **diverse student body** (24%)
  - Dealing with **economic decline** in the area (24%)

# Most Effective Recruitment Tools/Outreach Activities



**Referral from Current Family**  
**95%**



**Referral from Previous Family**  
**93%**



**School Tours**  
**89%**



**School Website**  
**73%**



**School videos**  
**53%**

## Key Findings:

- **Many schools aren't meeting enrollment goals.**

For the 2017-2018 school year, less than two-thirds (60%) of international schools met their enrollment goals, and 35% were still enrolling students after the start of the current school year. Less than half of schools operate at least a small wait list in one or more grades. Schools report increased challenges meeting enrollment goals in upper divisions (56%) than in Kindergarten (20%) or early years (24%), possibly because more options exist for older students in boarding schools and/or with online education.

- **Schools must pay more attention to attrition.**

Although over 50% of schools report an increase in voluntary attrition in the last three to five years, our data indicate that 87% of international schools have no formal plan/committee focused on retention. Factors such as parents relocating for work are unavoidable, but for families, "seeking a more affordable option" is increasingly being linked to attrition. This may be tied to changes in company/third party policies for paying tuition

- **Competition dominates the landscape.** As in 2015, competition from other international schools is the number one challenge (39%). Following behind were a family's reluctance to disclose children's learning needs (27%) and marketing the school effectively (26%). Coming in at 24% each were pressure to meet enrollment numbers, enrolling a diverse student body, and dealing with local economic decline.

- **Admission is most competitive for applicants in two key areas.** Data indicate that admission is more competitive for host country nationals (42%) and applicants with learning needs (31%, up from 22% in 2015).

- **Word of mouth is critical.** The recruitment tool regarded most effective is referrals from current (95%) and previous families (93%), closely followed by school tours (89%).

- **Admission and enrollment professionals need learning opportunities.** Almost all (92%) international school admission decision makers are interested in professional training/development. Data-driven decision making, marketing, communications, strategic leadership, and student assessment are the greatest areas of development interest.

- **Children with learning needs face a more challenging process.** Schools reported that a family's reluctance to disclose learning needs was their second most important challenge, and applicant competition is up nearly 10% for children in this category.



by Aimee Gruber  
Senior Director of Global Outreach  
Enrollment Management Association

# Sharpening our Admissions Saws



As professionals in an increasingly competitive market that vies for every edge, our roles are exponentially rising in visibility. We are now key players on our school stages.

How we make people feel is now our ultimate edge and what helps reinforce our school story, grow our reputation and see our enrollment rise to success. It's high time we got to checking and sharpening those skills, our interpersonal human-to-human skills.

A new brand of parents have been primed to expect a world class experience. For these families purchasing is more than a transactive relationship. A school is where they can see into the crystal ball of opportunities and they expect their child to be individually and optimally prepared. Admissions teams now spend more time setting the stage for the case of optimised learning, of reinvented, future-ready, present-ready, lifelong learning all in one competitive and legitimately authentic package.

The faculty we represent and

the families we draw in, expect from us purposeful high levels of executive functioning skills. These are "Impulse control, Emotional Control, Flexible Thinking, Working Memory, Self-Monitoring, Planning and Prioritizing, Task Initiation, and Organization."(<https://www.learningsuccessblog.com/8-key-executive-functions-infograph>).

**Success in our roles comes back to us and how we position ourselves on the stage of the human-skill showdown.**

At AISB, we put together a mini conference; a Sharpening our Admissions Saw-type Jobalike conference. Thanks to the support from our friends at CEESA (Central and East European Schools Association), we were able to become inspired with colleagues from our diverse region and professionals from our school community.

We brought in a trainer from the acting world, an emotional intelligence guru, a communications trainer with his

own brand of training ("words that change lives") and a communications personality-typing coach from our parent community. From our faculty, experts on cultural types with the Hofstede Model, our 'data for decision making' guru, EAL trend specialists and more. The group of admissions professionals came from 10 regional schools. We all unanimously left more self-aware and poised for business with razor sharp inter-personal awareness and highly tuned executive functioning skills!

Here are 5 of our most enduring takeaways:

## 1. Self-Awareness

Everything we do starts with Emotional Intelligence. Emotional Intelligence starts with awareness, and awareness starts with self-awareness. Self-awareness needs reflective time, in quiet distraction-averse moments.

Regular, daily mindfulness meditation practices can train us to be our self-aware best. As little as 10 minutes a day for 20 days according to the word on the mindfulness research circuit can help physically build new connections in our brain. At AISB we train daily as



an Advancement team using free resources from [www.franticworld.com](http://www.franticworld.com).

## 2. Presentation

We speak through our actions a great deal more than our words. The way we present affects how the world responds to us and whether doors open or close for us. There are powerful awareness exercises which can help move us out of our comfort zone into body language enlightenment.

By simply placing our hands at the side of our bodies and untwisting/unbending our legs and facing our audience face on in a grounded, confident poise we can reduce hidden/awkward postures which can instill a subconscious lack of confidence from our audience. Our tone of voice also becomes our personal brand and through practice and feedback, modeling and coaching, we can ensure a standard tone which becomes our unified school brand.

## 3. Empathy

By putting ourselves into the shoes of our families at each point of our relationship, we can better see our world through their lenses and articulate our approach to authentically speak to their immediate and long-term needs. We need to ask where they are and what they are looking for through sensitive open questioning and then really listen.

The more we can learn to listen and seek to understand before we prepare our responses, the more we can connect on a real level with their needs. There are some great 'hacks' for helping us re-wire to a more empathetic us, including; practicing active listening skills, reframing,

validating, moving our viewpoint and seeking to see the world through their eyes.

## 4. Communication

Good communication guided by astute social and emotional intelligence is a skill which unites all of our roles school wide. We can only do justice to our potential, with time for retrospection and awareness.

If we are acutely aware of the diverse cultural/ life stories of our audiences, we can ensure a sensitive and open dialogue that will leave both sides feeling heard and understood, whatever the outcome. By focusing on establishing our own comfortable style that can respond to diversity with sensitive aligning, we communicate the true values of our International Schools. Fostering an experience of feeling genuinely heard and understood goes further towards our goals than any outstanding marketing paraphernalia.

## 5. Diversity Awareness

With the help of our IB Psych teacher, through our study of the Hofstede Cultural model and using the online tool to compare the insights of the cultures in our communities, we experienced how we can gain a deep understanding of the various layers of each culture, 'the symbols, heroes, rituals and values' ([www.hofstede-insights.com](http://www.hofstede-insights.com)).

Through understanding and learning we can access our own preconceptions and innate biases. With this acute awareness, we can build scaffolding behaviours to mitigate any subconsciously demeaning behaviours and the reactions and feelings we then trigger

in others. With our hat of multi-cultural diplomacy, these are pieces of our saw which need continual safety checks.

## Shared best-practice which can bring an Advancement office from functional to outstanding

Successful Admissions/Advancement teams hinge on multiple role agility. The unique skill-sets we need to master in our Admissions Offices around the globe should mirror the frequently articulated "Future Work Skills" that every leading educational institution is leaning into;

- Virtual Collaboration
- Design Mindset
- Cross-Cultural Competency
- Cognitive Load Management
- New Media Literacy
- Computational Thinking
- Social Intelligence
- Novel and Adaptive Thinking
- Sense-Making
- Trans-disciplinary

(2011, Institute for the Future, 'Future Work Skills 2020');

Human face-to-Human face communications are something that no Alexa, Siri or 'Hey Google' can take away from us. Soft, interpersonal and social skills are rapidly becoming our edge over the future of a workplace. AI is taking over at exponential speed as the Fourth Industrial Revolution is upon us. Communicating as people with the highest level of executive functioning aptitude is really the bread, butter and finely sharpened saw of our successful operations.



by Magdalen Gray  
Advancement Director  
American International School of Budapest



# OpenApply

Events 2019



## Kuala Lumpur

IGB International School

November 15-16, 2019



OpenApply Admissions Conferences feature a mixture of Admissions Professional Development and OpenApply Workshop sessions.

### Our 2019 conferences will focus on **The Admissions Experience**

- How do you keep families engaged and excited?
- What are the best strategies for communication?
- Can you provide a smoother parent experience to avoid headaches on both sides?

Join us in Kuala Lumpur to network with top admissions professionals, share best practices, and learn how admissions fuels efforts throughout the school!



Register Now

For more information please visit [events.openapply.com](https://events.openapply.com)

# Find out more

on [events.openapply.com/](https://events.openapply.com/)!

## Upcoming Webinars

OpenApply's monthly webinars offer opportunities for admissions professionals from schools around the world to share best practices on topics like re-enrolment, marketing, growing enrolment, and more! Webinars feature a question and answer period and are always recorded for later viewing. Join us for a webinar this Spring!



**April 16, 2019**

### Networking for Improvement

Featuring Katie Rigney-Zimmermann

*Admissions & Marketing Director*

**Saigon South International School**



**May 1, 2019**

### Influencer Marketing in Admissions

Featuring Maria Litras

*Marketing & Communications Manager*

**Southbank International School**

## Meet us at

## Spring & Summer

April 14-17

### ATLIS Annual Conference 2019

Dallas, TX, USA

April 24-27

### ECIS Leadership Conference

Lisbon, Portugal

April 25-26

### COBIS Conference for Marketing, Development and Admissions Staff

Astana, Kazakhstan

May 11-13

### COBIS Annual Conference

London, UK

May 13-14

### AMCIS Annual Conference

Nottingham, UK

May 16-17

### 2019 China Campus+ Summit

Shanghai, China

May 21-22

### School Planning and Design Summit

Melbourne, Australia

May 26-27

### TIDE - Educators Shape the Future

Suzhou, China

June 19-21

### Finalsite University

Chicago, IL, USA

July 14-17

### AISAP Annual Institute

Colorado Springs, CO, USA

July 18-21

### IB Global Conference

New Orleans, LA, USA

Watch previous webinars on demand at [www.openapply.com/webinars](https://www.openapply.com/webinars)



# School Spotlight

## GREEN SCHOOL BALI



Helen O'Connor  
Head of Student Recruitment  
Green School Bali

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### Head of Student Recruitment: Helen O'Connor

Helen is in a unique position where she was a parent of two GS students first, before formally working at the school. She holds experience as an actor and educator, and has worked extensively as a corporate trainer in communications, emotional intelligence, and change management. One point of emphasis at GS is parent involvement. During her children's tenure at the school, Helen ran Conscious Communications workshops for the parent community and as professional development sessions for the school staff. She ended up running

the parents' association and became increasingly involved in the intersection between the school and the parents of GS.

With Helen's experience in education, communication and being a student-parent herself, she became sought after for the open position in admissions and decided to join the school. Due to the heavy online nature of their admissions process, Helen is now able to run the Admissions Office working remotely for half the year from Australia, after living in Bali for 5 years.



### **As a parent of the school first, how did you find Green School and decide to enrol your children there?**

It was a pleasant accident in a way. I was not happy with the schooling they were receiving in Australia as I wanted a more progressive and co-educational approach to their learning. Our family went to Bali on a holiday and at the time were considering moving there. Our friends mentioned Green School to us and we decided to go see it during our holiday only as curious tourists.

We eventually decided to move to Bali and I told my reluctant children that they could choose the school they wished to attend. We visited other schools on the island but it soon became clear it was a no-brainer for them - they wanted to attend Green School. They moved to Bali originally under duress, so we had agreed we would only trial it for six months. After three weeks they sat me down and told me they intended to graduate from this school and would not be leaving! The type of engagement at Green School was something they had never experienced in a school setting and they knew it was where they wanted to stay. I eventually found this to be a common theme - where families would plan to come to Green School for only six months to a year, and end up staying much longer for the education. The kids practically chain themselves to the bamboo and refuse to go!

### **Can you tell us a bit about the daily life for students at Green School?**

A typical day at Green School is broken into three parts that mirror the 'Three Frames of Learning': Thematic Frame, with a focus on research, inquiry, and communication skills in a group learning environment,

Proficiency Frame, where the relevant core competencies are honed, often in a more structured classroom environment, and the Experiential Frame, where students are involved in activities related to the theme or project.

Students spend about 60% of their day outside of the classroom in 'hands-on learning' which creates an environment where a high level of engagement occurs. So when they return to the classroom, the more structured English, math or science classes are connected to something tangible, bringing the education literally to life.

One example is the Middle School 'Bridge Project' where the students were asked to build a bridge over the river that runs through the school to connect the main campus to a smaller section of the campus and the local village. As you can imagine the Bridge Project involves many disciplines - math, science, physics, design, building techniques, and of course teamwork and collaboration. And vital realisations like building a bridge in Bali is different than other places in the world due to the climate and the culture. So the learning is vast.

The students have to figure out the mathematics and science and come up with the design and other essential plans before going out and putting it all into practice. This goes back to our main philosophy of high engagement of the child. When they are engaged, they don't really notice they are learning. We are hiding the peas in the soup...and they don't even realise they are eating the vegetables!

Another great thing about the Bridge Project was that a couple years ago there was a massive flood and the bridge collapsed. They had to go back

to the classroom and figure out why this happened. The learning involved in that entire process to uncover mistakes and develop a stronger bridge was phenomenal. And most of that learning came from consulting the local Balinese builders on how they would have done it...all in Bahasa Indonesia!

### **What are some of the unique obstacles Green School encounters with this type of education?**

I think it comes down to perception and getting parents to take a leap of faith when they first encounter this style of learning. One of the main fears of parents includes: "is my child going to learn the same things I learned?"

Most of us come from a traditional education system where we finish school and know how to write, read, add, subtract etc. Many parents want to make sure their child is going to leave the school with those same abilities, and ensure they could easily transition back to a traditional school if they need to, or indeed move on to University. They want to know that this is possible through the philosophy of learning by doing.

The biggest challenge is helping people understand that it is not what they learn, but rather how they learn it, that makes the difference. Green School continues to graduate kids that are going to Ivy League universities and studying all over the world. And the feedback we have from universities and employers where Green School graduates have ended up is that these kids have an extremely high level of critical and independent thinking, problem solving, and an ability to reason and argue, among other important life skills. They are as well educated as any other Grade 12





graduate; our educational approach is just a different way of getting them there, and one we believe better sets them up for future success. Our intention is to create a love of learning in an environment where students can explore their innate passions and realise that they have the ability to affect change in the world.

**Can you touch on some of the amazing projects Green School is currently engaged in within the community?**

Kembali, our recycling project, started as a simple way for parents to recycle items within their homes. It has now turned into a huge centre where people are taught about recycling and families can bring everything from their kitchen waste to recyclable goods and clothing to be processed. The project focuses on teaching people how to recycle properly and showing what can and cannot be recycled.

One of the incredible things that has stemmed from Kembali is a program called Trash-For-Class. Much of Bali is unfortunately filled with unwanted plastics and trash so we developed a program to help not only clean up the local community but also educate

the local children in the process. Local children are eager to learn English and so we encourage them to engage in trash walks where they go and clean up the community and return their trash to GSB where they can redeem certain amounts of trash for free hours of English education at the school.

Five kilos of trash gives them one semester of English class which has made our community one of the cleanest places in Bali and has established a strong connection with the local community and our school. This is one thing John Hardy wanted to emphasise when he founded the school; he wanted to bridge the gap between expat families and the local Balinese people.

Operation Rain or Shine is another program that is endeavouring to have GSB 100% self-sustainable by developing an energy hub at the school. Former students who won the Zayed Energy Prize used their prize money to build the energy hub and work on increasing the usable and renewable energy at the school.

Overall our students are extremely active and we encourage them to pursue their passion to benefit the community. One student who excelled at biochemistry, was part of a student team that helped develop a program that turned used cooking oil into the bio fuel that GSB Bio busses currently run on. Having this type of unique and proactive experience resulted in him being courted by numerous Ivy League universities, where he is studying today.

**As Green School celebrates its 10-year anniversary, what are you most proud of looking back over the history of the school?**

I would have to say two things:

First, gaining the recognition that we have received has been incredible. Green School is becoming a world leader in changing people's perceptions of education models, which I think is really important. We have gone from a point where we really had to work hard to convince parents that this style of education is equally if not more beneficial, to now having six years of graduating students proving this over and over. They are going out into the world after attending GS and excelling to great heights





The second thing I would say is the impact the school has in terms of creating a generation of thought leaders focused around sustainability. These kids have accepted a mission to go out and continue to have an impact on their environment and their community no matter how big or small their efforts are.

**How has OpenApply assisted you and Green School in your overall school efforts?**

Going paperless was of course one of the initial things that OpenApply allowed us to do. We used to print out applications and have parents fill them out manually which resulted in huge amounts of paper being used. OpenApply has definitely helped us along in the process of going green.

As you can see our mindset is all about sustainability and we actually did not realise how much we were also wasting in terms of time and also people's skill sets. Through OpenApply, we have really been able to streamline our processes and our time is now used much more efficiently

and effectively. We are now able to leverage our saved time on other things like engaging with parents more on Skype calls rather than spending time messing with spreadsheets, data entry and tasks of that nature.

When we first adopted the system, our goal was to be able to do everything in admissions through OpenApply and that is what we have done. If we weren't using OpenApply to the extent we are now, working remotely from Australia would probably not be possible.

If you wish to learn more about Green School, please feel free to view their [Ted Talk Video](#) by founder, John Hardy, or check out the [video CNN created in 2009](#) during the early days of the school.



**green school**  
BALI

**About Green School Bali**

Green School Bali is located just south of Ubud on the island of Bali in Indonesia. Founded by John and Cynthia Hardy, Green School takes a holistic approach to education and focuses on educating for sustainability and the philosophy of Entrepreneurial Learning - learning by doing.

The school has formed a nearly perfected blueprint for green schools across the world by demonstrating how education can be just as effective, if not more so, by impacting change locally and striving to implement change globally. The classrooms have no walls - a symbolic representation of the inclusiveness and limitless approach to education Green School takes in order to make our world a better place.

# EVERYONE PLAYS A ROLE



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from American School of The Hague

# Building Capacity in Intercultural Teams

According to ISC Research, there are currently 10,000 international schools around the world, enrolling over 5.3 million students. They are served by close to 500,000 faculty and administrators, both expatriate and local.<sup>1</sup> With a workforce of that size, there's a good chance that as an admissions professional, you lead or belong to a multicultural team.

At Jakarta Intercultural School, our admissions office mirrors the diversity of our student population, blending Indonesian, Filipino, Korean and TCK cultures. Cultural diversity adds a layer of complexity to teams by introducing different languages, communication styles, and conventions around time, giving and receiving feedback, and conflict resolution. Here are seven strategies that we have found helpful in building organizational capacity within our intercultural team to ensure consistent work standards and a consistent customer experience for the families that we serve.



## 1. Build relationships

To beat Jakarta traffic, we often arrive half an hour before the office opens. This gives us time to gather in the kitchen and start our day with coffee and conversation. To an onlooker, it may look like idle chit-chat, but in reality we are building our cultural intelligence (CQ). Unguarded and authentic social engagement tunes us in to how our language, thought processes, customs, and gestures converge or diverge. This helps

form a shared understanding of our individual contexts and builds trust.<sup>2</sup> Shared lunch breaks, water cooler conversations, or after-office drinks accomplish the same goal.

## 2. Recognize and adapt to cultural differences

In the JIS Admissions Office, our team members have a cultural tendency to be deferential. They can be reluctant to raise an opposing opinion. When seeking feedback on proposed training activities, we take a mindful approach, calling on the trust that we've built through social engagement. What works for our team is informal and indirect conversation. Yes, this requires an investment of time and patience, but the dividends are worth it. Through authentic conversation, we can tease out people's thoughts and can be confident that the professional development we plan is consistent with the team's needs and expectations.

## 3. Don't always assume it's a language issue

With team members who are non-native English communicators, we are careful not to assume that a gap in knowledge or skill is a product of language proficiency. As an example, a team member who recently took on the role of conducting tours requested language training in Business English because she lacked confidence in her communication skills. Together we unpacked her difficulties and concluded that it was not language that was her pitfall. Rather it was an inadequate understanding of the curriculum, which had changed considerably since she first joined the team. We arranged for her to attend parent community inquiry circles that focused on learning so that she could hear curriculum concepts explained to non-educators. We also had her shadow a student for a better



understanding of how students learn. Lastly, we decided to extend her tour training, having her buddy-up with a more experienced team member. It would have been easier to enroll her in the training she requested but it would not have solved the underlying issue.

## 4. Consider professional development in the home language

Stuart Jay Raj, a cultural training consultant in Asia, suggests that conducting professional development in the participant's home language improves engagement, retention, and results. When training is conducted in a foreign language or through an interpreter, participants tend to focus more on language competence than content; nuances become more difficult to articulate; and the fun factor disappears.<sup>3</sup>



Though I am not able to run a full workshop in Indonesian, which is the language of the majority in our office, I have learned enough vocabulary to interject anecdotes and to understand general conversations. Even just saying a few words in Indonesian prompts reactions and energizes the room. It sparks conversations and engages people.



### 5. Share the right tools

Still on the subject of language, though our team members communicate fluently in English, there is a striking range of differences in vocabulary and syntax. Some colleagues may also be unaware of the subtext of certain English words and phrases. To avoid communication pitfalls, we develop scripts and templates for commonly used responses such as general inquiries and waitpools. Tech tools such as Grammarly help catch most grammatical and spelling errors.

### 6. Beat the Budget: Harness faculty expertise

In a 2015 survey by the Enrollment Management Association, 91% of Admissions Professionals were interested in professional development but only 59% had a budget allocated for it.<sup>4</sup> With this constraint, admissions leaders need to get creative about providing training and upskilling staff.

Consider offering workshops run by your faculty and administrators. Our Deputy has conducted a workshop on difficult conversations, and another on handling challenging customers. We have had a teacher run sessions on mindfulness and wellness at work. Most recently, we invited our learning support coordinator for a session on inclusion and contemporary language around learning support.

### 7. Host local mini-conferences or job-alikes

If your office team is strapped for professional development funds, chances are other international



schools in your city are too. Consider hosting a mini-conference or job-alike for your local network. Some of the recent events we hosted at JIS are an admissions and student support conference for admissions professionals and student support faculty, a mini-conference for Early Years admissions teams, and an admissions and marketing job-alike. These activities benefit both your team and your school. Your team will enjoy professional development and build a peer network, while the school gains visibility and forges goodwill with your local competitors.

A study by the Institute for Research on Intercultural Cooperation (IRIC) concluded that shared perceptions of daily practices should be considered the core of an organization's culture.<sup>5</sup> I see our role as leaders of intercultural admissions offices as weaving together our teams' diverse backgrounds and values through engagement and professional development so that we can function cohesively to meet consistent standards and provide responsive, efficient, and exceptional service to families through the admissions cycle.



by Kathleen Ngkaion  
Head of Admissions  
Jakarta Intercultural School

## About Jakarta Intercultural School

Jakarta Intercultural School (formerly Jakarta International School) is the oldest and largest independent international school in Indonesia. It was founded in 1951 by the US, UK and Australian embassies. It is truly intercultural, with a student body of 2,350 students from over 70 countries, a faculty of 280 expatriates and over 800 host country staff. The community's deep respect for their host country's culture is reflected in the JIS mission: "Passionate, inquisitive and creative, learning in Indonesia to be best for the world."



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# Admissions Working With Academics

## Avoid the Elephant through the Snake



While admissions officers recruit and enroll students, academic administrators and faculty provide the educational experience of students at the core of a school's identity. So academic staff rely on admissions officers to manage enrollment strategically, rather than merely admitting as many students as possible across grade levels in any given year. Simple math does not suffice when multivariate Calculus does better to ensure that admissions strategies match institutional priorities and needs.

Significant enrollment changes from year to year create added challenges for academic staff as they do their part in pursuit of a school's mission. To academic staff, a large class bookended by smaller classes is like watching a snake eat an elephant: in both snake and school, you can watch as the mass works its way through with obvious consequences. Likewise, a small class bookended by much larger classes can wreak havoc on the academic staff. (See Chart A's peaks and valleys versus Chart B's more stable and consistent enrollment.)



While every school has some degree of year-to-year variation in class size, understanding model numbers at each grade level and reshaping marketing and admissions strategies each year in their pursuit helps avoid grade-level enrollment peaks and valleys. Strategic enrollment management that maintains smooth transitions from one class to the next helps academic staff in important ways.

### Finances

The first, and most obvious, impact of admissions on academics is through school finances. Admissions success, or lack thereof, goes straight to the budget bottom line and revenues for the fiscal year that affect schoolwide staff size. More students than expected provide extra resources for a school. However, schools failing to reach their budget targets may have to say goodbye to teachers in July or August. Administrators hate having to choose which teachers to release and which programs to cut, especially just before school starts.

### Enrollment by Grade

Admissions outcomes also affect enrollment by grade. When sorting out enrollment peaks and valleys in different grade levels, principals have to rework class and section sizes. For example, both teachers and parents expecting classroom sizes to top out at 24 push back when principals schedule some at 30 or more while others have 10 or 12 students.

### Staff Allocation by Grade

Similarly, admissions impacts staff allocation by grade as principals try to keep up with the elephant with yearly adjustments to the grade levels, preps,

and numbers of sections assigned to teachers. This also inhibits bigger-picture, more strategic efforts to build a strong, sensible, consistent curriculum as programs remain in a frenzied state of "this is what we were able to manage this year." Ultimately, this can even impair faculty retention efforts as frustration with regularly shifting between grades, subjects, and preps wears out good teachers who end up seeking new schools.

### Scheduling Students

Scheduling courses and sections also becomes more difficult when numbers have a high variance from grade to grade. Elephant classes dominate master schedules, leaving other grade levels with fewer teachers in fewer sections to allow students to schedule the courses they need.

### Purchasing Curricular Materials

Purchasing or allocating curricular materials can be smooth, efficient, and cost-effective; or the elephant through the snake can kill that prospect. When academic administrators make multi-year purchases of curriculum materials, they must buy for the largest class going through the term of the purchase. So one class significantly larger than the smallest class, as in Chart A, means spending significantly more to supply those students with curricular materials as they work through the grades than if all grades were roughly the same size.

### Academics Can Help Admissions Help Academics

Of course, the relationship between Admissions and Academics is not unidirectional. As admissions staff seek to help academic staff do what they



do by keeping the elephant out of the snake, academic staff must realize their role in helping admissions officers help them. The key to this is lots and lots of communication and collaboration.

Teachers and principals can impact positively or negatively the experience of prospective families visiting campus. As families visit classrooms on tours, prospective students spend shadow days on campus, visitors come to campus for events, and school personnel present themselves off campus, teachers and principals serve as de facto ambassadors of the school whose actions and behaviors tell people whether the school community is one they want to join. Academic staff who understand their roles as admissions officers support recruiting mission-appropriate students with their daily actions.

Academic staff can also help admissions officers with admissions testing. Admissions staff often do not come from academic backgrounds, and so could benefit from the input of academic staff who interpret testing results (if not conduct the tests themselves).



Schools with enrollment management committees bring admissions and



academic personnel together to ensure everyone is on the same page regarding the big picture, strategies, grade level goals, and even talking through specific decisions to admit a prospect or not. This can help considerably in finding, recruiting, and admitting mission-appropriate students that enhance the student body, and in increasing the strategic level of schoolwide enrollment management.

Two things can help considerably in such efforts to manage enrollment by grade level and minimize the chance of sending an elephant through the snake. First, admissions officers must know and follow the school's mission to find mission-appropriate students and sell them on the school. A school's mission guides admissions staff to present "bells and whistles" facets - like flashy buildings and athletics facilities - in ways that complement, if not feature, what is most important to school identity instead of as fancy distractions from it.

Second, the marketing plans admissions staff implement should be comprehensive, proactive, and data-driven so that admissions efforts seek students in the grades and programs where they are needed most and not where they are not.

By seeking mission-appropriate prospects; avoiding the elephant through the snake with strategic

enrollment management; and collaborating with faculty and principals to make admissions an all-school endeavor, admissions officers can help academic staff succeed in their school's foundational and defining activity: educating students.



by Brian Menard  
Director of Curriculum & Program Development  
**George Washington Academy**

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*Brian Menard oversees Admissions and Advancement as the Director of Curriculum & Program Development at George Washington Academy, an international school in Casablanca equipping minds and building character in 900 students from 40 countries, and Morocco's largest American school. Prior to international school administration, Brian served as a Head of Schools in the United States after teaching nearly every grade from preschoolers through fourth-year college students.*

# FACING REJECTION

## The Power of **No**



This article is the first in a short series by Dr. Denry Machin on school admissions and marketing. This piece has a particular focus on the power of 'no'.

Why do parents reject you?

That isn't some existential interrogation, designed to probe your deepest childhood memories. This isn't that kind of article. Rather, it is to ask why your potential customers (parents) don't become actual customers (parents with children in your school).

At a recent marketing event for schools, conference participants were challenged to consider how to turnaround 'rejecting' parents. This kind of thinking is useful, necessary even. But, at its extremes, the implication is that those rejecting you might have been convinced otherwise. It

suggests 'no' should (and can) be turned into 'yes'.

In some cases, this might be possible—a 'no' might become a 'yes'. But, getting at least the occasional 'no' is inevitable, such as the cut-and-thrust of international schooling. Some parents will reject you.

**"What matters is what you do with the 'no'."**

Every 'no' should prompt some reflection on your marketing and, in particular, the admissions processes parents go through when choosing a school.

Imagine, for example, that a parent rejects you because you offer the IB Diploma and they wanted A-Levels. There is clearly a

mismatch between your offer and the parent's need. You can (and should), of course, try to convince them of the merits of IB, but rejection on this basis isn't failure, it is just a fact of life—you don't offer what they want.

Or, in contrast, imagine a parent rejects you because they misperceive how strong your sports programme is, a factor important in their decision making. At some point in the marketing process, you have failed to recognise the parent's needs and to communicate your 'value proposition'—you didn't communicate how strong your sports programme actually is.

The latter is an error in marketing and the 'no' an important piece of feedback.

## The Power of 'No'

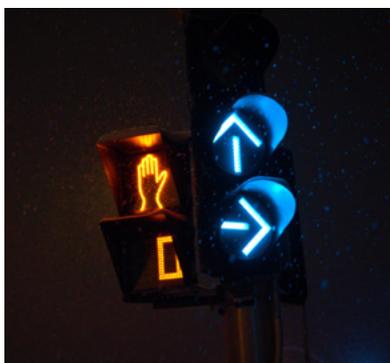
Given that some rejections are inevitable, you want them to come as early as possible in the admissions process. The sooner you get to 'no', the more you can focus on 'yes'.

It is common to think of this process as moving a potential parent through the stages of Awareness, Interest, Demand/Desire and Action (what salespeople call 'AIDA'):

At the Awareness and Inform stages, your promotional materials should make it clear what type of school you are—and, by extension, what type of school you are not. You are filtering parents as much as they are filtering schools; if parents don't want what you offer then an early 'no' protects everybody's time.

If a prospective parent moves to the Interest stage, they will then start to consider your 'enablers'. In short, do you offer what they are looking for: the right curriculum, the right location, at the right price and so on. They will have a sense of this from your marketing material, but here they are looking in more detail – via your prospectus, via your website, via your fee schedule and, most critically, via word-of-mouth.

Getting a 'no' at the Interest phase is annoying but may not be a major cause for concern. Your school won't be the right 'fit' for all



children (as above, you simply may not offer the 'right' curriculum for a particular family's needs).

However, every rejection at this stage should prompt the following reflection:

### Did the parent say 'no' because of a mismatch between their enablers and your offering?

Can you address the mismatch? If not, then:

### Do your materials clearly communicate the basics of what you offer and are they easily understood by parents, second-language English speakers especially?

Are you filtering the right parents for your school early in your marketing process?

By the Demand stage, and certainly if a parent visits you for a school tour, the right 'enablers' are probably in place. At this stage a 'no' is much more critical. If a parent rejects you it is much more likely that they might have been persuaded otherwise. You are a viable option for them but failed to address their 'deciders'.

To avoid this, you should develop an idea of the family's interests and needs, and you should build your tour around those needs. The task isn't to tell nor to sell, it is to listen. You should listen to the family's needs and respond to their questions. Find out what their deciders are and make sure that you address them – what will it take for them to say 'yes'.

The Action part, if you get all of this right, and if you meet both the enablers and the deciders, is a new enrollee in your school.

### Know your value

Why parents reject you is an important question to ask. However, rather than existential

angst the answers should, hopefully, encourage more productive introspection. Knowing why parents say 'no' can encourage you to think differently about your marketing: are you effectively communicating your unique proposition; do parents value the same things as you offer?

The fundamental question is whether failures or inefficiencies in your marketing processes are causing rejections. Are you giving parents insufficient information at initial enquiry? Do your materials communicate clearly enough what type of school you are and what you offer? Are you proactively identifying parents' needs and addressing their concerns, or are you just telling them about your school?

In these terms, every 'no' is a valuable piece of marketing data.



by Dr. Denry Machin  
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# At ASH, Everyone is Part of the Admissions Team

At American School of The Hague (ASH), strategic enrollment management sits at the center of our institutional planning and academic programs and guides us toward our preferred future within a changing environment. Key success factors include emphasizing a culture of student learning and individualized attention, assessing and measuring the strategic value of every core move, establishing clear enrollment targets based on capacity and our strategic plan, and applying best practice.

## Engaging in the Learning

Concretely, this means that we prioritize cultivating relationships across our school community by collaborating with our faculty, for example, to establish a solid foundation of trust in the application process and a clear understanding of the enrollment process and parameters. At the start of the school year, we engage with our new staff members about their transition and our expectations when bringing a prospective family on tour into their classrooms.

We also keep faculty closely informed about new student arrivals. When we offer a student a place, we systematically brief the entire school division on the expected start date along with a family and student background. This helps ensure we set everyone up for success and our new students are off to a great start.

We also take the time to visit classrooms and participate in school activities and events to stay fully engaged in the ASH learning experience. Immersing ourselves in the learning provides us with a deep understanding of our programs, which is invaluable as we represent the school to our prospective families.

## Understanding Our Context

We study our context to gain an understanding of what is happening around us and how that arena changes over time. This environmental scan forms the crux of our enrollment management planning and helps us understand emerging trends and project them into the future to the best of our ability, based on our knowledge at the time.

In this process, we recognize the connection between enrollment and fiscal management, human resources, technologies, policies and procedures, academic offerings, marketing, development, and alumni engagement. This integrated approach helps us to proactively manage our enrollment as we align our efforts around optimizing student admissions to achieve institutional goals. In sum, our plan encompasses the complete student engagement cycle from the point of inquiry, admission and orientation, to engagement and re-enrollment, graduation and/or transfer, and ultimately joining our Alumni Association.

## Cultivating Supportive Bonds

Our data collection and analysis tells us that families learn about ASH and decide to join us as the result of internet research, friends and colleague referrals, and first impressions of ASH after a campus visit. Since our current and former

families are our best advocates, we emphasize the nurturing of those relationships on campus and through our Alumni Association. We also conduct parent surveys, collect exit feedback and show our gratitude to referring families; inform prospects via our website and social media highlighting our world-class program and faculty; and prioritize the maintenance and development of our campus.

As the school year progresses and we begin our planning for the next academic year, knowing which students will be returning and who will be leaving us informs our budgeting and enrollment forecasting. This allows us to offer a space to someone in the waiting pool or who is looking to join us from overseas. Knowing this as early as possible, through the issuance of a re-enrollment contract, helps us with classroom and general facilities planning and most importantly, the recruitment of new teachers.

We do this through the markers of the values, vision and mission we uphold and share with our audiences. Championing these unconditionally and across the school to inspire and engage our employees, students and families is key. This, in combination with a great program, and backed by a strong strategic plan creates a community of supporters who, in turn, help us produce the support required for an even greater program the next year. So we aim for a bold and mission-driven marketing plan as we endeavor to connect with those that believe in our purpose within our context.



by Franne Van Der Keilen  
Director of Advancement  
American School of The Hague



by Laura Romains  
Director of Admissions  
American School of The Hague

## AT ASH, THE ADMISSIONS TEAM:

### Has a finger on the pulse

We get out of our office and venture into the classrooms. We stay in the loop about events and volunteer for activities, such as reading to a Kindergarten class or chaperoning a field trip. We know the cafeteria menu and build strong linkages with all staff, including our caterers, transportation officers, athletic director and head of school. Because we make an effort to know our students by name, they will want to join us in talking about our school because they know us. The more we connect with our employees and students, the more authentic and successful our interaction with prospective parents will be!

### Keeps communication lines open

During the year, we announce new student arrivals widely and keep real-time enrollment overviews, which we share with the relevant school division and our signature transition Safe Harbor Program to allow for forging early connections with an ASH Student Ambassador and the ASH counseling office.

### Connects with parents

We are people-centered and help families decide about the best fit for their children. For this, we always make ourselves available, answer questions with integrity and keep open communication lines with families, which helps strengthen the bonds we forge often for many years following our first point of contact as parents keep ties with the Admissions Office. Remembering the importance of that first connection and nurturing positive parent relationships in combination with cultivating a positive student induction experience are key in helping our parents become our biggest supporters.

### Invests time in smooth transitioning

The effort we invest in our Transition program resonates in our families' school experience for many years to come. We spearhead the ASH Transition program, identifying the parents and staff we deem excellent volunteers to help develop and grow the program. If you don't yet have a Transition program, start small with a commitment to developing a Student Ambassador program who will inspire their parents to become Parent Welcomers. A Transition program should be a joyful and fulfilling experience for everyone involved.

### Is available and willing

We always make time to assist with every request and inquiry. While time-consuming, we believe that responding to a request we know will not lead to an application still leaves a positive impression on the sender. Remember, at all times, how you would like to be treated in such a situation. A random inquiry may just be a parent feeling unable to navigate the right channel for an answer - be that one that takes some of that anxiety off their shoulders. In the end,

you will be rewarded - not only will you feel good about the service you provided but they will remember that good feeling when someone asks about your school. Similarly, be there to answer questions for your colleagues at work. Volunteer to join a meeting to answer questions about Admissions or attend a faculty meeting to clear up any anxiety.

### Asks questions ?

How can we make certain that a school will always improve and thrive each year? Ask questions and learn from the responses. Send a New Family Survey and use your Parent Welcomers to encourage responses from new parents. Use a Transition Survey to ask parents who have recently left the school to inform you how their child's new school is in comparison to your school. Has their child had a better or worse experience? At the end of the year, ask families to participate in Exit interviews to better understand their experience. Sometimes we resist asking questions because we fear the answers or the work that may come with the feedback. But we have to keep learning and trying to make improvements.



**American School**  
of The Hague

### About American School of The Hague

Located in Wassenaar, a friendly community near the City of Peace and Justice and at the center of world diplomacy, American School of the Hague (ASH) is the area's flagship school for a learner-centered, American style education. ASH is host to an Emergent Global Responsibility Research Center and also one of the world's preeminent international inclusive education institutes.

A global leader in fostering student transitions into ASH and on to universities, ASH is home to more than 1,200 students and 250 employees, including Fulbright scholars, National Principal and Superintendent of the Year awardees, and scores of faculty involved in educational research. ASH enjoys the support of a strong community network through its Safe Harbor transition program, Parent-Teacher Organization, and Alumni Association.



# Creating a Culture of Collaboration

*At the Multiple Intelligence International School, admissions is a team effort.*

**The Multiple Intelligence International School (MIIS) prides itself in fostering not just an institution that welcomes holistic learning, but also a learning community. Located at the heart of Quezon City, Philippines, MIIS empowers students, parents, faculty, staff, and caregivers with the opportunity to champion the true essence of the school in their daily lives. Through its core values, the MIIS community embraces the positive culture of collaboration and community.**

monthly. During the PSPC meeting, the learning community is also given the opportunity to learn from guest speakers who share their knowledge on such topics as positive parenting and the Multiple Intelligences Theory. This gives our learning community not only the chance to trade ideas, but to also learn collaboratively, as well.

## TEACHERS AND STAFF HOLDING HANDS

Our teachers and staff are at the forefront of championing collaboration and community at MIIS. As a learning community, teachers and staff are given the opportunity to collaborate in our regular Professional Learning Community (PLC) seminars. During these talks, the teachers and staff of MIIS gain knowledge through guest speakers and invited lecturers.



## A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION IN THE STUDENT BODY

Entering the halls of the Multiple Intelligence International School, one is immediately greeted by the sound of our students interacting with one another. This is because, at MI, we try our best to inculcate a sense of community among our students. Whether you're an artistic soul from Grade 5, or an aspiring painter from Grade 7, you are welcome to collaborate within your own interests at MI.

One of the ways we do this is through the school's Programs for Excellence (PEX). While other schools have clubs or orgs, our school community allows students to excel beyond the classroom, according to their own interests. For instance, students that are interested in films may watch and analyze movies among each other, regardless of grade level.

The student body also routinely holds special events that are designed to encourage participation from the whole learning community. Last November 29, 2018, for example, the MIIS Batch 2020 staged TUBULAR: Fitness Fair 2018, which encouraged all students to live an active and healthy lifestyle by doing simple exercises and dance routines. We had a lot of fun!

## COMMUNITY AMONG OUR PARENTS

It is not only our students that are engaged in building a learning community. Of course, our parents are also involved. Our primary initiative in this regard is our Parent-School Partnership Council (PSPC). Headed by parent-leaders, discussions between the school administration, teachers, and parent community are held

**More importantly, they are given the chance to collaborate and brainstorm.**

Within the halls of MIIS, teachers may also collaborate on inter-level activities, such as the recently-concluded Academic Bowl, where students were quizzed on Science, Mathematics,





Spelling, and Social Sciences. Through events like these, teachers hold each other's hands in deciding the best and most productive course of action to enhance student learning.

**COLLABORATION IN ADMISSIONS – MAKING IT VISIBLE!**

The staff of MIIS are dedicated to collaborating to make the essence of MIIS visible to the general public. The Student Services Department continuously seeks to welcome prospective students. The Marketing and Admissions Department work together to make the MIIS learning community vibrant and visible to the public, through regular social media updates, newsletters, and other communication channels. The team then makes sure that the learning community is in a safe and wholesome environment for learning at MIIS.

Making our learning community visible is essential to the team effort that is admissions at MIIS. Together, we aspire to welcome children, parents, teachers, and staff that are valuable parts of our learning community. We aim to make the daily life of students meaningful not only through events and competitions within the school, but also through the small acts of community that they feel within the MIIS campus.



**ABOUT THE MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

The Multiple Intelligence International School (MIIS) was founded in 1996 with the aim to hone leaders of the 21st century who use their intelligences to make a difference. It is the first educational institution in the Philippines that has based its approach on the Multiple Intelligence framework of Harvard-based cognitive psychologist Howard Gardner. The MI approach, which is implemented in the United States and other countries, backed by recent research on how children learn, is truly responsive to the needs of the 21st century. MIIS is a progressive international school that offers programs from PreK-12. As an accredited institution of the Council of International Schools (CIS), we are committed to be a premiere international institution that embodies best practice and global trends in education.



*by* Cristina Parpan  
Student Services Department Head  
**Multiple Intelligence International School**

# Sharing the Admissions Decision with EAL

It is pretty simple to administer and in emergency cases I can give the test as well. Once the test is done you plug the results into the online calculator and it creates a score sheet. And this is when the hard work begins.

Getting scores is child's play, interpreting the scores is something different.



If we were a public school with unlimited funding for EAL support and in a country where English is the native language, we would use the WIDA rubric and determine that every student who is not achieving at the native or near native level would receive direct support and be considered "in the EAL program." But, just like the chances of me becoming a genie, the chances that the majority of international schools could be sustainable with this model are pretty close to zero.

So our school, like many others, set entrance and exit cut-offs for the EAL program. These scores help us to determine whether or not a student can access the curriculum, how much support they would need and sometimes, depending on their grade level, whether or not we can even admit them into the school. When we set the cut-offs, the EAL team, the principals and I got together to hash things out. Each department had different points of view about what the scores should be and valid reasons for these views. The EAL teachers needed to make sure that their resources were not stretched too thin, the principals needed to balance

In my wildest dreams, which are of course always about my work, I am an omniscient, benevolent admissions director looking a little bit like the genie in Aladdin. In a voice very similar to Robin Williams' while standing in my school's testing room I am waving a magic wand pointing at students and bellowing "And you get admitted" "And you get admitted" over and over again with an enormous smile on my face. And the crazy thing about this, besides the obvious, is that every morning after this dream I wake up relaxed and happy. Now what your dreams mean.com tells me this is because I am waking up truly relieved that I do not have to deliver bad news to prospective students. I must admit that I believe it. I mean that is the worst part of the job. No matter how much I get cranky because sometimes we have to do another round of testing or because I have to wait until at least two other people have looked at a file before we can give families a decision, I am thankful that I am not the only one determining if we are a good fit for a prospective family.

Depending on the profile of the applicant, one of the other people involved is an English Additional Language (EAL) teacher. We have limited spaces in EAL and so when a student's admissions screening indicates they might need some additional support we require an EAL assessment. At SSIS, our EAL teachers administer a commonly used measure of English proficiency, the WIDA MODEL assessment. This tool evaluates speaking, reading, writing and listening.





the demands on the classroom teachers and I needed to make sure that the school has a sustainable enrollment. In the end we came up with scores that we still use today.

EAL teachers take the results of the WIDA assessment, the answers on the language survey and the student's academic experience with English into consideration when making an admissions recommendation. Once they make their recommendation I look at it, check to see if we have EAL seats available, and make my decision. Then the file goes to the principal or into the "no thank you" pile. Sounds pretty simple and straightforward right?

**Ah but no, just when we thought we had it down to a science our marketplace changed.**

In response to this change we revamped our elementary school EAL department, moved to a model of one EAL teacher per grade level and moved from the notion of "x" number of seats per grade level to the notion that many of the current students and applicants fall somewhere on the EAL continuum due to the demographics of expatriates here in Vietnam. Therefore, we needed to look at what mix of the continuum works best in our classrooms without lowering our standards. Working with EAL teachers and the principal I developed a continuum table with spaces available at each level, which we use to inform admissions decisions.

Enormous amounts of professional development and time went into the shift, classroom teachers received explicit EAL training, EAL teachers received more training on the new model of delivering services and time and resources were spent on



**Maximum number of students to be admitted at overall WIDA level**

	Entering	Beginning	Developing	Expanding	Bridging	Reaching
Grade level	1	2	3	4	5	6
EC	18	18	18	18	18	18
K	5	8	18	18	18	18
1	4	7	15	20	20	20
2	3	6	12	20	20	20
3	2	5	10	15	20	20
4	0	3	5	15	20	20
5	0	0	5	10	20	20

cross-divisional alignment. At the beginning of the school year I spent two-days at an in-house workshop with the EAL teachers from all divisions to refine our common understanding of the scores and use of the WIDA scoring rubric. This helps us to ensure that someone placed as "bridging" by one teacher would get the same result if another teacher conducted the assessment. Intense discussions revolved around what was the best calculation to determine composite scores given our student population but thankfully consensus was reached giving all a feeling of accomplishment. During this workshop we also began the task of truly analyzing where all of our current students would be on the continuum based on reviews of unassisted classwork.

This work will continue as we evaluate our current student population, review the continuum table used for admissions and

begin assessments for the new admissions season. Having such a close working relationship with our EAL teachers has made the process professionally rewarding and allows us to feel good about our admissions decisions. It is great when genie-me can announce "And you get admitted" knowing we truly are a good fit for the student.



*by* Katie Rigney-Zimmermann  
Admissions & Marketing Director  
Saigon South International School

# Forging relationships with international audiences



When ACS Doha International School's admissions office was set up, the work was mainly clerical: to collect application forms, process documents and schedule assessments. The staff came from administrative backgrounds and were part of the school already.

However, with the growth of international schools came an increased focus across all the school's operations. The admissions office started to evolve. These days, it recruits qualified professionals who are creative, possess people skills and have a flair for marketing, all of which are important qualities for attracting and retaining families.

ACS Doha International School is one of four ACS International schools, with three in the UK. The schools have over 50 years of history with a vision "through learning, inspire all to make a difference". The latest parent survey states that the admissions office is

popular with new families for assisting in a smooth transition to both school and the new environment and current families for continued support for re-enrolment, fee payment and after school activities.

The role of the Dean of Admissions is challenging as well as rewarding. Its main purpose is to either assist a family as they join the ACS community in Doha or to help find an alternative option if ACS Doha is unable to accept them. It is the duty of the Dean to be excited for a new family joining and be patient and empathetic when being unable to make the offer of acceptance for another family. ACS Doha's admissions office is always busy, the goal of the team is to facilitate the journey of a new family in a simple, structured and diligent manner. Even though the application process is 100% online in two parts, we invite families for a personal tour of the campus and support families who may need extra

help with their application or who are still trying to settle down in a new country.

**The admissions team works hard to connect with families on a personal level and support them until they feel secure and familiar in the new environment.**

The working style of the admissions team is very inclusive. They ensure all stakeholders in the school are included as part of admissions and marketing. When a prospective family is touring the school, they meet the Head of School, principal, homeroom teachers and the students in an informal manner. This helps the family to identify if the school is a right fit for them.

The application process can sometimes be challenging to prospective families, particularly

when combined with a move to a new country, new workplace and a new time zone. Finding a safe and happy place for their child's education is paramount on their mind. The admissions team go through the application process in a detailed manner with the family and provide honest feedback to help inform their decision making.

Each family and applicant have a unique requirement from the school they choose. In this respect the key function of the admissions office is to connect the dots between the family's needs and the vision of the school to forge like-minded partnerships. If there is no possibility of such a partnership, then the admissions team identify alternative institutions and learning centers that are able to provide the support required to assist the family.

The admissions office in ACS Doha is a fun place to work. It is a dynamic space buzzing with walk-ins, telephones ringing off the hook, meetings, assessments for applicants, school tours and chat after the tour, orientations for new starters, and registrations for confirming spots for the new families offered to join the school. The current families consider us as their gate keepers for the school, their first point of contact before joining us. The bond is formed during the admissions process, when they come to the office for requests about transportation, moving house, and joining different clubs and WhatsApp groups which helps integrate them with the ACS Community. The entire admissions team is happy to assist and be part of the journey with the families.

The journey of the admissions office starts from the inquiry stage and continues until a student graduates or leaves the school; they form part of their extended family. There is a close, tight and warm community feeling that can be picked up in the environment by any newcomer.

ACS Doha International school



currently has 920 students and we are excited about moving to our new campus in 2020 which is a new state-of-the-art campus for 2,500 students. Our main focus now is on transferring the same kind of energy and vibe to the new campus where we assist more families with the same amount of vigour and enthusiasm.



by Sowmiya Kasthuri  
Dean of Admissions  
ACS Doha International School

#### About ACS Doha International School

A dynamic IB World School for over 900 students and 150 expert faculty and staff from over 70 countries. At ACS Doha International School, we believe every student should be inspired and challenged to reach their full potential. We bring the philosophy and approach of our established UK schools to our Doha campus and combine them with a programme that integrates our internationalism with the vibrant local traditions, culture and history of Qatar. We are proud of our international community and its commitment to inspire all to make a difference.





# The Way We Listen Shapes Our Success Story



by Madalina Cioc  
Admissions and Communications Manager  
International School of Bucharest

I decided to start this article by telling you a short story. Very predictable, I know!

I see my school as a Happy Giant who lives through the stories of everyone he meets, and I see the Admissions and Communications Department as the blood that circulates the stories to the Happy Giant's heart.

My Happy Giant always has a gigantic smile on his face, formed by hundreds of little smiles. He is very kind, he makes friends in a heartbeat and he is very welcoming with everyone he meets. The Happy Giant loves to learn, he aspires to be the best version of himself and he is very respectful of everyone around him.

His soft spot is stories. The stories of everyone he meets and becomes friends with, which keep his big heart alive. Every day he is adding them up to his own story.

In my story, the Admissions and Communications department is in charge of feeding the Happy Giant's

heart with excellent stories which keep him alive and well.

Now, we all know that working in the Admissions and Communications department in a school is not always a fairy tale. My 15 years of experience working in International Schools taught me that:

- The most important part of my job is to be, first and foremost an excellent listener, because "stories have air to breathe in only if someone is listening"<sup>1</sup>
- It is crucial to record the information we get from the people we meet
- Storytelling is the most powerful tool which can shape the future of a school. The good stories always sell and the bad stories always travel faster, so we can't let this happen
- Listening is the key to efficient and effective communication

By the real act of listening and keeping records of our meetings, not only will we be able to understand the stories and the background of everyone we meet, we will be able to tackle and handle communication barriers. Well-kept and accurate data help us to build the profile of our "target personas." These will, in turn, help us understand what, when, and how we communicate our story and the channels we use when we want to promote the school



with the view of increasing our registration numbers.

Well-kept and recorded data "speak" to us on behalf of the school community and "reveal" the next steps we need to take as an organisation or, in some cases, the need to "rewrite" parts of our story.

Two years ago we decided to review our school's mission and aims and our core values, and we asked all the members of our community (students, parents, school staff, and companies we work with) to write the words which they think define our school.

**Three defining words emerged from within our community: Learn. Respect. Succeed.**

These three words tell the story of ISB, of who we are at this point in time and what are the most important values of our community.

"Stories are data with a soul" says Brene Brown in the *Power of Vulnerability*. The ability of each school to use and interpret the data is vital when it comes to decide our schools' marketing and communication strategy, the development plan of our departments, and the story of our school. I would say that data put in the local and global perspective is most probably, the perfect tool to

help us predict, plan and put together our communication plan. It will help us to "write our story" which will be circulated around the world by our best storytellers (the prospective parents, current parents, the members of staff, people from outside the school who we work with, and the influencers).

To give you an example, our latest project was designing a landing page to promote the Early Years and Primary School and to increase registration numbers in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We analysed the data we had available on admissions (numbers of enquiries, numbers of meetings, registration numbers, meeting records, follow ups, parents' surveys and reasons for leaving school, etc) and we came up with the profile for our target personas. We have also gathered important information from the HR department regarding, for example, the teaching staff turnover and their feedback on internal surveys. The school's secretaries helped by providing valuable information on the current parents' feedback or complaints they had.

Once we identified the needs of our target personas, we started to look into the heart of our community and into our school's ethos to bring to light the story that would help convince prospective parents that ISB is the right choice for their children. We wrote the brief, we selected the appropriate

visual and decided on how, when and which communication channels we were going to use. We plan to launch the landing page at the start of our registration for the following academic year, in the beginning of February, 2019.

My point is, everyone you interact with has a story to tell you. If you are prepared to listen to these stories, they will, later on, answer your questions about where your school is going or who you are as an organisation.

Listen to the stories of the people you meet and you will be able to write your own success story.

#### References

1. Murray Nossel. *Excavate, Craft, and Present Stories to Transform Business Communication*

#### About International School of Bucharest

Established in 1996, International School of Bucharest (ISB) provides a complete and high standard educational programme for students from ages two to eighteen.

ISB operates on a new purpose-built campus situated in Bucharest, Sector 3, 1R Sos Gara Catelu. Over 40 nationalities are represented among its 730 students. ISB follows the UK National Curriculum for both Primary and Secondary school and offers International General Certificate of Education (IGCSE) and International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme which allows our graduates to apply and be admitted to prestigious universities worldwide, including Romania. English is the language of teaching at ISB and the majority of our teachers are native English speakers.



# Framing Admissions and Collaboration

## Framing admissions and collaboration at Halcyon - The CET

At Halcyon, Admissions, Marketing, Communications, Alumni and Development sit under one unified team - the Community Engagement Team (CET). Together, we work closely to develop strategic goals, place students into the school, retain students and families, as well as build and nurture our alumni network to support students in their lives after Halcyon. This collaborative approach from an institutional level means that colleagues can work in unison to organise meaningful goal-oriented events, to support families in their journey to learn about Halcyon, and to build strong relationships throughout our admissions process that will continue throughout a family's time at Halcyon and beyond.

### Admissions journey - collaborating with Marketing and IT

For many of our families, the journey starts long before they join Halcyon. Our school website has been developed with 'Discovery' in mind, providing all the information a parent might need to make their decision to join us. We utilise User Experience data from our IT team to inform how accessible our pages are, and which are the most popular, to further streamline the journey towards an enquiry, school visit or application. Any information we find is not required, we will remove so that the customer only sees exactly what they are looking for; helping to create a positive user experience.

The CET works hard to build strong relationships with our feeder schools and collaborates with them on how best to support prospective students

and parents in the decision-making process. As well as more traditional methods such as reciprocal school visits, we also offer bespoke events such as taster evenings with specific primary and prep schools, providing families, students and parents the opportunity to experience taster lessons at Halcyon. These events include our whole school community; we collaborate with different subject areas or departments depending on the areas of interest of our visitors, offering families and schools a transparent view into our learning culture.

These efforts at collaboration are seen in our focus on Diploma Programme students and bursary students in our Diploma Programme Evenings. These events alone include the voices of our Alumni, University Guidance Counselor, Diploma Programme Coordinator, Community Engagement Director, Admissions Director, and our School Director.

Our Open House events are excellent opportunities for families and students to meet the Director, students and staff in person, as well as to learn more about life at Halcyon and the culture of our school in an intimate and personalised environment.

### Admissions decisions - collaborating with academic and wellbeing teams

Completed admissions applications are closely reviewed by a committee including our School Director, senior administrators, curriculum coordinators and, where necessary, our wellbeing team - comprised of our Student Wellbeing Leader and our Academic Learning Coach. The review is meant to determine whether Halcyon's self-directed, academically rigorous learning environment is well-suited to an applicant and their family.

### Transitions to Halcyon - collaborating with our community

As an international school, we recognise that changing schools - whether relocating across a city or around the world - can be an exciting, albeit stressful and challenging time

for any family and student. Successful transitions depend on the support, guidance, and welcome from the new community, a key part of which will be the new school and what it has to offer. Halcyon's orientation programme, student wellbeing programme, empathetic staff, and vibrant parent community, support students and families to transition into their new home in London. These transitions are facilitated by the CET by working closely with curriculum coordinators, our mother tongue programme language coordinators, student wellbeing team and our Halcyon Parent Community.

### Retention - collaborating with our colleagues

Retaining families is another area in which our CET works with colleagues

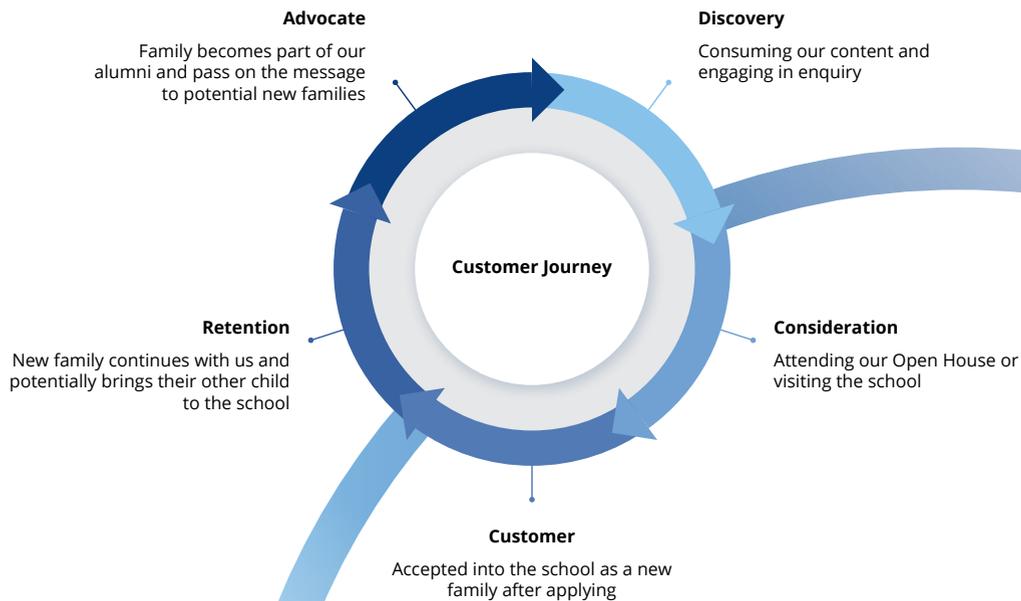
across departments. If a family has indicated that they may be looking at other schools due to a myriad of reasons, our team tries to connect with each family to further understand, provide support and reflect on these decisions. Through these conversations, our team is able to feedback information to colleagues so as to better learn from a family's experience, but also perhaps find ways for a family and student to remain in our community by adapting our service.

### Alumni - collaborating with our advocates

As a young school we have only had two graduating classes, however, we are already working hard to collaborate with our alumni community and to develop strong relationships with this

important group. Our approach to the development of an alumni association is, as with everything at Halcyon, collaborative. We will continue to work with our alumni as this group grows, ensuring that activities, events and directions reflect the needs and wishes of our alumni community. Due to our small school and close community, alumni families often stay connected to Halcyon and their support in sharing our message to the next generation of students is invaluable.

Hand-in-hand with colleagues across the school our services and expertise in Admissions, and more broadly in the CET, continue to grow and develop, embracing new techniques and technologies to provide a first-class personalised service to our families, reflective of the values of Innovation, Collaboration and Community at Halcyon.



by Maria Rosengren  
Admissions Director  
Halcyon London International School



by Sian Healy  
Community Engagement Team Director  
Halcyon London International School



by Katy Wrench  
Marketing and Communications Coordinator  
Halcyon London International School



# Developing Leaders

The core mission of the Aga Khan Academies is to produce ethical home-grown leaders for the developing world, including the African continent, towards the goal of sustainable development. What makes the Academies unique is that they identify and nurture exceptional young people from a wide range of national, religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds to create learning communities that are exceptionally diverse, open-minded,

culturally-rooted and driven to make an impact on their communities and the world.

The question often asked is how our admissions team is able to identify leadership potential – that unique variable which will ensure the students' chances of success with the rigorous International Baccalaureate programme, quality tertiary education as well as life-long learning.

Let me walk you through our process.

Since traditional student evaluation methodologies are often limited in their ability to identify strong students across socio-economic and cultural spectrums, the Aga Khan Academy Mombasa (AKA Mombasa) has established an innovative Talent Identification Programme (TIP). The programme actively searches for and assesses students with academic and leadership potential across diverse backgrounds. A key aim of this programme is to expand the reach of the Academy beyond the usual catchment groups for schools of similar calibre to include students who come from disadvantaged (i.e. poor or

marginalised) groups and otherwise would not have access to high-quality secondary education. The programme provides students, over the course of six years, with tuition, housing, meals, a weekly stipend and covers the costs of uniform, medical coverage, exam and university application fees as well as school trips and extra-curricular activities.

This initiative includes strategies for reaching out to potential students in disadvantaged communities as well as a multifaceted admissions process that includes a range of assessments to identify giftedness, regardless of a

child's previous academic preparation. These aspects of the programme help satisfy the Academies' vision to educate diverse groups of students who have the potential to become ethical leaders committed to bringing about positive change in their communities and countries.

Every year the Academy partners with Aga Khan Foundation East Africa (AKF, EA) and Kenya Government primary schools in the coast region to organise the Talent Identification process. The Academy aims to identify highly motivated standard 6 students of excellent intellectual ability, who

demonstrate exceptional leadership potential. The coordinators use their knowledge and experience to identify educationally and economically marginalised areas within the coastal region of Mombasa and schools to target for the process.

The headteachers of the selected schools are invited to the Academy to sensitise them about the IB programme, the residential and leadership programmes and the students, as well as the assessment and nomination process. The headteachers are asked to liaise with their standard 6 teachers to nominate two boys and two girls for the process. A school that is centrally located within each area is chosen as the testing centre, so that the students and their teachers are able to travel without too much time consumed and so they are not inconvenienced. The nominated students are asked to meet at the testing centre. The students then undergo a pre-test.

The pre-test includes a cognitive ability assessment using Raven's Progressive Matrices or the Naglieri, which is a reliable non-verbal test of logic and problem solving. The aspects of fluid intelligence assessed by these tests involve a high level of analytic-sequential thinking for successful performance. The tasks involve being able to identify and integrate two nonverbal patterns; these may be spatially or quantitatively defined.

The students' reading and writing performance is also assessed. Knowledge and skills in each of these areas provide vehicles for learning in all other academic areas. Writing to communicate is assessed by asking the students to write a short essay on a selected topic. The purpose is to give students the opportunity to show creativity, complex thinking and far transfer in writing a creative narrative. The students are given a picture prompt and are asked to write a creative story about it. This context gives the students the opportunity

to think creatively, make far transfer, talk about possibilities, etc. The students can write this either in English or Kiswahili, which are the official languages of Kenya.

The students also undertake a comprehension exercise to assess their knowledge of vocabulary and understanding of a text. In addition, a mathematics assessment is aimed to determine the students' capabilities in numeracy and problem solving. The assessments have been designed with year 6 teachers and MYP teachers who have knowledge of the content delivered in the Kenyan national curriculum.

Each student is given a standardised score for these assessments. This is used to select the top performing students who are considered for the secondary test.

Those selected for the secondary test are invited to return to the test centre on the following day. The procedures here include a contextual problem-solving exercise in which students are provided with open-ended opportunities to display high-level thinking, creativity and leadership. The students are given a socio-economic problem within an African context. This is written in Kiswahili and English. The students are guided through a practice problem first, to enable them to differentiate between literal responses taken directly from the text and more inferential responses that show a higher form of thinking. They are introduced to the concept of the diffuse social problem as 'a situation that could be improved or made better in some way'. The students are invited to discuss why each situation was bad and how it could be improved. The students are given a question sheet that introduces them to the steps they could go through in 'making the situation better'.

Before beginning, the students are shown either a short video or pictures related to the problem. After

going through the practice problem, the students are given a problem unrelated to the practice one to tackle by themselves. They have the opportunity to respond in Kiswahili or English.

Finally, after the process is complete in all these areas, the admissions team reviews and collates the assessment scores for each student. Based upon these scores, the admissions team then makes a final selection of students who are offered a place at the Academy.

AKA Mombasa's Registrar of Admissions, Jane Okello, says the testing process, especially the contextual problem-solving, allows the team to see the "capacity the students have for being stretched out of their comfort zone. One of the biggest tell-tale signs of leadership potential is their involvement out of school – especially how they actively pursue their passions given their limitations." She says that the problem-solving section gives the team an insight into the students' ability to think outside the box and to come up with solutions for their community and the world. The access to opportunities and accelerated growth which takes place during their time at the Academy then helps to take this to the next level and launches them onto a path of self-discovery, open-mindedness and ethical leadership, in whichever field they end up pursuing.



by Paul Davis  
Dean of Admissions  
**The Aga Khan Academy Mombasa**

# Conference Roundup



## ECIS & AISAP Admission & Advancement Conference

October 2018

by Sharleen Samuelson

Admissions Manager

Raha International School

It was such a pleasure to attend the 2nd annual ECIS and AISAP (Association of Independent School Admission Professionals) conference, held in the leafy green suburb of Waterloo, Belgium in October 2018. I chose to attend after coming across AISAP's Learning and Development Framework. I think many admissions professionals agree that their work can be poorly understood within a school, reduced either to strictly administrative tasks or conflated with marketing and sales, but AISAP highlights the competencies and behaviors necessary for an admissions professional and provides a guideline for how to grow and become a true school leader. Reading it made me feel like I had found a kindred spirit and I immediately signed up to attend and to present.

The theme of the conference was "We can be stronger together by learning together". The conference exceeded my expectations. Each session, both the plenary and the breakout sessions, were mapped to the Learning and Development Framework and for AISAP members counted towards continuing education credits for certification.

The conference opened with a keynote from Dayle Savage, Director of Learning and Development for AISAP. She addressed the importance of building shared ownership for admissions with other people and departments within your school, giving practical ideas of how to move from a transactional to a transformational relationship to enhance admissions. The second keynote speaker, Tom Larkin, CEO of Communico, addressed the all-important issue of handling emotionally charged interactions. The most helpful part was when he involved attendees to workshop some of the more challenging interactions we face on a day to day basis.

The breakout sessions covered a myriad of topics and gave a further opportunity to learn from one another. I was privileged to share a recent initiative in paperless admissions that I pioneered for our school and company. Initially I was hesitant to present (read: terrified), but the environment was warm and encouraging and I was glad of the opportunity to exchange ideas with my peers. To anyone presented with the opportunity to present, I encourage you to take the risk as you will find it tremendously rewarding! As is usually the case, the best interactions happen at coffee break, lunch, walking to and from the venue. This is when you meet someone working in a different part of the world, facing the same issues you see every day and you immediately connect over your shared challenges, joys and dreams.

It was my first time attending an AISAP conference and I was incredibly impressed by the caliber and relevance of the speakers

and sessions. This wasn't the first conference I have attended, but it was the first one geared solely for admissions and advancement and the first one where I ventured to present. I left challenged, inspired, refreshed and bursting with new ideas.

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## EARCOS Leadership Conference

October 2018

by Katie Rigney-Zimmermann

Admissions & Marketing Director

Saigon South International School

The East Asia Regional Council of Schools (EARCOS) held their annual leadership conference this past October in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It was a time for celebration for all who attended as EARCOS was celebrating their 50th anniversary and the second retirement of their amazing leader, Dick Krajczar, also known as Dr. K.

It was a great conference for Admissions professionals from around the region. We had a dedicated Admissions pre-conference led by Jesse Roberts, CEO of Admissions Pro, titled "Enrolling Successful Families and Keeping them at your School" We talked about the fact that not every family is a "best fit" for your school, but how do you know this ahead of time and how do you get rockstar families into the school. In the morning session, we built profiles of successful or rockstar families, worked with predictive analytics and identified those families that were going to become your best word-of-mouth advertisers. The afternoon found us developing KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) for our offices to ensure an experience that will keep these families at the school. Jesse led 3 additional sessions focusing on the admissions director's toolkit, word of mouth marketing and improving the customer experience.

We once again had regional colleagues step up to share their knowledge and experiences. Caroline Farrell shared with us how the Admissions and Communications team at Dwight School Seoul used interactive formats to change their open days to highlight what makes their school unique. Cheryl Palamarket from Hong Kong Academy presented on the ways to move from departmental silos to embracing effective systems that will support inclusion and diversity in the admissions process. Aimee Gruber from the Enrollment Management Association and I presented on the preliminary results of their State of International School Admissions Survey.

The noisiest time of the whole conference was when we all gathered together with the people from Marketing for our job-a-like which was led by Julia Love from the International School of Kuala Lumpur. The world-cafe approach to this session allowed us to choose topics where we felt we could either give or receive the most support. The fact that we once again proved how important the alliance with the Marketing department is was not lost on anyone.

In the EARCOS region, we are lucky enough to have colleagues who

are willing to present and a steering committee (Julia Love, Tina Herman, Wendy van Bremer, Linda Belonje, Jo Cole and me) to help ensure that the pre-conference and sessions are timely and relevant. Work has already begun on next year's conference so we hope to see you there!

## OpenApply Admissions Conference, Hong Kong November 2018

by Kim Meaden-Kendrick

Registrar

Brighton College Bangkok

The OpenApply conference in Hong Kong was a fabulous opportunity to meet new people, share ideas, learn some more about OpenApply, and also take some time to look at the bigger picture of admissions in schools. It was a really great opportunity to see how other schools handle admissions, marketing and communications.

There were some exceptionally interesting presentations such as the one from Green School Bali, which really resonated with those of us wanting to see education for children being driven by long term environmental sustainability. There was also plenty of opportunities to speak to colleagues from schools that are either getting established or are well established and share best practices.

The OpenApply team took some time during the conference to give some very useful training and update our collective skills with OpenApply. They delved into analytics and also into some of the new features OpenApply has rolled out in the past year.

The venue at The Harbour School in Hong Kong was really lovely and not only did we absorb the fabulous views but we all also very much enjoyed a tour of the truly unique school at the end of the conference.



## Finalsite University Asia January 2019

by Michael O'Neill

Director of Admissions

Taipei American School



In late January 2019, marketing and communications, technology, and admissions professionals from around Asia met at Saigon South International School in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam for the inaugural Finalsite University Asia. The conference focused on marketing, technology, and admissions topics for professionals in the region.

Highlights of the conference included keynotes from Finalsite's CEO, Jon Moser, and International School of Brussels' Director of Advancement, David Willows. Moser's keynote explored insights into the future of EdTech and the latest happenings at Finalsite. Willows shared ISB's innovative approach to admissions, communications, and advancement in what he calls "The Periodic Table of Advancement TM." Willows' approach to advancement is predicated on user experience, gamification, and design-thinking.

The event sounded off with a welcome reception the evening before the conference. Over the course of two days, speakers from around the region shared valuable insights into their profession. Attendees took away helpful tips, concrete advice, and important lessons. Finalsite staff was on hand throughout the conference with lively roundtables, interesting presentations, and useful advice.

A special thanks to Saigon South International School's Dr. Catriona Moran, Head of School, and Katie Rigney-Zimmerman, Director of Admissions and Marketing, for working with Finalsite to make the conference a wonderful success.

*"I must say that your help and described explanations are **AMAZING!!** Thank you so much."*

Elisa Giobellina  
Admissions Officer & Marketing Assistant  
Leysin American School



*"As always, I have been **thoroughly helped** by OA. I do not know what we would do without Kristen's help."*

Jay Nickerson  
Head of Admissions  
International School of Nanshan  
Shenzhen



*"I have been telling [my colleague] how **fantastic** your webinars are and all the support we receive from your team"*

Miriam McCulloch  
Assistant Registrar  
Cranleigh Abu Dhabi



*"Every time we ask if the system can do something, Tom either responds with "yes" and shows us how to do it or if not...he will give us three other ways to **achieve what we were looking for.**"*

Lily Just  
Director of Admissions  
THINK Global School



*"Thanks a lot for having a **solution to everything** :)"*

Jenny Vrotsou  
IT Coordinator  
Costeas-Geitonas School



*"Many thanks for updating our webpage so quickly. I really appreciate the **efficiency** and **thoroughness** of your team."*

Meg Holmes  
English Language Center Coordinator  
American School of Barcelona



*"You're absolutely **the BEST!**"*

Lovetta Karyeah  
Admissions Director  
American International School  
of Monrovia



## World Class Support



*"Kristen has been **so helpful** and very patient with my many questions. Very happy with the service."*

Kyrie Goundar  
Secretary / Receptionist  
International School Nadi



*"We couldn't be more pleased with the support we have received in general from OpenApply. Tom has been so incredibly supportive-endlessly, from the start. He has been absolutely so **beyond helpful and responsive** to our many, many needs and questions."*

Monica Barden  
Admissions Recruitment  
St. Stephen's School, Rome



*"Excellent! Thanks for your prompt action and **super service.**"*

Ylva Kovacs  
Admissions Director  
American Embassy School,  
New Delhi



*"You are **wonderful!!!** So professional - Thank you very much!!"*

Maya Kogan-Elias  
Director of Admissions & Marketing  
Eastern Mediterranean  
International School



*"...This is a small thing that **makes my life much easier!** Thank you!"*

Annina Caveng  
Admissions Director  
Inter-Community School Zurich



# International School NEWS



**Milestones, events, achievements, innovations, awards,  
and more from around the world**

Have news to share? Please send 50-100 words and an optional accompanying photo to [bulletin@openapply.com](mailto:bulletin@openapply.com)

# Cairo American College Celebrates CACMUN's 40th Anniversary



CACMUN delegates at the Opening Ceremony, with HE Dr. Moushira Khattab as the Keynote Speaker

This October, Cairo American College celebrated the 40th anniversary of CACMUN. First established in 1978, CACMUN is an official THIMUN-affiliated conference that hosts local as well as international schools for a three-day conference. For CACMUN's 40th anniversary, the Advancement Office connected with Mrs. Barbara Johnson, who founded

the first CACMUN conference. Barbara founded the CACMUN program in 1978 during her time in Egypt, "in 1979 I took the students to the Hague for 7 consecutive years. We won best delegation a lot!" Barbara noted "So many of those former students went into international relations and public service which is so wonderful. We were shaping the leaders of the future," she added.

CAC senior, Seif Hikal who is the secretary general of CACMUN this year, was so excited to be a part of the 40th anniversary during his last year at school. "We've had students come in from schools all the way from Beijing to Johannesburg over the years," noted Seif, emphasizing how today this has become the biggest conference of its kind taking place in Cairo.

This year, the conference had students coming from Beirut, Lahore, and numerous other local private schools from all around Egypt. "In the past years we've had many prominent politicians and public figures attending, including previous advisor to the President, Dr. Osama El Baz, former Secretary General of the Arab League and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Amr Moussa, and well known Egyptian businessman, Naguib Sawiris, as well as several US ambassadors," added Seif.

On the 40th anniversary of CACMUN, CAC was honored to host Dr. Moushira Khattab as keynote speaker at the opening ceremony. Dr. Khattab is an Egyptian diplomat, and Former Ambassador of Egypt to South Africa. In her address at the opening ceremony, she noted, "The fact that you are celebrating 40 years means that this



is a place of leadership. It means that CAC realized earlier on the crucial role of youth as constituencies as well as watchdogs of the United Nations."

Seif's father, Omar Hikal, is a CAC Alumni who was Chairman of the Political Committee at THIMUN over 30 years ago. Seif explained, "My father's accomplishments at THIMUN inspired me to pursue MUN in the eighth grade. Last January, I was honored to Chair the First General Assembly at THIMUN using my father's gavel from 1986!" Seif explained "I've always been amazed by the quality of the debates that take place in committees. Students come together and debate such relevant global issues, all while building long-lasting friendships that transcend borders."

Another delegate, Abdullah Shamsi, had this to say when asked what he learned from this experience, "Starting CACMUN from a young age truly helped me come out of my shell. Gradually making me more confident in discussing global topics, I became more aware of what was happening around the world, it is an experience that I know will benefit me for the rest of my life, especially that I am hoping to pursue a career in international relations and diplomacy. It is very similar to what actually happens at the UN."



A conference of such magnitude has the ability not only to raise awareness about some of the most important topics around the world, but also to shape the students' perspectives on global issues. Many members and students from CAC see this conference as a means of learning the art of debate, and more importantly learning how to welcome diversity, think globally, and to accept different points of view. All this, while building strong friendships with students around the world. In the end, CACMUN serves as the perfect model for students to learn while having fun.



by Diana Shanaa  
Communication Specialist  
Cairo American College

# Edify International School Pune Celebrated its Inauguration



Edify International School Pune in association with Pune District Chess Association organized a unique chess tournament for all Pune students aged between 5 and 16 as part of the School Inaugural activity. Around 1,000 students from the city participated in the chess tournament and the top 12 who were scouted through the preliminary rounds got an opportunity to play a historic exhibition match with Grandmaster and Former World Chess Champion Viswanathan Anand on the day of School inauguration, 8th December, 2018. Mr. Anand is also the brand ambassador of Edify International School Pune.



Viswanathan Anand won the match against the 12 students and said that he was happy to see that there is a curriculum like International Baccalaureate which focuses on building the 21st century skills by encouraging young minds to think critically and challenge themselves to do things differently in their



daily life. The event was followed by a Kids Carnival and had activities like Zumba, Karaoke, Musical Night, Food & Flea Market and children's workshops like Pebble Painting, Origami and Keyboard & Percussion workshops. The event was attended by people from the entire city and proved to be a great inauguration for the school.

The tournament had a registration fee of 300 rupees per student and the proceeds received from the event were utilized to sponsor the education of a girl from an underprivileged background to study at Edify International School Pune.



by Imran Bandeali  
Chief Admissions Officer  
Edify International School

#### About Edify International School

Edify International School is an established IB School in Hinjewadi, Pune. It is a candidate school for IB PYP\* and MYP\*. The programme aims to develop the individual talents of young people and teach them to connect the experience of classrooms to the realities of the world outside. The school encourages its students to play sports like basketball, football, tennis, skating, volleyball, swimming and squash as it boosts self-esteem and confidence. Physical education as an education tool can contribute significantly to the development and learning progress of children.



# International School News

## Aga Khan Academy Mombasa

DP2 student from Aga Khan Academy Mombasa, Devesh Datta, traveled to the USA this past summer for an entrepreneurial program called LaunchX which is hosted at MIT and Northwestern University. Devesh attended the Northwestern session which resulted in him becoming involved in two new companies. He co-founded a company called Pyronix which focuses on reheating drinks in a portable and convenient manner and was also approached to become the director of Stellar Corp - a website development company.

## Ambassadors College, Ota Ogun State

A female student of the secondary school of Ambassadors College successfully beat the previous mathematic record of the Cowbellpedia Secondary Schools Mathematics Television Quiz Show. Faith Odunsi solved 19 questions in 60 seconds, beating the previous record of 17 questions in 60 seconds with room to spare. The record was broken in the semi-final round of the competition sending Faith forward to the final stages.

## American School of Paris

Exciting new changes have arrived at American School of Paris as Jane Thompson became the new Head of School this past July (2018). Jane comes from Istanbul International Community School in Turkey. Upon announcement of her appointment, the school's Board of Trustees stated that "[Jane's] experience, strong leadership capabilities, and future-focused, student-centered approach to education complement ASP's

mission to prepare students to achieve academic and personal excellence and to thrive in a global society."



American School of Paris

## Borneo International School

Upper primary students of BIS took to the coast to sweep and clean at Damai Central Beach in Borneo. Teachers and students combed the beach, determined to improve the conditions and cleanliness of their community. The students packed 50 large garbage bags full of an array of waste from the beach and left with a great sense of satisfaction.

## French International School in Hong Kong

Located in the city's Tseung Kwan O district, French International School in Hong Kong's new campus is a "vibrant green oasis in the dense city." The 19,600-square-meter building is made up of a series of large open plan spaces called Villas which hold 125 pupils in the same age group. The new campus includes 42 new trees, a 550-square-meter botanical garden and even a multi-story hanging gardens all aimed at improving the air quality at the school.

## German European School Singapore

CESS opened its new \$135 million campus in fall 2018 and is offering the use of its facilities to community organisations. The school has an

Olympic-size swimming pool, football field and cooking studio; not to mention a 400-person auditorium as well. Principal Mr. Christoph Zaenglein made it clear "We are blessed with wonderful facilities and we want to pay forward the support we have received from the Government, our neighbours and so many other people by making spaces like our auditorium and football field available for community event bookings."



German European School Singapore

## International School Manila

ISM students successfully won the 2018 Beamline for Schools competition, an initiative funded by the prestigious particle physics laboratory Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire (CERN). The competition included 195 teams made up of over 1500 students from 42 countries. The

ISM team, called "Beamcats", project explores the use of subatomic particles as a less harmful method of treating cancer over other methods including X-rays in anti-cancer radiation therapy.

### International School of Paris

The International School of Paris recently evolved to an integrated Advancement Office model, responsible for admissions, engagement, internal/external partnerships and development/fundraising. Courtney Knight has been appointed the Director of Advancement and Engagement and will oversee departmental initiatives. Piers Jarvis and Emma Ward have been promoted to managing Admissions Coordinators and, along with Leanne Dwyer, will be responsible for enrolment across all three campus IB programmes, this during an exciting time of growth for the school! Stephine Corso has been promoted to Communications and Engagement Coordinator and, along with Lydia Ratto, will be responsible for internal/external communications and marketing strategies. As ISP embarks on a new departmental multi-year strategic plan, they are excited to connect with their colleagues rich in experience and innovation across these areas.

### KIS International School

New facilities at KIS bring new opportunities to students as they add two new buildings to their spacious campus to compliment the already outstanding facilities. The first is the Arts & Design building featuring art studios, a black box drama room, a multipurpose hall, a design center and design workshop as well as school

shops and offices. The second is a new Sports Building complete with an indoor gymnasium, two full sized courts and an additional competitive swimming pool with starting blocks and touch pads for timing.



### Le Monde International School

LMIS is a new bilingual school in Norman, Oklahoma that opened as the result of dedicated efforts from students, staff and parents over the past two years. It is a French and Spanish language-immersion public charter school aimed at creating biliterate students, not just bilingual. School Board Vice President Jody Britt said "...the really rewarding part is walking down the halls, seeing the students' projects on the walls, to hear them speak French and Spanish. It's amazing to have made that happen." She also alludes to the process of even letting the students pick the mascot. It came down to pickles or panthers - "Thank God panthers won!"

### Malaysia Shanghai International School

Malaysia gets its first China-centric international school with the addition of Malaysia Shanghai International School. The school is a product of Cempaka Schools Group and Shanghai Rainbow Tree Education Group. The school opened its doors this January and has gained the reputation of having innovative programs and top-notch facilities.

### Manistee High School

Manistee High School is making the world a little smaller through its foreign exchange program. Twenty students came to the school hailing from several countries including Denmark, Australia, Thailand, Germany, Spain, Finland, Brazil, Norway, Japan, and the Czech Republic. Several students cited how welcoming the school and community were and the surprising fact that life was not as different as they might have expected between Manistee and their respective communities.

# International School News

## Mayfield Senior School

Students from MSS in Pasadena, California have been awarded the Moulton Global Citizenship Grant as a result of their proposal to create a technology-driven education and cultural exchange with students located in the Philippines who are survivors of human trafficking and children of former commercial sex workers. Their aim is to raise issues of diversity, build relationships and share experiences to enhance cultural identity and personal growth for each girl involved.

## Multiple Intelligence International School

Students from the Multiple Intelligence International School traveled to Chiang Mai, Thailand to immerse themselves in the local culture as Global Leaders. Grade 7 students at the Multiple Intelligence International School were given the opportunity to explore their ASEAN neighbors to equip themselves with the skills to face an increasingly globalizing future. The students experienced local farming and jungle cooking, learning Thai dishes and agriculture. They were also treated to a Thai culture immersion, where they learned some Thai phrases, culture, and heritage.



## Novel International School, Jeddah

NIS Jeddah won the BEST Cup Under-14 Football Tournament. The team beat reigning champion New Al-Wurood International School, Jeddah 1-0 by scoring the game's only goal in the second half of extra time. The BEST Cup Under-14 Football Tournament has a mission of finding out the genuine talents in football initiated by the BEST group of schools in Saudi Arabia. Students gain exposure to fair play and a disciplined way of life by following the game's rules and experiencing comradery.

## Oakridge International School, Bengaluru

Students of OIS Bengaluru are challenging societal pressures and general inequality in the spirit of Republic Day. Students from OIS' Class 10 performed plays on the street to bring awareness to issues around gender stereotypes that hinder boys and girls. The students concluded their multiple street plays by chanting "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but your words will not define me."

## Obero International School

Students from OIS hosted TEDxYOUTH@OIS - an event centered around the spirit of spreading ideas. The theme this year was 'Evol-YOU-tion' which signifies achieving something above and beyond what has been achieved so far. The event serves as a platform for students to come together to discuss inspirational ideas which will hopefully create a better tomorrow in the community and improve the fabric of society.

## OurPlanet International School Muscat

OurPlanet will begin teaching the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme in 2019. "When the Ministry of Education gave us the approval to offer Grade 7 last year it was obvious that the next logical step would be to begin the MYP. On behalf of the Board of Governors I would like to say that we are all very excited to be leading OurPlanet on this next phase of educational growth." Sayyid Mohamed Al Said, Board Director. Principal, Mr. Tim Sloman added "I am looking forward to introducing the MYP to our wonderful cohort of students and the wider school community. Any student that successfully completes the Middle Years Programme at OurPlanet will be well-prepared to take on the two-year Diploma Programme."

## Saint Francis International School, Maryland

This past fall, SFIS students left their classrooms, as they do every Wednesday, to plant lettuce in their school garden. A community volunteer known as "Farmer Alan" teaches students every week to tend to the garden. The garden itself produces lettuce, kale, chard and other vegetables that are used for the school's lunch program. Through this program the school is hoping students will make the connection between dirt and plants and what they decide to put in their mouths to promote overall health. The program incorporates a lot of science to keep the education alive even outside the classroom.

### Seisen International School

Seisen International School, an all-girls international Catholic school in Japan, is helping students to pursue science 'in the real world' through its Firebird initiative – a competitive science team. Firebird has achieved great success over the years. In 2015 the team invented the NASoPod, a portable and renewable heater that works without fossil fuels or electricity. They presented this invention during a trip to the Kennedy Space Center and ended up receiving requests to take NASoPod into production. Even last year the team invented Bonometal which is a biodegradable material used to make screws and plates used in health care, and Hydroshield 15 - a fabric protecting astronauts from Galactic Cosmic Rays.

### Success International School, Riyadh

SIS of Saudi Arabia conducted CPR training for its students in association with the Ministry of Health. The trainers went through the different techniques for CPR when performing on adults, kids and infants. The students learned the importance of CPR and how it can keep the blood flowing to the brain and vital organs during emergencies. Students later answered questions asked by MoH staff and received safety kits as a gift for their hard work.

### Swiss International School Qatar

Students at SIS organised an International Day Festival to celebrate the diversity and multiculturalism at the campus. The festival comprised of over 30 stalls representing different nationalities across the world. Attendees were able to experience all the different cultures and even indulge

in local foods from each nationality. Students received a passport stamp at each stall allowing them to "visit" and experience more than 30 cultures in a single day.

### The European School in Copenhagen

The European School officially opened this November (2018) as the first public international school in Denmark. HRH Princess Marie and Copenhagen's Lord Mayor Frank Jensen cut the ribbon at a ceremony attended by parents, teachers and students. The school has held multiple temporary locations since 2014 until finally receiving its own permanent campus. The school already has plans to continue its growth, eventually catering to over 1000 students from kindergarten to secondary, up to 7th grade.

### The International School of Macao

The International School of Macao launched its first-ever Activist-in-Residence program in November 2018, an initiative that gives students access to an expert in the field of activism. Mr. Salva Dut spent two days at TIS and met with nearly 1,100 students from PreK to Grade 12, sharing his incredible journey as a "lost boy" of Sudan fleeing civil war, to his ongoing work with Water for South Sudan, a charity he founded that drills, repairs and maintains wells to make safe drinking water accessible to communities in remote areas. TIS exceeded its fundraising goal of \$16,000 USD which will be used to build a new well. The program was facilitated by Inspire Citizens, a teacher-created collective that provides project-based learning opportunities to international schools throughout Asia.



The International School of Macao

### The Kilmore International School

TKIS has placed a heavy effort in its wellbeing program which aims to give students more opportunities to succeed academically and build resilience. The school used an "appreciative inquiry" where they asked students, staff and families to identify what they value most about the school. The inquiry brought to light TKIS' core strengths like diversity, its connection to the local and global community and its commitment to achieving personal and academic excellence. Focusing on those values, the school's new wellbeing curriculum is taught every week in homeroom classes. In primary and middle school, students learn to deal with life's challenges and build strong decision making skills. Senior school focuses on career preparation and self-management to get their students adequately prepared for the next steps of life beyond TKIS.

# My Journey to Admissions

We have observed that international school admissions staff come from incredibly diverse backgrounds. How do these past lives inform their current work?





## Robin Berting

*Admissions Manager*

**International School of Brussels**

When I finished high school in suburban Vancouver, BC, Canada, in the mid-1980's, I desperately wanted to travel and see the world. I took a gap year and spent some time working in a restaurant before hitch hiking across Canada and all over Western Europe. A little later, as an undergraduate student at McGill University in Montreal, I spent a couple of years working as a part-time receptionist in the Montreal Youth Hostel. To top it off, I also did a couple of extended, adventurous trips backpacking on a shoe-string in Mexico and Central America.

The more I look back on those intense experiences, the more I come to the conclusion that the kinds of work and travel I did back then were excellent preparation for what we do in admissions. Of course my formal education in political science and then teaching have been a big help too, but it is probably during those early years that I learnt how people can be so different yet so similar at the same time. Everyone has their own story to tell but we all have the need to connect with others so that we can share our stories. Those experiences helped me develop the ability and confidence to instantaneously connect with people from all walks of life. When I was hitchhiking or tending to the reception at the hostel, I often didn't know who I would have to talk to next, where they were from, what they were going through, or what mood they would be in. Sometimes I didn't even know what language I would have to use with them until they were right in front of me! I had to learn to pick up on both verbal and non-verbal cues. I also had to look out for myself, and in the case of the Youth Hostel, I had to look out for the institution I was working for as well - and once in a while I found myself in tricky situations that required quick solutions. A lot of people would find this stressful, but I thrived on finding ways of connecting with people and helping them feel comfortable so they could tell their story.



Another aspect of my background that has helped prepare me for the work we do in Admissions is the number of times I have moved and adjusted to new locations, jobs, cultures and languages. After spending my first twenty years in Vancouver, I have lived anywhere from one to nine years in the following locations: Montreal, Mexico City, Seoul, Barcelona and now Brussels. And I have had my wife and school-aged children with me in the last three locations. As you can imagine, this has given me valuable insight into different cultures - as well as genuine empathy for the families going through transitions that I regularly meet in Admissions.

And how exactly did I get into admissions? I was working as a French teacher at an international school near Seoul in 2005 and the Director of Admissions at that time suddenly left. They approached me when they found out that I could speak Korean relatively well; they correctly thought the ability to speak Korean would be helpful in interviews as many of the Korean prospective parents back then couldn't speak much English at all. I had been teaching for about ten years by then and had never dreamed of working in admissions, but the more I considered it, the more I liked the idea. I thought it would be both exciting and insightful to talk to parents about international education and their hopes and fears for their children - and it still is.



## Simon Fitch

*Director, Student Recruitment & Admissions*  
**TASIS The American School in England**

2017 saw me arrive at TASIS The American School in England, one of the UK's most international schools where I'm privileged to work with students and colleagues from over 50 countries every day. I'm almost back to where I began, in the leafy country of Surrey, it's the twists and turns in the intervening years that have provided the learning and international mindedness I'm bringing to my current role as Director of Admissions here at TASIS.

Given current events here in Great Britain, I'm often reminded of my own first memories of school admissions as I was asked, at 11, for my opinions of the European Union in my own interview. Having adequately negotiated that minefield, I completed my teenage years locally, before starting a journey of discovery with 4 years at Newcastle University. Those readers familiar with the wonderful North East of England might empathise with my feeling of culture shock – a genuinely very impactful and different experience which was quite extreme for the younger me, but now dwarfed by the transitions of the many students and families I've helped move to UK education during my career.

The bright lights of London were calling post-University, and I moved into a role working with applicants from around the world who were aspiring to gain a place at the University of Westminster's Business School. Technologically, their road was often more difficult than now (faxed applications?!), but I realised quickly that our students' tenacity certainly matched that their successors have consistently demonstrated in terms of accessing educational opportunities globally.

Via a move to St George's, University of London medical school and a number of roles there, I became Director of International Development, led teams in the UK and US committed to raising awareness around the possibilities and intricacies of medical school admissions to high schoolers around the world, and those helping them, along with developing opportunities for study abroad and overall internationalisation at the University. Somewhere along the way, I took a postgraduate course in Sport, History and Culture –

marrying my three major interests and probably providing the basis of most of my conversations in life...

I was also able to work with talented young people from around the globe in London as Centre Director at the University's joint venture partnership with INTO University Partnerships, where I directed our pathway centre. The sheer breadth of the opportunities afforded to me, both at home and via extensive travel, were transformational and I remain very grateful to those who guided me during this time, and to my wife Fiona and family who supported me from near, or usually it seemed from afar.

TASIS England was one of the schools closer to home I visited regularly, and when this role was made available, I jumped at the opportunity to base myself at the heart of a truly global and highly connected community, devoted to nurturing and emboldening our learners. I enjoy leading a team helping those relocating to the UK (a bit of local knowledge goes a long way), with families looking to send their kids to board here and with those helping them, including our network of agents and consultants who we regularly host at our beautiful campus.

Whilst being back at school is definitely different, with structure, routine, safeguarding at a whole different level, as I hoped every day it also provides the opportunity to work much more closely with our families and students and provide the individualised advice I'd increasingly missed. Mixing these approaches with some of the experiences previously gained, for example, around data-driven decision making, peer-to-peer advocacy and expedient but rigorous processing has been fascinating. Rarely can you say you genuinely learn something new every day at work – I'm very pleased that those around me let me do this every day.

Over the last couple of years, it's been very enjoyable meeting admissions colleagues within schools from around the world, as has understanding the transferability of, and differences from, what I've been responsible for previously. Judging on the conversations I'm having with old University friends and colleagues, there's a whole cadre waiting to make the same move, and I'm also enjoying acting as advocate and confidante to many looking to join our community. As the father to two brilliant boys myself, finding a role where I feel true empathy is hugely rewarding – and in 2019, I might even stop making rookie mistakes like signing student emails as Simon, and finally make the transition to Mr. Fitch complete!



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