



SUIS Pudong offers an opportunity for students to enter a continuum of education from Primary through to the end of Secondary to prepare them to become Global citizens for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Dear Parents

Following on from our *A Level Information evening* where parents and students learnt what A Levels are and how respected the CAIE qualification is around the world, we thought it would be useful to share the key takeaways with the parents of Secondary school.

See below some information which Mr Macdonald would like to share with you:

### **American Universities**

**A** non-American curriculum may not be accepted by American universities? As a University Guidance Counselor, I asked American university representatives about this at every opportunity. However, I have stopped asking this question now, because the answer is the same every single time: A-Levels are viewed equally positively as IB and AP, and there is no preference.

**F**or instance, when I visited the senior admissions deans of Yale, Columbia, New York University, Princeton and Cornell in the United States last year, every one of them emphasised that A-Levels are acceptable, and that there is no hierarchy of curricula in which one is seen as superior to another. Looking at my notes from our meetings, I can quote the Senior Assistant Director of Admissions for Yale University John Yi (who reads all applications from China) as saying that the choice of A-Levels/IB/AP etc. "doesn't concern us at all" and that choosing one curriculum over another "is not in any way going to advantage someone". In fact, Mr. Yi said that he places a particularly strong emphasis on teacher recommendations, and the fact teachers form such close relationships with students at our school, given its small A-Level class sizes and family atmosphere, would give them a strong advantage here. Janet Rapelye, the Dean of Admissions at Princeton, told us that they prefer applicants who "ask questions and challenge ideas"; again, the small size of our school gives students a great opportunity to stand out in this regard.

**S**econdly, I believe the replies I have received from contacts of mine from the admissions departments of Babson University, the University of Southern California and the University of California Santa Barbara over the past few days make this point quite clear.

# How American universities decide which students to admit

**W**hat parents and students alike need to realise is that American universities take a 'holistic' approach. This word is used by admissions deans repeatedly. What it means is that grades are only one of the factors considered. As well as this, American universities consider the applicant's essays, recommendations, extra-curricular activities, external tests (SAT and ACT) and contribution to the school community, among other things. The most important thing for them in terms of curriculum is that the students choose the most challenging course available to them, regardless of whether they are A-Levels, AP, etc. All of the A-Levels we offer are highly academic, so this is not a problem.

**C**hinese parents should also be aware that American universities focus on what is known as 'building a class'. They look to ensure that the students in their freshman year are accepted from a diverse range of backgrounds and cultures. Unfortunately, as so many Chinese students apply to the top American universities, the odds of them being accepted are very low, because only a few students from each country will be accepted. I was told last year, for instance, that fewer than 5% of Chinese applicants (all of whom were outstanding) were accepted by Columbia University. This is even lower than the university's overall acceptance rate. In this highly selective process, which curriculum you took is not even a consideration!

**F**urthermore, no school can guarantee entry to the top American universities, simply because they will not accept more than a small number of students from any one school. It is for this reason that I would say that going to a big school where large numbers of students apply to the same American universities actually reduces a student's chances of being accepted by them. Well-known schools like to mention all the 'famous' American universities their students have been accepted by, but what they don't mention is that the majority of their students are rejected by them. This is the same for every school.

**I**f it were true that A-Levels, IB or AP (or gaokao, or any curriculum!) were 'preferred' over another one, then everybody would take that curriculum, and nobody would choose the others. But it is absolutely not the case. This is clearly shown by the fact that a SUIIS Pudong student who graduated last year was accepted by and is currently studying at the University of Toronto, Canada's top-ranked university. Furthermore, Owen applied to and was waitlisted by New York University, and may have been accepted if he had not withdrawn his application after being accepted by Toronto, his top choice. In short, A-Levels do not prevent students from successfully applying to North American universities.

# University preparation at SUIS Pudong

With regards to what is on offer at SUIS Pudong, I would also like to draw the parents' attention to the range of activities on offer at the school aimed at preparing students for university. For instance, with particular regards to applying to American universities:

- Three **A2 (grade 12)** students are currently preparing their applications to American universities, and being given one-on-one guidance on their essays from the University Guidance Counseling and English departments.

- **A1 (grade 11)** students have been provided resources on how to prepare an American university application, and will be given a guidance seminar in coming weeks to advise them on the next steps they need to take. Before the summer holiday, they will begin work on their application essays.

- **IG2 (grade 10)** students have just completed a survey on their university goals, and in one-on-one follow-up meetings, those who have expressed an interest in American universities (more than ten students) will be given advice on how to prepare over the next couple of years.

- In regular bi-weekly sessions starting next week, both **IG1** and **IG2 (grade 9-10)** will be given introductory lectures on all aspects of university application, including application to American universities.

- All interested students will be encouraged to attend the university fairs held for students in March next year, which will be attended by numerous American universities

- The online BridgeU platform introduced by the school this year allows all students at the school from IG1 to A2 to research suitable American universities, and to develop their extra-curricular achievements. It also allows constant communication between the students and the university guidance counseling team.

- I have experience as an IELTS examiner, and last week I gave mock IELTS speaking tests to four A-Level students, and a writing test to one, with more to follow. Similar preparation will be given to students who wish to pass TOEFL.

- In September I attended the Council of International Schools' university guidance conference in Bangkok, and spoke to representatives from dozens of American universities, asking them questions in order to help our students. Ms. Chen and I will be attending similar events in future, and will make a point of making contact with the universities our students wish to apply to.

# University preparation at SUIS Pudong

**B**y far the most important way for students to improve their chances of being accepted at a highly-regarded American university is to ensure they are participating actively in their school and city community, as well as working hard in their studies. If students are well settled at this school, get on well with their classmates, form positive relations with our teachers, take part in the activities offered to them and - especially as they get older - start and lead their own activities, I see little point in moving schools just because the curriculum is (incorrectly) perceived to give them a better chance. It won't.

**T**he IGCSE and A-Level students at this school have shown time and again that they are willing to show a lot of initiative in their extra-curricular activities, with numerous student-led activities such as the Student Mentoring Group, the student-designed yearbook and the student-produced musical play particularly outstanding examples. This week, to give another example, as well as the training I am doing with them, the A1 students also organised debate practice themselves without any assistance from the teachers, in order to prepare for the Asian Parliamentary Debate Championships next Saturday. We encourage students to 'take the lead', and the small size of our school gives them plenty of opportunities to do so.

**I**would also like to reemphasise how the close bond between teachers and students in our A-Level cohort benefits university applications, with an example of my own. Currently, I am preparing the recommendation letter for an A2 student who is applying to the UK, and I have received outstanding feedback from five teachers who know him well. This will allow me to write a very strong report. This student is known for being active and enthusiastic in class, and for asking his teachers challenging questions. I will ensure that this will really shine through in his recommendation.

***We hope you found the information provided here useful in giving you a clearer picture of how the American university application system works, and how our school takes measures to prepare students for it. Our school is very deeply committed to helping the students make the strongest applications possible, and we hope this is apparent from the contents of this letter.***

# International School Book Week

The book week was a great experience for all KS3 students who had the opportunity to participate in a range of activities and earn house points and certificates.

The Grade 7 students had a great time reading western folk stories to some very receptive Grade 1 and Grade 2 classes (they even acted them out in costume!). Some KS3 created games for each other, for example finding quotations from novels.

A big thank you to Gretl Chen and Faye Jiang from Grade 8ZB for their questionnaires and videos about their teachers favourite books and characters. We know now that Mr Mc Donald's favourite character is Holden Caulfield from 'The Catcher in The Rye', and that Miss Hart admires Jane Eyre from the novel of the same name by Charlotte Bronte. Also, Mrs Emilie's favourite character is Harry Potter and Ms Rene's favourite author is Mark Twain.

Grades 6 and 8 also designed book covers and told each other about their favourite books. Some performed some stories.

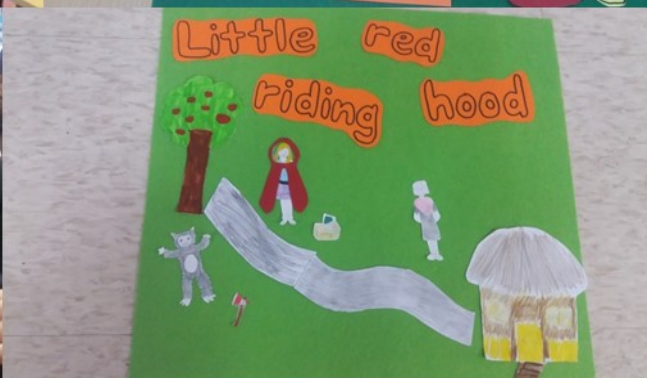
The highlight for everyone was the theatre productions by The White Horse Theatre Company. All grades were fascinated! They even wrote reviews about them. Grade 6 enjoyed Cinderella/ King Lear, the 'Vampires' in IG1 were amazing, and Grade 7 was delighted by the Midsummer's Night Dream story. It was a pleasure for the cast and the staff to see the students respond so enthusiastically. The actors commented that SUIS Pudong were the best audience they have ever had!

The costumes of book characters that the KS3 wore on the Friday were so original and inventive! Well done to the winners of this dressing up competition! The book fair attracted many people this year, another good way to be introduced to new literature.

The teachers were involved too! Miss Dodd shared her reading skills with her Grade 6 and 8 by reading them one of her favourite stories, 'The Man from the South', and imaginations were flying when her classes wrote their own stories based on it. We are looking forward to next year!



# International School Book Week



Pictured: Costume presentations from Grades 6, 7, and 8 winners. Winners of the costumes are Kitty in Grade6, Eva in Grade7 and David in Grade 8. Grace Chen Grade 6ET holds her favourite book and two felt displays made by Grade 7 who gave them as presents to the primary classes they read for.

## Grade 6 students from Local and International streams held the Annual Cross Stream 'Chinese Idiom Competition'.

The idiom competition was fun and exciting. I learned a lot of new idioms and enjoyed performing them. In the part where we raced to answer questions the atmosphere in the air was tense and exciting. I enjoyed watching performances and performing myself. Everyone was really good at guessing and hitting the buzzers quickly. Although I was disappointed that green house was last I was happy that red house had won for the smiles on their faces brought a smile to mine. Overall the idiom competition was a huge success, and I wish to have another in the near future.

6ET Mercedes FAMIRA-PARCSETICH

As a competitor, I felt quite nervous on the stage, but it was still a terrific contest. Different parts of the competition bring different feelings to us: The first part was intense and exciting, as competitors tried their best to earn points for the team. The second part was even more fierce, as everyone was brain-storming, searching in their heads for the answer. The third part was my favorite as it is really interesting. It was quite amusing.

6ET Ariel Zhang

I have enjoyed this idiom contest a lot. We have learned an abundant amount of fantastic idioms, in addition, what I found that was most important in this contest is teamwork.

6SD Kate Lin

All of the amazing, smart competitors of this competition concentrated VERY hard on brainstorming all these super hard questions. My favorite part is the last part : when groups acts out the idiom , one intelligent person guess out all the answers. It was incredibly cool.

6ET Eva Ye



Kim Sahi

Co-Principal



Ms, Bonnie Cai

Assistant Principal and Head of Secondar



## SUIS Pudong 2018

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*Shanghai United International School, Pudong would like to invite you and your family to attend the annual Winter Bazaar and Christmas Celebration.*

*The event will be held on Saturday, December 8th from 10:00am - 3:30pm*

*Each year the entire school collaborates together with the local community to provide a family experience like no other featuring Christmas carol performances games, gifts, delicacies and delights designed for the whole family to enjoy!*

*All funds raised from this event go to a chosen charity.*

*For entrance to this Saturdays SUIS Pudong Winter Bazaar and Christmas Celebration we ask you to please use your phone or a printed version to show the information booklet below to school security guards when entering the front gate.*



## SUIS Pudong 2018

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*This event will be held on Saturday, December 8th from 10:00am - 3:30pm*

*Choir Performances  
10:00 - 12:30*

*Magic Show 12:30 - 3:00*

*Featuring: Afternoon performances from a world class magician*

*Santa's Pony  
Virtual Reality  
Global Delicacies  
Christmas Tree lighting ceremony*

*with Santa Claus himself rumored to arrive*

*All funds raised from this event go to a chosen charity.*

*1 Family Admission*