



The International School's TIS News is published three times per year to update our community on school programs and activities. To subscribe, please contact Marketing Director Linda Bonder, [LBonder@intschool.org](mailto:LBonder@intschool.org), 503-226-2496 x104. We do not share our mailing lists.

## THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL'S TIS NEWS

### Board adopts Strategic Plan

On April 9, 2009, the Board of Trustees adopted a new Strategic Plan to guide TIS through the upcoming years. The plan was developed with the input of scores of TIS stakeholders including trustees, parents, students, founders and staff.

As part of the planning process, the board reaffirmed the school's original mission while updating its wording. The new mission statement is centered around educating "global citizens," a term not used when the school was founded in 1990 but clearly understood by TIS founders Douglas and Frey Stearns:

*The International School inspires*

*children to become global citizens by providing a rigorous and comprehensive education within a nurturing, student-centered environment of full immersion in multiple languages and cultures.*

The Strategic Plan articulates TIS core values and guiding principles of honesty, respect, collaboration, responsibility, diversity, and passion for learning. It is based on these values and a detailed vision for the future:

*The International School will be recognized as a center of excellence in multicultural education. Graduates of the school are true global citizens who excel in*  
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### For Capstone Study Abroad, seeing is believing

Even after years at TIS, many parents harbor unspoken doubts about how well our language immersion works. But if this year's Capstone blogs are any indication, seeing is believing:

"I have already evolved from a detached but hopeful dad into a proud and humbled parent of two wonderful TIS students who are acquitting themselves ably in as foreign an environment as one might imagine. My fears about their ability to truly communicate with Chinese students, my doubts about their adaptability, and my worries about The International School experience not being competitive with education in China all evaporated on the first day we went to the school [in Suzhou]. ... This trip, already, has been nothing short of illuminating and inspiring."

"The city of Merida [Mexico] was a far

cry from tourist resorts and it was clear that with our English only language skills, my husband and I were handicapped in ways I had never considered. In contrast, I watched with amazement as my daughter bargained with a vendor at Chitzen Itza."

"The TIS students communicated easily in Japanese, stumped only by some slang and a few words such as 'stock market' and 'orphanage.'"

"I had no idea my kids spoke such good Chinese. Every parent should look forward to this trip as the absolute highlight of the immersion process!"

"I was not prepared for the true affection that developed - between the children from both schools, between the host parents and our children, and between the host teachers and our children."

*continued inside*

MAY 2009

*The International School provides a multicultural environment where children are fully immersed in Spanish, Japanese or Chinese language and culture. Children become bilingual as they learn a full preschool & elementary curriculum with native speaking teachers, small classes, and high expectations.*

*The International School was founded in 1990 and today educates nearly 400 students.*

# TIS Library enriches the TIS experience

"I have so much fun in the library! I went to a party for reading books and skipped working in class," said a Spanish Track second grader. This student was one of 60 children that met the Beverly Cleary Children's Choice Award Challenge by reading six books – not exactly skipping education. The TIS library works to keep our students enthusiastic and engaged about reading with some help from their favorite librarian.

Today's librarian must be able to teach our children new world skills while still educating them on traditional library systems. TIS Librarian Tamara Beecroft-Fornell

does exactly that. Though only working part-time, Tamara has made great strides with the library and its curriculum. Just two short years ago, she and many parent volunteers started the library from scratch. "There were no books, no shelves!" she affirmed.

Now there are collections in four languages, computers, and lesson plans for each grade. Students do book reviews, learn typing, check out books, and develop research skills. Second through fifth graders create PowerPoint presentations and use electronic resources to study authors and illustrators.

TIS' younger students are also

introduced to the library through story time. They discuss their favorite parts of stories and initiate a love of reading.

Tamara comes to TIS with experience and education her field coupled with an appreciation for multi-lingual environments. She received her Bachelor of Arts in English from a Swedish University and Masters in Library Science from Texas Women's University.

For the coming years, Tamara envisions developing a specific curriculum for each grade that will complement each class' International Baccalaureate unit of inquiry.



## Capstone (cont'd)

"Our students get a lot of attention from passers-by. How strange it seems for foreigners to be listening to Mandarin at a museum. How even stranger when the children respond in kind.... Of course, the students have been speaking Chinese to one another and their teachers at TIS for years. They honestly don't know what all the fuss is about. We parents, of course, can't get enough of it!"

"After much anticipation we were able to visit "Escuela Modelo" and observe our kids in this setting, engaging in classroom activities along with their fellow schoolmates. It was interesting to see their acceptance by a group of kids who had only just recently met them."

In the coming year, three new classes will embark on their own Capstone experience. They will benefit from the lessons of past trips and from the new resources TIS is applying to the

program. With extreme gratitude for all the work and funds that parents have put toward Capstone through the years, TIS has stepped up its commitment to ensure that Capstone remains an integral part of the TIS experience. Beginning in 2009-10, the TIS Capstone program will be managed and funded by the school as a component of its curriculum.

Capstone Coordinator Erika Kohn will chair a committee of TIS staff charged organizing trip details, consulting with parents, and managing the school's Capstone budget. The school budget will include school-related student expenses such as airfare and accommodations as outlined in the Capstone Handbook due out shortly. This will make the Capstone program accessible to all TIS fifth grade students.

For more information about Capstone Study Abroad, please see [www.intlschool.org/about-tis/capstone](http://www.intlschool.org/about-tis/capstone)

## Quick quote

"I want every class to have a positive mentality for PE," said TIS PE teacher Robert Briglia. "Every student learns what PE is about, and the expectations become natural to them. Even our first graders run a timed mile on the track! And we have so many students performing over the 85th percentile for their age. This is a PE class, not a track team - but our students do so much better than most. I'm really proud of them all."

## US Custom House awarded to TIS

The US Department of Education has approved TIS' application to acquire the US Custom House, the stately 1901 building in the north park blocks of Portland's downtown.

"I am pleased that there will finally be a tenant for the beautiful, historic Custom House," said Congressman David Wu in reaction to the news. "I am honored to have supported the International School's tenancy and look forward to seeing the halls of Custom House bustling with students excited about learning."

The Custom House offers tremendous opportunity to bring TIS students' academic and social experiences to the next level of excellence. The most obvious advantage that the Custom House provides is a

single building with over 49,000 usable square feet, nearly double the total of all current TIS facilities combined. All TIS classes and offices would be in one building, enhancing communication and collaboration among students, faculty, parents and administration.

In addition, the Custom House provides space for:

- ▶ Students to attend programs and collaborate across language tracks and grade levels (including group lunches, informal gatherings, group projects and formal assemblies);
- ▶ Multi-media classrooms and well-equipped science labs;
- ▶ A Library Media Center truly large enough to support our four-language program for all grades;

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## Students and grads excel in language tests

Fifth graders in all TIS language tracks now take proficiency tests in their target language, and this year's results are outstanding:

- ▶ Four fifth graders and three graduates passed the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) administered by the Japan Foundation this year. The JLPT evaluates and certifies the language proficiency of non-native speakers of Japanese.
- ▶ Seven fifth graders and one second grader passed the Chinese government HSK proficiency test normally administered to adults. The HSK test (named for its Chinese initials) is a required test for non-native speakers to enter *university* in China.
- ▶ Five additional students in second through fourth grades passed the Chinese Government's Young

Learners Chinese Test (YCT), a test for non-native Chinese learners under the age of 15.

- ▶ Eight students in the TIS Class of 2008 passed the Spanish government's DELE test last spring. The DELE is a language aptitude exam that measures reading and listening comprehension, writing, grammar, and speaking. The Class of 2009 Spanish Track students took the test in May and will know their results this fall.

"The test results reaffirm that our students are ready and able to participate in meaningful exchanges and daily life in their target language," said TIS Principal Maria Abad. "Congratulations to all the students!"

For more information about the TIS language tracks, please see [www.intlschool.org/about-tis/languages/](http://www.intlschool.org/about-tis/languages/)

**More Spring '09 highlights**

This spring TIS students worked on and celebrated:

- ▶ Science Fair, where all students presented science projects to parents and visiting classes;
- ▶ Sakura Matsuri, for which Japanese Track students performed on stage at the Uwajimaya Festival;
- ▶ English Literacy Fair, where all first through fifth graders displayed and discussed their works from English class;
- ▶ The first four-language Book Fair, resulting in almost \$2000 in new books donated to TIS by Scholastic, Chinese Interactive, and Kinokuniya Japanese Bookstore combined.

*Custom House (cont'd)*

- ▶ Community-building activities with meeting areas and display spaces for curriculum, culture, volunteerism, activities and events;
- ▶ Faculty gatherings, work sessions, and professional development activities;
- ▶ Staff, trustee and volunteer conference areas;
- ▶ Sufficiently-sized and dedicated indoor play space;
- ▶ Accessibility for physically disabled students, staff and family members;
- ▶ Enhanced after-hours and summer enrichment programming; and
- ▶ Growth of the student body and administrative staff.

The Custom House also provides natural opportunities for educational activities with neighbors such as the Portland Classical Chinese Garden, the Oregon

Nikkei Legacy Center, the Japanese American Historical Plaza, galleries, museums, book stores and theaters. All of these benefits would strengthen the school's International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme, enabling students to have their questions answered first hand.

The Custom House is currently vacant and, pending approval from the TIS board, will be conveyed to TIS at no cost. TIS would be responsible for renovating the building for seismic and programming needs while preserving the building's historic characteristics. The TIS board will vote on the acquisition and contract for the building in the coming months.

For more information on the Custom House, please see [www.intlschool.org/customhouse/](http://www.intlschool.org/customhouse/)



*Strategic Plan (cont'd)*

*a diverse and multicultural society. The International School fosters a culture that reflects its core values. Active and effective planning is the foundation on which the school achieves its success.*

- ▶ ***Our Faculty Members** are passionate professionals and leaders in language immersion education who inspire our children and create a safe and nurturing environment for them to achieve excellence.*
- ▶ ***Our Students** excel academically; are fluent in another language and versed in different cultures. They attain leadership skills that enhance their confidence and self esteem and*

*represent cultural, ethnic, economic and social diversity.*

- ▶ ***Our Programs** support academic excellence through small robust class sizes, year round enrichment programs, and international education.*
- ▶ ***Our Facilities** are clean, green, safe and welcoming in the centrally located urban environment.*
- ▶ ***Our Finances** provide long-term stability through non-tuition endowments and other sources.*
- ▶ ***Our Leadership and Management** demonstrate vision, transparency, and accountability.*

- ▶ ***Our TIS Culture** values our intimate and unique environment, global and local partnerships, and service to the community.*
- ▶ ***Our Families and Alumni** provide broad based support to the school through active volunteerism to sustain a positive learning environment*

Special thanks to everyone who provided input and to the dedicated volunteers who worked tirelessly on this effort. To see the complete Draft Strategic Plan, please see [www.intlschool.org/2009/04/27/sp/](http://www.intlschool.org/2009/04/27/sp/)