



# Hangzhou International School

## 杭州国际学校

### HIS Mission

We provide international learners with opportunities  
to pursue academic and personal excellence  
within a caring community.

Dear HIS Parents and Friends,

I would like to convey my thanks to our entire school community for an impressive start to the 2016–17 school year despite the significant calendar interruption due to the G20 Summit. Your children have quickly adjusted to being back at school and our returning students have set an outstanding example for the over 110 new students joining our community. It is simply a great way to start our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary at HIS! I hope you have noticed some of the exciting changes that took place heading into this school year. We have welcomed additional faculty positions in the areas of leadership, student support services, Mandarin, ESOL, science, technology and the visual and performing arts. We have also made immediate improvements in the leveling, staffing, and placement within our schoolwide Mandarin and ESOL programs; committed to resourcing and aligning our lower school math curriculum with Singapore maths; launched the International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC) to better support our Early Childhood levels; and made significant commitments to program expansion and improvement at the Upper School grades, especially as related to IB Diploma Program options. We have also completed capital projects to improve our reception and office areas, and gym facilities; and expanded our number of classrooms and play/activity areas. More aesthetic and safety/security projects are in the works for completion during the October break and I will include an update in the next monthly Director of School Notes. There is definitely much more to come as we take on the schoolwide goal of going after the low-hanging fruit!

Through these efforts, we have remained committed to keeping our class sizes within the range of best practice and research on international schooling; celebrating our unity in diversity; and providing plentiful opportunities for our entire community.

In addition, there are several other important notes that I would like to share with you below:

- **Simplifying the Mission Statement:** Some will notice a couple very small changes to our mission statement that have been approved by the Board of Directors. In particular, we recognize that HIS provides opportunities for the adults who also support student learning. Students, faculty, staff, and parents are all ‘international learners’. We learn to be better parents, better teachers, better leaders, and in so doing, we are better able to support our students. As part of schoolwide improvements in ‘transitions’, we aim to involve our entire community in establishing a caring community that best supports all learners.
- **WASC Mid-Cycle Report and Visit:** I am pleased to confirm a very successful mid-cycle visit by the WASC visiting team last Spring. The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) provides regulations and standards of education to measure schools that are otherwise outside conventional government systems. Maintaining this accreditation is a guarantee that HIS reaches rigorous standards of education comparable to like-minded schools in North America, Europe, and Asia. The visiting team chair noted outstanding improvements in curriculum development, strategic planning and educational resources. The most glowing commendation was the chair’s recognition of the ‘community feel’ at HIS, which was clearly linked to efforts by our students, parents, and faculty. Our next full re-accreditation visit is scheduled for Spring 2019.
- **Schoolwide Goals:** As I have mentioned at the orientations, back-to-school nights and PAFA coffee mornings, we have 5 very simple schoolwide goals for this school year, which have been

developed with consideration of the WASC visit and the feedback I received during meetings with student leaders, parents, admin, and returning faculty prior to end of the 2015-16 school year. These basic goals are:

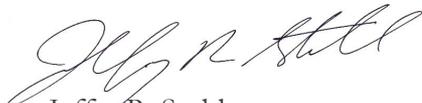
1. **Improving Transitions:** creating a safer harbor for our students by better organizing and committing to comprehensive support for students, parents, and faculty who are new, 'stayers', leavers, and even those who have departed. A Transitions Team and steering committee is already forming.
  2. **Improving Communications:** creating more efficient and effective methods of communication that fits the purpose and demonstrates understanding of the diverse needs of the HIS community.
  3. **Continuing Improvement of Student-Support Services:** HIS is an inclusive school that commits to providing every student with the highest quality learning opportunities. With such diversity of schooling backgrounds, languages, and learning needs, we are pleased to add the schoolwide position of Student Support Services Coordinator, with Carmen Rioux-Bailey. The SSS faculty will be supporting our Transitions Team, reviewing referral procedures, and developing comprehensive strategies that ensure all students have quality support available for their needs.
  4. **Focusing Improvement of our Curriculum in Areas of Mandarin, other World Languages, Mother Tongue Programs, Math, and Pre-IB Grade Levels:** while IB, NWEA and WIDA results demonstrate that HIS students thrive within our educational program as compared with like schools in the region, the above mentioned areas will be given extra consideration as we continue to improve our curriculum and experience enrollment growth.
  5. **Going After the Low-Hanging Fruit:** we will continue to set direction and strategic objectives; however, new research on international schools shows that many schools spend too much time discussing lofty goals and too little time taking advantage of immediate changes, opportunities, or resources that are easily within reach.
- **Back to School Nights:** Our Back to School Nights were held Tuesday, September 20 for the Lower School (Nursery-Grade 5) and Wednesday, September 21 for the Upper School (Grade 6-12). Teachers gave presentations regarding their individual character, classroom expectations, basic program information, and classroom communications. Both nights had excellent turnout, especially for the levels with the youngest learners. We know Upper School students are more independent, but we still appreciate parent participation and understanding of our program at these levels. Many of you directly shared with me very positive comments about both evenings. Thank you so much for these affirmations in our Principals efforts to improve these events.
  - **IB Diploma Results:** We were extremely pleased with our IBDP (International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme) final results for our first graduating IB cohort, the Class of 2016. With an average of 32 points, our students exceeded the worldwide average by 3 points. Furthermore, 100% of our students registered for the full IB Diploma passed and 33% received a Bilingual IB Diploma! Really quite exceptional! Many of our students received advanced university course credit for successfully completing IB coursework. Congratulations to the Alumni of the Class of 2016 for setting such an excellent example for the future generations of students.
  - **2016 Graduates:** We continue to hear from our 2016 graduating class, who are now well into their freshman year of university or post-graduation plans. To view the remarkable list of university acceptances and scholarship offers our graduates accumulated last year, please visit the following link: [HIS Graduates of Class of 2016](#)
  - **Welcome Back BBQ:** Saturday, September 24, was a beautiful day to simply celebrate our community and the start of a new school year. We estimate that over 1000 members of our community and friends enjoyed the event. We hope to make this an annual tradition. Special thanks to Andrea Stubbs, our new School-Community Relations Coordinator, and the many HIS students, parents, faculty, support staff, and vendors for making our first Welcome Back BBQ such a success!
  - **PAFA:** I would like to say thank you to our Parents and Friends Association (PAFA) for their continued support of our programs. In particular, I would like to thank the growing group of facilitators who have helped get the year started, sign-up volunteers, maintain committee

participation, and develop a PAFA Charter, which will be published online in the next few days. In large and small ways, PAFA makes tremendous contributions to student learning and community development. If you are new and interested in volunteering at HIS, please contact the Community Relations Coordinator, Andrea Stubbs, at [astubbs@his-china.org](mailto:astubbs@his-china.org)

The success of Hangzhou International School has been built upon the quality relationships formed within our school community. Time and time again, new families have come to our school as a result of referrals from returning families. Ultimately, our hope is that your child's time at HIS will be the best schooling experience he or she will have in their lifetime, and that your family's time in our school community will be a memorable one. Thank you for being a part of our dynamic community.

On a personal level, Andrea and I have truly felt the HIS spirit of community and care as newcomers to Hangzhou and HIS. I want to thank the many who have gone out of your way to express a heartfelt welcome to our family. This only confirms our hope and belief that HIS and Hangzhou will be special places for us to work, live and give back to a unique community.

Here is to our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary year at HIS and more successes throughout the year, and as always... GoooOOO Gold Dragons! Have a wonderful National Holiday and October break!



Jeffrey R. Stubbs  
Director

