

Then and Now: A TAS Retrospective 2006-2019



Dear Parents,

First, yes I know many of you wish I would send shorter email messages. And I promise to work on that...after I share this with you!

Recently, three distinct events happened that led me to document changes at TAS over the past decade or so, and I really want to share them with you. First, in preparing to celebrate our 70th TAS Birthday next September, a team has prepared a video interviewing folks from across five decades at TAS. A common theme was how wonderful TAS has always been and how very different it is today from a decade or so ago. I listened carefully as true friends of our school shared their feelings, observations, and insights. Clearly, the direction TAS has taken, through visionary Board leadership, clarity of parental expectations and aspirations, and the work of truly gifted faculty and staff, has resulted in TAS developing the reputation as one of the finest college preparatory independent schools in the world. Our unusually talented and able students are at the core of all that has been done. So, this detailed document sprung from my sincere curiosity of just what the changes have been over these last 12 years, and why the community feels so very well served, why our applications and enrollment are so much stronger, and how faculty retention has become more like that of the fine independent schools in the United States than that of most international schools.

Second, I happened to meet with a family who has a TAS graduate, an upper schooler, middle schooler, and lower schooler; yes, we have a few of those families! One of the parents casually commented that the graduate, looking at the work being done by the upper school sibling could not believe how advanced it is compared to when she was a student here. Likewise, the parents reported, the upper school student looking at the middle schooler's homework could not believe how much more demanding the middle school curriculum has become. And, yes, the middle schooler looked at the homework of his Grade 4 sister and said, "Wow, we did not get that until Grade 6!"

And, finally, in preparation for next year's celebration, I asked our principals and other educational leaders to document what is different now compared with when they arrived. I take the liberty of quoting Mr. Gary Pettigrew, the bedrock of our Middle School, who captured the essence of the transformation with the following note to me: "Here are the changes in the Middle School. Please let me know if you need any more information. I must say looking over older co-curricular brochures from 2006 really brought home to me how many more opportunities we now are able to offer. They are of higher quality and more academic in nature as well."

I shall now provide detailed reports regarding changes implemented in athletics, Upper School, Middle School, Lower School, and Summer Academy, just as the principals and other leaders have reported them to me. If you are new to our school, you may not even know how much has changed. If you are a long time parent, perhaps you recognize that much has changed, but do not realize how exhaustive and deep those changes have been. If you are interested in your child's education, I urge you to indulge me and have a good look through the following lists. They may not be complete, but they are representative of your child's TAS experience today, and how far we have come, together, to expand the options and opportunities of every TAS student. Rest assured that our focus remains on every single child's options and opportunities, and with your Board's clear direction we shall continue to plan for a school that meets the needs of our students today, and those of their children's children for generations to come.

Faithfully,

Dr. Sharon Hennessy

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1. ATHLETICS

The Taipei American School Athletics department continues to enhance its offerings and services to our upper and middle school student-athletes.

NEW ATHLETICS POSITIONS:

Beginning in 2013, in accordance with Strategic Plan initiatives and beyond, TAS added the following positions and personnel:

- Athletics Director
- Scheduler
- 2 Strength and Conditioning Coaches
- Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach
- Director of Sports
- PE/Aquatics/Athletics Assistant
- Sports and Activities Information Photojournalist
- 2 Associate Athletics Directors
- Head Athletic Trainer
- Sports Facilities Operations Staff
- Sports Facilities Operations Part-Time Assistants
- 2 Certified Athletic Trainers



NEW ATHLETIC OFFERINGS:

Below is a list of new athletic offerings between 2013 and the present day, in chronological order:

- Added a new Competitive Middle School Program
- Opened the Tiger Health & Wellness Center fully staffed with strength and conditioning coaches
- Added golf as an IASAS sport
- Withdrew from TISSA (Taiwan International Schools Sports Association) to focus on IASAS competitive programming
- Added new Sport Specific Training (SSTs) for US/MS to provide pre-season training opportunities
- Added MS Competitive prep teams in order to increase the number of athletes training and competing
- Began offering summer camps for basketball, baseball, softball, and volleyball
- Launched new athletics web page and social media platforms
- Added baseball and fastpitch softball as an IASAS sport
- Added personal fitness training for US students
- Revised the MS athletics program to feature no cuts in participation and increase the requirements for coaches to accommodate participants

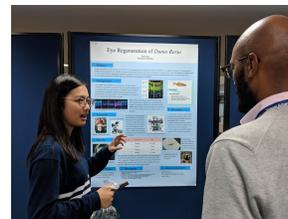
STUDENT PARTICIPATION:

Of note is the significant increase in middle school athletics participation. In the first year of our revised MS athletics offerings (2018-2019) — in which we migrated to a competitive and all-inclusive model — we experienced the following year-on-year increases in participation:

- Season 1: 50% increase (189 in 2017-2018; 283 in 2018-2019)
- Season 2: 48% increase (176 in 2017-2018; 260 in 2018-2019)
- Season 3: 37% increase (198 in 2017-2018; 272 in 2018-2019)
- Season 4: potential 139% increase (estimated 125 in 2017-2018; 299 student-athletes registered for 2018-2019 Season 4).

2. UPPER SCHOOL PROGRAM & COURSE OFFERINGS

The Taipei American School Upper School continues to increase both the depth and breadth of course offerings and services to ensure all of our students learning interests and needs are met.



NEW UPPER SCHOOL COURSES:

Beginning in 2007, in accordance with Strategic Plan initiatives and beyond, TAS added the following courses to its course catalog:

<p>English Honors Art and Literature Art & Literature Honors English 9 Honors English 10 Honors American Literature Honors World Literature Literature, Justice, & Law AP English Language & Composition AP English Literature & Composition Honors Literature & Media Studies Honors Contemporary Literature Writing Workshop & Seminar Honors Writing Workshop & Seminar Poetry Seminar & Workshop Honors Poetry Seminar & Workshop Honors Journalism 3-4: <i>The Blue & Gold</i> Expository Writing 1-4</p>	<p>Political Science and Forensics Public Speaking, Rhetoric, & Debate International Relations Honors International Relations IBSL Global Politics Honors Research in Social Science AP US Government & Politics/Policy Debate AP Seminar Capstone AP Research Capstone Honors Philosophy: Metaphysics & Epistemology IB Philosophy 1 AP Psychology Social Entrepreneurship Honors Social Entrepreneurship</p>	<p>History and Social Studies History of the Ancient Greek People (Sem. 1) History of the Ancient Roman People (Sem. 2) AP World History Seminar: History of Minorities in America Honors Seminar: History of Minorities in America Big History Honors Big History Seminar: World Religions IBSL World Religions Honors Seminar: World Religions Seminar: Turning Points in US History Honors Seminar: Turning Points in US History Honors Accounting Honors Marketing</p>	<p>Science Honors Computer Modeling Conceptual Physics Conceptual Chemistry Conceptual Biology IBSL Biology 2 Independent Research Internship 1-2 Research in Biology Honors Research in Biology Research in Chemistry Honors Research in Chemistry Research in Physics Honors Research in Physics Statistical Methods for Scientists & Engineers Astronomy Forensic Science Honors Quantum Mechanics & Relativity Anatomy & Physiology of Movement Honors Thermodynamics & Statistical Physics Introduction to Science Research Honors Research: Synthetic Biology Honors Research: Nanotechnology</p>
<p>Visual Arts Digital Photography 1-2 IBSL Visual Art 2 IBHL Visual Art 2 AP Studio Art (2D Design) AP Studio Art (3D Design) Fashion & Costume Design 3D Modeling & Character Design Architecture Honors Journalism-Yearbook Honors Advanced Design Film Production 1 Film Studies 1 Honors Film Production 2, 3, 4 IBSL Film Studies IBHL Film Studies Art & Literature</p>	<p>Computer Science and Robotics Mechanical Engineering Microcontroller Electronics Programming for Game Design Robotic Engineering Media Arts & Technology Java Graphics & Design Robotics Mentoring Honors Modern Topics in Computer Science Honors Video Game Programming Honors Robotic Engineering 1-2 Computer Science & Robotics Research Servers & Networks Teaching Assistant in Computer Science & Robotics Honors Artificial Intelligence Web Design & Programming</p>	<p>Classics Elementary Greek & Latin Intermediate Greek & Latin Honors Reading Greek & Latin Reading Greek & Latin AP Latin IBSL Classical Language (Latin) IBSL Classical Language (Greek) IBHL Classical Language (Latin) IBHL Classical Language (Greek) Advanced Latin Honors Advanced Latin Advanced Ancient Greek Honors Advanced Ancient Greek Advanced Greek & Latin Honors Advanced Greek & Latin History of the Ancient Greek People History of the Ancient Roman People</p>	<p>Performing Arts Vocal Studio Piano Performance Honors Piano Performance Musical Theater Honors Musical Theater Music Production & Technology Honors Music Production & Technology 1, 2, & 3 Chamber Repertoire Performance Honors Chamber Repertoire Performance Flute Chamber Ensemble Honors Flute Chamber Ensemble Jazz-Rock Ensemble Dance 2, Dance 3 Honors Dance 3-4 Stagecraft Advanced Technical Theater Stagecraft Production Honors Stagecraft Production Honors Theater 1-2</p>
<p>Mathematics Honors Advanced Geometry Honors Advanced Algebra 2 Honors Precalculus Calculus Honors Precalculus & Differential Calculus Honors Differential Equations Honors Linear Algebra Honors Advanced Topics in Mathematics Honors Multivariable Calculus</p>	<p>World Language Honors Spanish 3, 4, 5 AP Spanish Language & Culture AP Spanish Literature & Culture AP Japanese Language & Culture Mandarin as a Foreign Language 1, 2, 3, 4 Honors Seminar Mandarin: Case Studies Honors Seminar; Current Mandarin Topics Honors Advanced Heritage Mandarin 1, 2, 3 Honors Advanced Literature in Mandarin 1, 2</p>	<p>Physical Education and Health Advanced Fitness Training Yoga & Meditation</p>	

UPPER SCHOOL DEAN OF STUDENTS:

- The Upper School Dean of Students position was added in the school year 2016-2017. This position oversees all activities, non-athletic travel (listed below), character education program, advisory program, student government, and class deans. There is an intentional focus on community building at the upper school level, including spaces that are designed for connecting students in a positive environment.

UPPER SCHOOL TRAVEL:

During the 2007-08 year, we had two overseas Activities trips: IASAS MUN and IASAS Cultural Convention. During the school year 2018-2019, TAS offered 27 student trips:

- AMIS Jazz Honor Band & Jazz Skills Workshop – Frankfurt
- Hawaii Tourism Debate – Hawaii
- All-American High School Film Festival – New York
- NEAMC (Math Competition) – Japan
- Qatar Leadership Conference – Qatar
- iGEM world championship – Boston
- SEOMUN – Seoul
- THIMUN Singapore – Singapore
- IASAS MUN – Manila
- VEX Regional – Manila
- BERMUN – Berlin
- THIMUN The Hague – the Netherlands
- Stanford/Berkeley Swing – California
- AMIS Jazz Honor Band – Salzburg
- IASAS C.C. ADDT – Bangkok
- IASAS C.C. MUSIC – Singapore
- IASAS Debate & Forensics – Jakarta
- Duke National High School Moot Court Tournament – Durham
- FRC Australia – Sydney
- J.H.S. Japan Trip – Osaka
- FRC Hawaii – Hawaii
- National Tournament of Champions – Lexington
- MUN Impact – New York
- TAIMUN – Taichung, Taiwan
- NSPA Journalism Trip – Los Angeles
- FRC World Championship – Detroit
- VEX World Championship – Louisville



UPPER SCHOOL CLUBS:

There are a similar number of student interest and service clubs (90) as in past years with an ongoing, continual focus on improving the “service” aspect for clubs.

UPPER SCHOOL ADVISORY: Specified, intentional, impactful advisory program was started in 2007-08 and continues to develop and grow today. Teacher buy-in on this program is strong. All students are impacted.

UPPER SCHOOL CLASS DEANS: We now have (2) class deans at each grade level who oversee class activities and are the point persons for advisory and class leadership within each class.

UPPER SCHOOL CHARACTER EDUCATION: We have added Courage as a value, we have an Honor Committee (Robert Bruce) that presents at in-class meetings and advisory meetings. Character Education also takes place within the advisory curriculum.

UPPER SCHOOL FACILITIES:

- Addition of Cafeteria (Legacy Commons) that includes seating, booths, and beanbags for 465 students. Students use this comfortable space to eat, study, and congregate.
- Addition of Dean of Students Office and Student Lounge: space that includes areas for student leadership meetings, Stu Gov work, club activities, advisory group meetings, studying, and community-building.

2. MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM & COURSE OFFERINGS

The Taipei American School Middle School has continued to grow in both enrollment numbers and program offerings. Here is a look at the changes in the Middle School between 2006 and today:

- Middle school enrollment grew from 576 students to a projected 630 students (for the 2019-2020 school year).
- Class sizes have been reduced with all faculty teaching the equivalent of five sections each day in addition to their homeroom responsibilities.
- Middle School teachers overall student caseload has been reduced from an average of 96 students to the current load of an average of 80 students.
- Middle School students now sit for semester exams, in preparation for both upper school and college exams.
- Grew from two counselors to three counselors in the Middle School, allowing each counselor to follow students throughout their middle school experience.
- Transitioned from only intramural sports offerings to a competitive sports program offering 13 sports, across four seasons; added a dedicated middle school associate athletic director, scheduler, and trainers. This became a very popular program, as season three saw over 340 MS students on a team. A fitness option is also available for students after school.
- Increased the number of clubs and activities offered. Over 30 clubs and activities are now offered across four blocks each year; clubs and activities are offered every day of the week.
- Added an orientation and community-building day for students on the first day of school before beginning classes.
- Improved the transition program for Grade 5 to Grade 6 and new students.
- Adjusted the transition program from Grade 8 to Grade 9, including senior panels, tours of the Upper School, and visits from upper school administrators and counselors.
- Added "Center Court" meetings for grade level celebrations of student achievements and to hear guest speakers.
- Established daily homeroom meetings for 10-11 students per teacher at the start of every day to increase a sense of community.
- Extended homeroom lessons addressing character and wellness education.
- Added grade level service projects, including a Grade 8 community service requirement, and more service-oriented clubs.
- Implemented a Student Wellness Action Teams (SWAT) per grade level to lead wellness, character, and service initiatives, comprised of homeroom representatives.
- Developed a student ambassador program, which is involved in the orientation and support of new students.
- Implemented "Responsive Classroom," an evidence-based approach to teaching that focuses on the strong link between academic success and social-emotional learning. All MS faculty underwent formal training.
- Implemented a "Writing Across the Curriculum" initiative, to increase scholarly discourse across all courses.
- Increased the number of Summer Academy course offerings related to the TAS MS curriculum.

NEW COURSES AND ACTIVITIES:

- Changed from offering Humanities to offering separate English and History courses.
- Change from six math courses to eleven in middle school.
- Added a middle school robotics department. Robotics is a required class in Grade 6 and optional in Grades 7 and 8.

- Increased STEAM opportunities with the Solomon Wong Tech Cube with a focus on engineering.
- Added a MS forensics department. Public speaking elective introduced in Grade 7 and recently changed to debate in Grade 7 and advanced debate in Grade 8. Debate is now a required class for all Grade 7 students.
- Added a yearlong performing arts class with 6-7 sections per year. A dance performance showcase was added to the performing arts concert schedule. Middle school students regularly attend AMIS music honor festivals on overseas trips and a yearly ISTA drama festival.
- All Grade 7 students involved in a synthetic biology experience hosted by our upper school iGEM team.
- Drama classes added, as well as a play performance club; the musical remains an extremely popular offering.
- New programs include MUN, Debate, VEX Robotics, Math Counts, Play Performance club, and a Technical Theater Club.



4. LOWER SCHOOL PROGRAM OFFERINGS

The Taipei American School Lower School has continued to grow in both enrollment numbers and program offerings. Here is a look at the changes in the Lower School between 2006 and today:

LOWER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT:

- The student body has grown from 766 students (in the school year 2006-07) to the current enrollment of 905 students.
- Since 2006, full-time employment in the lower school has increased to meet the demands of increased enrollment and new programs (see attachment). Currently, there are 99 faculty in the lower school and 62 support staff. In contrast, in 2006, there were 77 faculty. Numbers of support staff are only reported from HR starting in 2010 with 29. The dramatic increase in support staff is a result of adding teaching assistants in every homeroom.
- With Board approval, well-qualified teaching assistants have been added to every homeroom class.



LOWER SCHOOL ENGLISH AS AN ACADEMIC LANGUAGE (EAL):

- In 2006 we had 5.2 teachers, and currently, we have 10. There are two reasons for the increase – enrollment and program development. Enrollment speaks for itself. However, our program has developed to meet the individual needs of students within each grade level.
- The program is far more comprehensive with increased standards, rigor, and exit criteria.



LOWER SCHOOL PERFORMING ARTS:

- Performing arts has grown in the following ways: most recently, the addition of a dance offering for students in Grades 4 and 5. Alongside that was a shift in performance-based programs that allow parents to see the process of learning in our music program – we call these “informances.” Starting in Grade 3 students have the opportunity to explore movement, voice, and instrumentation for the Orff method.
- The lower school musical began in the spring of 2014. The musical was created in response to the strategic plan initiative to increase opportunities for public speaking. The current result has half of the student body involved in the production, both behind the scenes and on the stage.



LOWER SCHOOL PUBLIC SPEAKING:

- Public speaking is alive and well in the lower school – in all content areas. For example, turn and talk/accountable talk is everywhere. This allows for increased engagement and more opportunities for students to share their thinking. Public speaking is alive and well in all areas of the lower school experience including Mandarin, Music, visual arts, and STEAM.
- We continue to raise the level of what is expected for public speaking. Students in Grades 2, 3, 4, and 5 have opportunities to use their skills to become student leaders – representing their class and grade levels. Lower school students leaders meet regularly with administrators and counselors, organize grade level assembly programs, and events for the entire lower school.

LOWER SCHOOL LITERACY:

- Teachers College, Columbia University staff developers have been at the Lower School since 2011-12. They are working alongside teachers and coaches to refine pedagogy and increase rigor in all areas of literacy. We continue to raise expectations and lift the level of the structures of the Workshop Model. Two staff developers visit each year – one assigned to intermediate and one to primary grades.
- Annually we have world-class, award-winning authors/illustrators visit the Lower School enhancing our program and inspiring our budding writers.

LOWER SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES:

- Behind every great program are great coaches. Our instructional coaches are game changers as they hold everyone accountable for the highest expectations, consistency, and program development. Starting with the hire of one literacy coach in 2008, we now have two literacy coaches, one math coach, an EAL coordinator who coaches teachers, and two Technology and Design coaches.
- With the addition of a math coach, we seamlessly upgraded our program and allow more students in Grade 5 to participate in our 5x class which allows students to study topics with greater depth and rigor. In all other grades, student learning is far more differentiated. Our new program, Eureka, is based on the standards of mathematical practices, endorsed by NCTM and the work of Jo Boaler from Stanford University.

LOWER SCHOOL WELLNESS:

- The five TAS values of honesty, respect, responsibility, kindness, and courage continue to actively guide every aspect of life in the Lower School.
- All members of the lower school faculty explicitly teach, model, and practice the values throughout every school day in every classroom. With our school wide focus on Wellness, we have broadened our programs and approach as to how we fulfill our mission to “inspire each student to be...a moral individual” and provide an education “that results...in a balanced life and service to others.”
- Responsive Classroom is the perfect approach to bridge Character Education and Wellness in the lower school, a philosophy that has been in place since the school year 2017-18. Responsive Classroom is not a program or curriculum itself; it is an approach to teaching that focuses on engaging academics, positive community, effective management, and developmental awareness. Through the Responsive Classroom approach, students develop strong social and academic skills in an environment where every student can thrive academically. Responsive Classroom’s (RC) approach reinforces and validates great teaching, is research-based, increases student engagement, and strengthens our sense of community. The RC approach strengthens our Character Education program as it promotes respectful, kind, and positive school communities while addressing students’ social-emotional needs.
- Service learning in the Lower School is based on the work of Cathryn Berger Kaye. Our program is still in the early stages but will be structured in a way that connects classroom content, literature, and skills to community needs. Currently, kindergarten, Grades 3 and 4 are embracing these updates.

LOWER SCHOOL MANDARIN:

- Our Mandarin program has developed extensively over the past five years. Working closely with our Literacy Coordinator and Mandarin Coordinator, the pedagogy in our Mandarin and English classrooms are better aligned. Mandarin teachers are now able to differentiate their

teaching to meet the needs of our students. Our two tracks have been better aligned for vertical articulation.

- Classroom libraries have been added to all Mandarin classrooms, and students meet with the Chinese librarian once in a ten-day cycle.
- TAS has hosted two Chinese Literacy Symposiums (school years 2017-18 and 2018-19), which has attracted educators from all over the world to learn from our success.
- Our Mandarin faculty has grown from 6 teachers in 2006 to 11.5 in 2019 due to increased enrollment and program development.

LOWER SCHOOL STEAM:

- STEAM – there are so many developments! Every student in Grades KA-5 participates in five to six STEAM challenges a year. These challenges include engineering, robotics, 3D design, cardboard construction, coding, and independent design opportunities.
- The annual EXTREME STEAM event draws hundreds of students and families.

LOWER SCHOOL COMMUNICATION:

- Implemented a new, one-of-a-kind, digital, interactive report card for parents in the school year 2017-18, which is currently in place.
- Increased parent communication – coffees every month to educate parents. Math game nights for every grade level are offered to all families. Parent coffees allow our parents to interact with our lower school experts around the following topics – math, literacy, social-development, EAL, wellness, technology, and more.



5. SUMMER ACADEMY PROGRAM OFFERINGS

The Taipei American School Summer Academy continues to grow in accordance with students learning interests.

- In 2006, Summer Academy was essentially a lower school program that enrolled approximately 120 students in reading/writing extension and support classes.
- Summer Academy is now a robust academic program that allows students to extend their learning in a wide range of classes as well as accelerate through the regular academic program and complete graduation requirements. We also have a robust internship program that connects students with some of the best research institutions and companies in Taipei.
- The current Summer Academy program serves approximately 500 students each summer.

Classes include:

LOWER SCHOOL	MIDDLE SCHOOL	UPPER SCHOOL
Art Teacher - Story Writing and Illustration EAL Support Public Speaking/Communication - Gr. 4 & 5 Reading/Writing Extension - Gr. 4 & 5 Reading/Writing Summer Workshop - Gr. 1 Reading/Writing Summer Workshop - Gr. 2 Reading/Writing Summer Workshop - Gr. 3 Reading/Writing Summer Workshop - Gr. K Reading/Writing Summer Workshop - Gr. KA Scientific Experiments - Gr. 4 & 5 STEM Exploration - Grades 2 & 3 Story Writing & Illustration - Gr. 2 & 3 Story Writing & Illustration - Gr. 4 & 5	Algebra Preparation - Gr. 7 & 8 Eng. Reading/Writing/Public Speaking - Gr. 6 Java Programming - Gr. 7 & 8 Art and Innovation Class at the Tech Cube MS Scientific Research - Gr. 6 MS Scientific Research - Gr. 7 & 8 MUN-Focused Reading & Writing Pre-Algebra Preparation - Gr. 6-8 Strengthening Foundational Skills Gr. 6-8	Capital Markets & Investing Drawing Fundamentals & Art Portfolios Expository Writing Film Production 1 Honors Advanced Algebra 2 Honors Advanced Geometry Honors Algebra 2 Honors Biology Honors Chemistry Honors Geometry Honors Geometry Honors Physics Introduction to Scientific Research Mechanical Engineering Microcontroller Electronics National Palace Museum Docent Class Programming for Game Design Public Speaking, Rhetoric, & Debate Robotics & Media Arts Theater Arts & Public Speaking United States History Internship

