

Monday, 16 June 2014

Dear Parents and Guardians

Re: Secondary Report – End of Semester 1

Term 2 has been a busy but productive one for the Secondary School community. The students and staff continue to make a positive contribution to our school across numerous areas. More pleasing than the final outcomes, which has been excellent in so many ways, has been the collegial spirit that permeates all that we undertake. The synergy that exists between teachers and students working toward a common purpose has been most gratifying to experience.

Sport has played an important dimension throughout Term 2. The students participated in competitions across a wide variety of endeavours against international and local schools. The level of achievement continues to be excellent both in terms of performance and sportsmanship. Our students have been able to secure a number of premierships this term in Basketball, Golf, Rugby and Soccer. We hosted our second Spirit Game for the year with our Rugby Team playing against St Andrews for the Dr Miller Cup. Despite the inclement weather a large crowd turned out to support our teams. The AIS Games moved to Hong Kong this term with boys and girls teams competing in Basketball, Swimming and Touch. The annual House Swimming Competition was another highlight for the term with all students displaying immense passion for their team. The sporting dimension is definitely flourishing in the Secondary School.

The Visual Arts Department continues to provide the Secondary School with many opportunities to celebrate the talents of our students. The Year 11 students participated in their annual camp to Bali. This event extends the students artistic paradigms and affords them an excellent opportunity to further develop their portfolio. Students from AIS and other schools in Singapore participated in the *Touring Art Show* an event that showcased the artistic talents of our pupils.

The Music Department provided two magnificent highlights this term. The School Choir sung at the ANZAC Day Dawn Service. Their rendition of *In Flanders Fields* was commented on by the Belgium Ambassador as the best he had heard – no small praise. The term ended with the spectacular *Annual Music Ensemble Evening*. This event was a wonderful metaphor for our school with Elementary and Secondary students performing together to create beautiful music. I never cease to be amazed at the level of creative talent that emanates from the staff and students of the Music Department.

No wrap up of Term 2 at AIS could be written without reference to our ICE-Tastic ICE Festival. This magnificent event embodies our School Motto – *Globally Focused, Distinctly Australian*. I was completely dumbstruck by the magnitude of the day yet the relaxed, inclusive atmosphere that is a strong feature of AIS, was still prevalent. Many staff, parents and students worked collectively to bring this magnificent day to fruition – it is really a community event. However, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the organising team who went above and beyond. To Mr Farrell, Mr Carney, Ms Murphy and the School Captaincy team – thank you! The day was truly ICE-tacular!

I am immensely grateful to the dedicated teachers who give so much of themselves to work with our incredibly talented students. The synergy that is created when these people work together is truly amazing.

Teaching and learning continues to be the unapologetic central focus of the Secondary School. This is our core business and it is incumbent on us to deliver the best possible educational outcomes for all of our students. This is a matter close to the heart of all AIS teachers. Term 2 has a particular academic focus with the end of semester examinations a key feature. These examinations mirror the assessments that the students will encounter in their final years of school. They are seen as vital preparation for our students as they progress through the School.



Term 2 has had a particular academic focus this year with our first group of Year 10 students undertaking their final IGCSE Examinations as part of the May/June examination cycle. I have been immensely impressed with the level of application displayed by all of these students. Moreover, I am most grateful to the teachers who provided the students with excellent stewardship and support for these assessments. I am looking forward to our results that will return to the School in August.

Another important academic initiative that was launched during Term 2 was the Academic Mentoring Program. Over forty staff from across the whole school have volunteered to mentor students in Years 10 and 12 as they move toward their final examinations. This program was developed by Assistant Head of Secondary School – Academic Standards, Ms Kalea Haran. Its purpose was to give targeted students an opportunity to engage more effectively with their studies and in so doing improve their academic output. The initial sessions have been most popular.

The reports that accompany this letter mark the end of the reporting cycle for the semester. They provide a summary of student performance and attainment throughout this period. They also furnish students and parents with strategies that will improve achievement moving forward. I encourage all parents to spend some time with their children to unpack the reports. Celebrate their successes, consider their points of development and engage with the strategies to assist improvement.

The Secondary School are looking to provide parents and students with appropriate and effective feedback regarding attainment and effort through the reporting period. The changes to four reports per year have shown positive results however we are constantly reviewing our procedures to best meet the needs of our community. To assist us with enhancing our reporting provision a survey has been put together by Ms Haran. All families will receive a link to this survey via email during the first week of the holidays. I would urge you to take some time to complete this diagnostic tool.

Along with the report I have included a Term 3 Events Calendar to assist parents when planning activities and travel during this period. I urge families to also consult the various year level Assessment Calendars that will provide further information about key dates in the term. These two documents are important to assist forward planning. More details of the events highlighted in the calendar will be provided closer to the dates.

The end of Term 2 saw us bid farewell to a number of students and three teachers. These people have all made a contribution to the AIS community and will be sadly missed. I wish them well in their future endeavours and remind them that they will always be welcome at our school.

I wish all of you and your families a lovely, restful mid-year break. All in our community have certainly earned this time. I urge you all to make the most of this important family period and to travel safely. I look forward to continuing our School's journey with you next term.

Yours faithfully



Andre Casson
Head of Secondary School