



ISG Tehdeed May 2010

Sharing Monthly Highlights and Innovative Learning across the ISG District!

Summary

Please find below highlights from many of our schools across the District for the month of May. Excellent educational and co-curricular opportunities for our students continue to take place as we wrap up another successful academic year!

For more information on current news, visit our ISG News/Events or follow the links to the main websites of each ISG school in the lower left of the **ISG Homepage: www.isgdh.org**. Superintendent Norma Hudson wishes to thank, as always, ISG students, staff, and parents for their hard work and commitment. We wish all of our graduates continued success and look forward to keeping in touch with them as ISG alumni!

DISTRICT-WIDE NEWS

1. **Graduation Dates:** Please see the list of scheduled graduation ceremony dates, compiled by Kelly McDermott in the Superintendent's Office.

SCHOOL SITE GRADUATION CEREMONY DATES - 2009/2010 School Year

SCHOOL	EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Dammam High School	HS Graduation	June 10	11:00 - 1:00	Auditorium
ISG Jubail	10 th Grader Leaving Celebration	May 29	7:00 p.m. onwards	Intercontinental Hotel, Jubail
Yanbu Int'l School	HS Graduation	June 16	6.00 p.m.	Auditorium
Dhahran High School	HS Graduation	June 3	11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Auditorium
DEMS	Pre-School Graduation Grade 8 Graduation	May 24 June 7	1:00 p.m. 1:00 p.m.	Mini Theater Auditorium
DBGS	Key Stage 3/4 Prize Giving and Year 6 Prize Giving	June 22	10:30 - 1:00	Auditorium

2. Technology Initiatives for 2010 – 2011

New Student Management Software: Three years ago, ISG began the attempt to manage all of its schools under one software system. That software was *SERCO*.

Three years later, SERCO, for many reasons, has not been fully implemented. Thus, **ISG schools are adopting a new student management system, Skyward, for the future.** While this system does not connect all ISG schools, it does allow important electronic functions such as a gradebook, report cards, transcripts and a variety of scheduling activities. **The schools that will make the transition to Skyward are DEMS, DHS, Dammam, Jubail, and Yanbu. DBGS and Sara Village School will continue to use Serco.** This software program is geared toward the British curriculum schools and is currently meeting the needs of DBGS. Since students will be shared between DBGS and SVS, it is best if the two schools were on the same system.

Skyward, as a student management system, contains a gradebook that links directly into a report card and transcripts; an e-portal (Family Access) that promotes communication between parents, students, and the school; fee tracking; health records; scheduling; discipline; and graduation requirements. Additionally, the District Office will be using Skyward for its financial capabilities in producing invoices and requisitions; payroll; and human resources.

Skyward is used in other overseas schools similar to ISG, as well as throughout the US. Additionally, the states of Florida, Texas, and Washington have adopted Skyward throughout the state. Its flexibility is quite remarkable. It has one high school that uses a 40 period day with some classes meeting different periods on different days for different lengths of time.

To implement Skyward, a lot of work lies ahead. Sites will be involved in training as early as June with follow-up training in the fall. It is expected that dual platforms will be run at each school for the 2010 - 2011 school year with full implementation into the Skyward platform by the end of June 2011.

Until then, ISG will be working to provide Skyward with the finance, personnel, and student data it needs to begin making the conversion. ISG will tackle problems and glitches as they occur. Site administrators and technical staff have been involved in the review process so and will provide the guidance and direction needed to make this change successful.

For more information, check out the website at www.skyward.com.

Virtual School (MOODLE): In the past the NESAs organization has supported the Blackboard platform for Virtual School. ISG was fortunate in that all of our schools were able to be a part of the Blackboard initiative. However, not all of our students were able to have individual log-ins. ISG students and staff are to be commended for their efforts during Virtual School to ensure that all students either had group access or individual access.

The Moodle platform has improved significantly over the past several years and is geared towards a KG - 12 educational systems as well as a college and university. NESAs is moving away from the Blackboard platform and adopting the Moodle platform. For us, this change is positive in that now all of our students and teachers will have their own individual log-in.

Our first anticipated day of operating the Moodle platform for students is during our Virtual School days of October 10 - 12, 2010.

Tracy Bosch, as the District Virtual School Facilitator, has developed an implementation schedule detailing what each of us needs to do in order to make the change from Blackboard to Moodle successful.

Change is never easy. ISG did a remarkable and amazing job when it came to operating virtually this past fall. The Blackboard platform was new to several of us, yet we quickly adapted and learned how best to meet student needs through virtual schooling. While recognizing the hard work and achievements of our educators, there may be a sense of "Why change now?" The answer is that we no longer have the capabilities to access the Blackboard program. Change is inevitable and I believe we will be successful in this transition. We have time to plan ahead and transfer courses from Blackboard to Moodle, set up courses, add student names, and publicize our new platform in preparation for the next virtual experience.

For more information, check out the website at www.moodle.com.

E-mail Platforms for Students and Staff: As a result of our virtual school and the difficulties experienced with certain email addresses and changing email address of students, discussions among staff began exploring the possibility of establishing a **common e-mail address format for students throughout the District**; essentially the same thing that is done in universities and colleges. In discussions with administrative leaders, the "ideal" platform would consist of a common e-mail address format, shared calendars for staff, folders for pertinent information, and an address book. In considering these desired characteristics and the prices of various programs, ISG has adopted the continued use of "First Class" for its staff platform (nothing changes), and the use of Google Apps for its student platform. Every student throughout the District will have a similar e-mail name protocol to use. Tracy Bosch will work closely with designated staff at each school site to establish a process for assigning student names. One distinct advantage of using Google Apps with students is that this feeds directly into the Moodle platform. This is an opportunity for our District to move forward to better meet the needs of our students.

What does this mean for us and our students? First, it means that we will have a common address format to reach every student. It will be up to the student to use this as his/her "official" ISG school e-mail contact. **For further information, please consult the website at www.google.com/a/help/intl/en/edu/k12.html.**

3. Kingdom Master's Cohort Graduation:

Forty-eight educators representing each of **ISG's current six schools**, joined colleagues from **AIS-Riyadh, Saudi Aramco Schools (SAS)** and **International Programs School (IPS)** over a period of two years to complete the Master of Science Degree in Multidisciplinary Studies program. The graduation ceremony and celebration was held on May 20 at 5.30 p.m. in the Dhahran Campus auditorium. A **Faculty Choir** of 21 colleagues sang two selections at the ceremony. The graduation and celebration ceremony provided ISG an opportunity to honor, value, and celebrate the accomplishments of our colleagues for their work and dedication during the past two years.

ISG PARTNERING SCHOOLS

Dhahran British Grammar School (DBGS) – from Ian Jones, Headteacher

During the month of May, DBGS enjoyed the performance of **"Of Mice and Mozart"** by Key Stage 2 children. The Tuesday performance to parents was very well received with all parents invited to join in with the finale.

Reception children visited Panda Hyperpanda as part of their topic work and also held a Parent Assembly.

Soon after the **DBGS Basketball Team** competed in a tournament at Aramco and our Minimum day saw Key Stage 3 and 4 staff involved in a **CIS meeting** and Key Stage 2 staff in **Serco Reports** update.

Three DBGS staff also visited Dubai to take part in a course entitled "**Teaching and Learning - The Next Generation**" which looked at Teaching Styles and Learning Styles and how they should complement each other to improve student learning; a focus for DBGS in 2010 /2011.

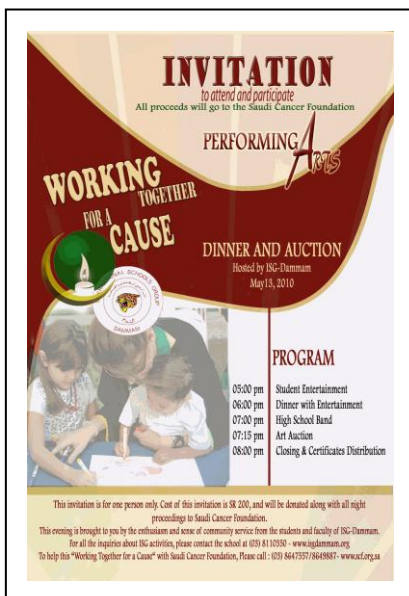
Early May was also **Fruit and Vegetable week** in Foundation, Key Stage 1 and 2, featuring a trip to Tamimi for our Year 1 students and lots and lots of unusual fruit and veggies brought in for the children to try.

Also during this month, our Key Stage 3 and 4 students came to school in National Dress or Formal attire to offer a Bake Sale in Aid of the **victims of Land Mines and Violence in Sierra Leone**. The afternoon culminated in a Leg Waxing event with several brave volunteers, including **Mr. Wade** and our **Head Boy Anas** having their legs waxed. Ouch!"

ISG Dammam – from Rick Barnhouse, Principal

"Dammam continue to be a busy place: During the month of May, our **AFG planning team** - under the direction of task master Evelyn Harrison - got a green light from Middle States on our objectives. Soon, we should complete our action plans.

This month our technician, **Mr. Nair**, installed computers throughout the entire school, including the elementary and middle school labs and computers for administrative offices, and Global Language, nursery, clinic and bookroom staff; 180 computers in all. GREAT JOB, Nair! The pending 46 computers will be installed in the HS Lab, Journalism class and our research lab.



Child Study Team meetings with parents/students kept all the administrators and counselors busy in late April/early May and on May 13 from 5-8:00 ISG Dammam held a Performing Arts, Dinner and Auction ..."**Working Together for a Cause**" with all proceeds donated to the **Saudi Cancer Foundation (SCF)**.

As I write this, we just finished our first **Music Fest**, sponsored by the **ISG Dammam Music Club**. After much reservations and worries I can't believe they pulled it off and am pleasantly surprised by the outcome. ISGD was taken over by more than 300 rockers from many different schools in the Eastern Province; including ten bands, eight rap groups, four dance crews, two middle school DJ's and **NO problems!**. These ROCKERS were great! This is a perfect testimony of the need for social opportunities for teens in the Kingdom. I had so many thank you's and handshakes ... public relations comes in all shapes, sizes and events." **ISG-Dammam ROCKS!**

Dhahran Elementary Middle School – from Jana Barnhouse, Principal

In early May middle school boys and girls competed in the **SAIKAC basketball tournament**. Our girls' team was in Jeddah and our boys played at **Dhahran Aramco**. These tournaments are an extension of the Eastern Province Middle School Basketball Jamboree held on the DEM's campus in April.

The minimum student day provided a working afternoon for staff to convene their **AFG action teams** accomplishing a significant amount of work to advance planning on assessments and action plans.

This month, a signal that the end of the school year is upon us, also marked the last week of **SAT 10 tests**. **Grades 2, 4, 6, and 8** 'enjoyed' a week of SAT testing and we also set aside time to recognize students receiving high honors, honors and those increasing their GPA significantly during the third quarter of the 2009-2010 school year. DEMS also scheduled **two assessing sessions for new students** wishing to attend DEMS next school year. It's an exciting time of the year with just six weeks packed full of learning and fun left to go!"

Yanbu International School (YIS) – from Paul Thompson, Principal

First Things First ... **Mrs. Jennifer Lasater** has high expectations for first graders when it comes to learning, good behavior, and celebrating accomplishments. She led the first graders of ISG-Yanbu in early May in their organization and delivery of the **elementary assembly** for an audience of Grades 1-6. The program was appreciated and enjoyed by all, and even a few parents were able to join us.

Two precious clear-speaking first graders acted as emcees and maintained a good pace through the presentation of:

- an Arabic song and a short play directed by **Mrs. Lasater** where the students revealed several mysteries of arithmetic, especially the magic properties of zero;
- the awarding of certificates to two students from each classroom who were role models in caring for others as shown through their generosity and empathetic communication;
- **Mr.T** talked to all of the students about how lucky we are to have so many caring people around us at Y.I.S. and had the students stand up if they had experienced someone's kindness that day - everyone stood up.

The assembly came to a close with the presentation of a thank you gift to **Mrs. Moir** from her **6th graders**. She will be leaving soon for Canada to have her baby and begin her new life as a teacher back in her home country. The Grade 6 students tearfully gave a few speeches about her contributions to their education and their lives while a power-point of fond memories of Mrs. Moir in action from this year played on the screen. The students were entertained, informed, and most of all appreciative of this celebration of the many good things happening in the elementary classrooms at ISG-Yanbu."