Korea Superintendent Focus on Parents Page 2	**Professional Development All Around** Page 4	**Special Report:** Multiage Classrooms Page 5	**SAMS Students form GIANT Flag** Page9

Students Celebrate Red Ribbon Week

Osan American Elementary School kicked off its annual Red Ribbon Week. It's a time when people pledge to stay drug free and join the fight again drug abuse. On Monday 22 October staff and students wore red to show their support. In the afternoon, students paraded around the school and then tied red ribbons on the white fence in front of the building.

The Red Ribbon Campaign is now the oldest and largest drug prevention program in the nation reaching millions of young people during Red Ribbon Week, October 23-31 each year. For more information on Red Ribbon week, visit the National Family Partnership website.

From the Superintendent:
Parent-Teacher Conferences are Upon Us

Mr. Charles Toth
Superintendent, DoDDS Korea

Communication between teachers and parents is ESSENTIAL for student growth, student learning, and student achievement. One key means of communication parents have available to them is the upcoming opportunity to participate in a parent-teacher conference. In early November all parents of students attending Korea District schools will have the opportunity to sit with their student's teacher to view a portfolio of their student's work and discuss their student's academic, emotional, and behavioral progress in a constructive, beneficial, and uninterrupted manner. The parent-teacher conference is not a time for criticism, anger, blaming, or negativism. Unless there is a genuine tone of concern for the student and openness to the feelings and thoughts of all present demonstrated on behalf of the student, there will not be a successful and beneficial outcome for the student. Although the teacher may have a planned agenda for managing the parent-teacher conference, parents are encourage to come prepared to gather specific information as that information relates to their student. By arriving prepared to participate in the conference, parents tell the teacher that they support their child's learning.

Let me share a few suggestions you can implement as you discuss the growth of your student with his teacher(s) to the benefit of your student's education:

- Learn about your child's progress at school. It's important to find out how your child is progressing academically as well as how he interacts with other students, if he participates in class, and if your student is well behaved. Listen carefully to what the teacher says; ask yourself if you note similar patterns at home. If your child is in middle or high school, ask about whether he is on track for college.

- Share your insights with your child's teacher. A parent-teacher conference is a good opportunity to hear from your child's teacher, but it's also a perfect time to share your perspective. Remember, you know your child best. You can give the teacher valuable information that could help your child learn more effectively.

- Be informed about the achievement scores for your child's school. In this age of standards and accountability, test scores are increasingly important. School test data can be found via this link - **http://www.dodea.edu/datacenter/testdata.cfm** . If the scores are strong, ask how the school is working to keep students on track. If the scores are low, ask what the school is doing to raise achievement and how you can support learning at home.

- Discuss your child's strengths and challenges. Through comparing areas where your child excels with areas in need of improvement, you can identify ways to support your child's learning at home.

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Ask questions. This is one of the most important aspects of a successful conference. Here are some key questions to get you started:

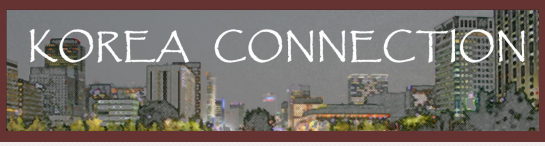
- How much time should my child spend on homework each night?
  Does the teacher's estimate match with what you see your child doing a home? If it doesn't, share your observations with your child's teacher to generate possible solutions. How can I reinforce classroom lessons at home?

Ask the teacher about activities, games or other strategies that you can use to further your child's learning at home.

- How can I stay connected?
  Find out ways to keep track of your child's progress, assignments and activities. Is there a system in place for parent communication or involvement? Discuss the best ways to stay current.

Do your best to make the most of your parent-teacher conference. The more informed you become, the better you, your child and your child's teacher can work together as a successful team. For the dates and times your student's school has established for parent-teacher conferences, you are urged to contact the school principal.

"Communication between teachers and parents is ESSENTIAL for student growth, student learning, and student achievement."



Korea Connection

Charles Toth	Superintendent
Peter Grenier	Assistant Superintendent
Tony Harris	Chief of Staff
K. K.	Editor

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Educators' Day 2007 Highlight

Peter Grenier, Assistant Superintendent DoDDS Korea, introduces Ms. G, the Teacher of the Year.

Professional Development at it's Best!

Educators' Day: Reaching and Teaching Every Child

This year's Educators' Day proved to be a huge success as it was once again held at Seoul American High School. Educators' from numerous International and DoDDS Korea school shared ideas while forming partnerships that will directly impact student learning.

Educators' Day is an annual event that allows teachers to collaborate and share classroom best practices. This is a one day event and teachers then have the opportunity to reflect on what they learned while taking it back into the classroom and putting it into practice.

This year's event was attended by special guests, Dr. Steven Bloom and General B.B. Bell. Over 900 educators came together for this magnificent event.

Above: Dr. Steven Bloom. Below: Educators Prepare for the opening keynote presentations.

October's Principal Meeting Provided Professional Development for District Administrators. (Left: Donna Kacmarski, Joan Islas, and Darrell Mood share on the topic of classroom best practices. Right: Keith Henson and Bob Sennett discuss how differentiation looks at the high school level.

Special Report: Multiage Classrooms

From the Editor's Desk

Multiage classrooms are becoming a familiar site in DoDDS schools across the peninsula. This month we take a look at four different perspectives on the multiage learning environment; the teacher, the student, the principal, and a parent. Entering Ms. M's multiage classroom at Humphrey's Elementary it was obvious that second and third grade students were working well together and I wasn't quite sure which students were in what grade. This couldn't be. Before venturing into a multiage class I made the assumption that I would be able to point out students by grade level. Wrong.

What I observed was a collaborative learning environment with students working cooperatively. I was hooked and had to investigate further. After interviewing and doing some research I found there to be four cornerstones to an effective multiage program. The following interviews explore multiage and this exciting classroom experience we are providing for many of our students.

Students in Ms. M's 2/3 multiage class brush on their Spanish with Mr. C & Pepe the Puppet..

Cornerstone #1 The Teacher: Ms. M

As a multiage classroom teacher, what is the biggest concern parents have about having their child this kind of educational environment?

Parents may be concerned that a classroom with students in a lower grade level will be geared toward work that their child has already completed, and parents with those younger students may be concerned that the lessons may be too difficult or require prior learning that the younger children do not have. Part of my job as a teacher is to educate parents about the benefits that a multiage environment can provide to their children and address concerns and questions early.

What kind of special training or certification do you have to support the learners in your multiage classroom?

There is no special certification required to teach in a multiage classroom, but I have received a great deal of support from my administrators and colleagues as well as on-site training from the Korea District Superintendent's Office to ensure that I am

Special Report: Multiage Classrooms

From the Editor's Desk

Continued from page 5

making the best use of time and resources to support all the students in my classroom. I have been interested in multiage education since my oldest child started school, and have read a lot of literature on the subject as well as observing multiage classrooms and interviewing multiage educators during graduate school. I'm excited to put the things I have seen and learned into practice for the benefit of my students.

What is the biggest reward you see?

The biggest reward I see for students in a multiage environment is that the students learn to work together and learn to develop skills that will be valuable both in and out of school. Students in multiage classrooms model good learning practices for each other, and teach each other directly and indirectly every day. By working with a wider range of ages and levels of experience in the classroom daily, students of all ages gain experience in leadership, develop better social skills, and gain a broader appreciation of the value of community.

What is the biggest challenge?

The biggest challenge is in planning and executing lessons based on two sets of standards and adopted curricula. The idea is to blend the students together into one classroom community, not to teach two grade levels separately, which can be very challenging. That's where the support of colleagues, administration, and the Korea District has been most helpful. The multiage teachers at the school get together to share information, and Tyler Tescher and Terry Greene have come in several times to provide assistance and support.

Cornerstone #2 The Principal: Dr. Joan Islas

As an administrator, what do you see as the greatest benefit of having multiage classes at your school?

I truly believe in the multiage philosophy. I taught multiage for 5 years both in DoDDS and in California and both of my daughters attended multiage classes for over 3 years. Multiage helps to build a community of diverse learners and thinkers. It gives students the chance to demonstrate their strengths and a chance to do some peer tutoring/mentoring. Skills are reinforced when a child teaches a skill to another child and sometimes children learn better from other children. Children build tolerance for others and they learn to be patient and understanding. They learn to play and get along with children that may be older or younger. Multiage students learn great social/emotional skills that will be beneficial in both the educational and career arenas.

What do you see as one of the biggest challenges?

Sometimes, parents may be a little skeptical about the idea. They may have the wrong view of the multiage model. They may view it as a combination class, where two

Special Report: Multiage Classrooms

From the Editor's Desk

Continued from page 6

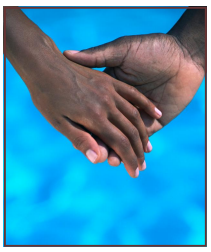
separate curriculums are taught. They may view it as only for students who are ahead or behind a typical student of that age/grade. The key is parent education. I have had great success with the multiage program especially when parents feel comfortable and part of the team.

With your experience in multiage classrooms, can you pinpoint one memorable moment that really solidified your belief that multiage classes do work?

My most memorable moment was when I was teaching (in Chinhae, Korea) my multiage class grades 2, 3, and 4 and we were working on bar graphs. I grouped the children into small groups (multiage of course), gave the instructions and set them loose with the assignment. I then saw children from three different grade levels working together, assigning different tasks, and enjoying the entire experience. The older children assigned the younger students tasks that they knew these children would be successful. At this moment, I realized how well multiage truly worked and how children could work together on one project at all different levels of understanding. All students were actively engaged participating in standards-based instruction that addressed their specific levels and needs. It was really endearing to see this type of collaboration and team work with such young children. They had great respect for each other regardless of age, grade or ability level. All team members were valued for what they could do.

Cornerstone #3 The Parent: Mrs. D

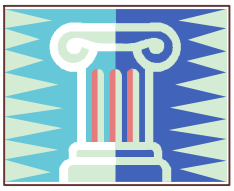
As a parent of a student in a multiage classroom, what do you see as the greatest benefit of this kind of learning environment?



The Multi-age environment allows the student to progress at his or her own level. The curriculum provides the flexibility for a child to pursue their interests and it encourages creativity and exploration. Additionally, children have the opportunity to increase confidence and improve their self-esteem through mentoring.

Did you have any fears or concerns before the school year began?

This is our second year for my son to be enrolled in a Multi-age classroom. Initially, I did have concerns about the child-centered approach vs. the traditional curriculum centered classroom approach to learning. I thought my son might become easily distracted when working in centers and I felt he might need more structure as in the traditional curriculum setting.



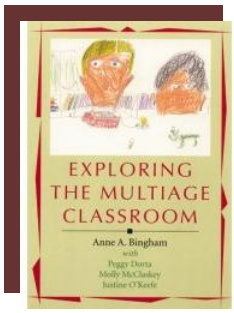
Cornerstone #4 The Student: M. B.

"I don't like that I am the youngest, but I thought I would get smarter!"

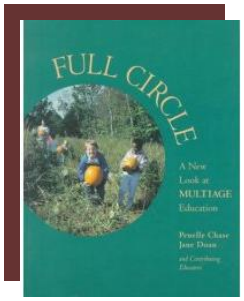
'I didn't like that I was the youngest, but I like the new people."

Comments from M. B. when asked about her new multiage class.

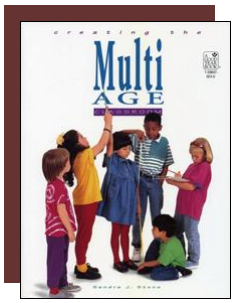
Recommended reading on Multiage Classrooms



***Exploring the Multiage Classroom*, Anne A. Bingham**



***Full Circle*, Penelle Chase & Jane Doan**



***Creating the Multiage Classroom*, Sandra J. Stone**

Deputy Director, Dr. Steven Bloom, from the Pacific Director's Office recently visited DoDDS Korea.

LINK OF THE MONTH

Combined Federal Campaign

There are over 2,000 organizations and charities that you can donate to. According to USAG Commander, Col. H., you can contribute directly to your community through "Family Support and Youth Programs." In 2006, $575,000 was returned to military communities overseas through FSYP. By choosing FSYP , 100 percent of your donation will return to the community. There is zero administrative cost.

www.opm.gov/cfc/

H. N. cheers on her school as they compete against Seoul High School..

Flag Day at Seoul American Middle School

This Home School Partnership project brought together 540, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students from Seoul American Middle School. Joining them were over 55 staff members. This project touched over 450 families in the Yongsan community.

The flag picture project takes place during seminar and demonstrates the benefits of cooperating, following direction, planning and having fun all at the same time. This affective domain activity could never be duplicated in the classroom setting. Each team of 6th, 7th and 8th graders wore a particular color (red, white or blue).

This is the third year Seoul Middle School has participated in this activity. One year Mother Nature did not cooperate and the project was abandoned after the third try. Even this rain-out became a valuable learning lesson for the students.

Seoul American Middle School incorporates this flag picture into the lives of the students in a variety of ways. It hangs proudly in the main office, is printed in each student's Agenda, and appears on the School Improvement Plan goal sheet. The Graphic Arts students have stenciled it on drinking cups for appreciation gifts. These gifts are given to visiting dignitaries such as the base commander – Col. H., parent volunteers, and members of the 8th Army band that perform for the students twice a year. The cups provide a warm thank you to the honored guests.

Each student can tell you exactly where they are in the picture, and they are excited to do so!

Story and photographs by P. K.

CT JOY

C. T. Joy Elementary Multiage Classrooms Focus on Individual Needs of Students

Written by Ms. B., CT Joy Educator

Over the past several years, I have been teaching a multiage classroom at C. T. Joy Elementary School. The school accommodates K-8 students and is located on a small American Naval Base in Chinhae, South Korea. All K-5 C. T. Joy Elementary students are placed in multiage classrooms. The setup of a multiage classroom as well as the use of instructional and organizational skills differs greatly from those used in the single-grade classroom.

In a multiage classroom, the focus of instruction is on meeting the needs of each student, and students view their success by his or her personal progress. In a multiage class setting, students of different ages, abilities, physical size, academic capacity, levels of learning need and learning styles are grouped together in the same classroom. In order to meet the varied needs of multiage students, teachers treat these differences as important elements in instructional design and student learning. They use their in-depth knowledge of child development and learning when designing divergent and differentiated lessons and cooperative group tasks to meet students functioning at different academic levels. They use their knowledge of when to use homogeneous or heterogeneous grouping and provide students with opportunities where learning from each other as well as from the teacher can occur. For example, students who have strength in reading comprehension, or are quick with

math word problems but weak in spelling and careless with computation are purposely grouped with those students who can complement their classmates' strengths and/or weaknesses to enhance learning. Teachers use assessment, evaluation, and recording of student progress using qualitative methods such as portfolios and anecdotal reports to maximize students' learning.

When teachers prepare target lessons and instruction focusing on meeting individual student needs and provide students with different opportunities to acquire content knowledge, streamline processing, synthesize concepts taught, and to advance academic knowledge, then each student's academic needs are met satisfactorily. The multiage model used at C.T. Joy Elementary School has been a success due to its judicious application, the malleability afforded by the relatively smaller class sizes, and the instructional prowess of the teachers and administration. It has allowed the school to meet the unique needs of each student and has reflected most favorably upon the DoDEA objective that envisions each individual student to realize the fullest measure from his or her potential and derive the maximum benefit from the total educational experience.

GradeSpeed and Parent Connection

New Pilot Program Giving Parents More Communication with Teachers

ParentConnection allows parents to stay connected with their students' education by allowing them to view academic progress, school events calendars, and providing easy communication channels to teachers via e-mail links.

To sign up go to: dodea.gradespeed.net

- Select the "Pacific District"
- Select "Click here to sign up"

Point of Interest: ***Between SAHS and SAMS we have 34% of the Parent Accounts in the entire DoDDS Pacific Area.***

Articles & Stories Contributed by R. H.

Osan American High School

The numbers of students and overall test scores at Osan American HS/MS have risen significantly. The OAHS 2008 Senior class promises to be the largest graduating class in the school's history. More students are now enrolled in foreign languages, and Advanced Placement exam scores have improved dramatically. The stability on the school staff has also risen with the lowest number of turnover in teachers and administration personnel in several years. The future at OAHS/MS looks brighter than ever!

Pilots Visit with Volleyball Team

The Student 2 Student program (S2S), sponsored by Mr. S., has been very active with a number of interesting activities. The S2S recently hosted two female jet fighter pilots who spoke to the members of the OAHS girl's volleyball team. The pilots provided excellent role models and shared their ideas of earnest hard work and motivation to become a success.

Construction Continues at Osan

The construction of new facilities for the campus continues with daily signs of progress. As part of the growing anticipation of the new middle school, a team has been formed for the selection of school colors and a mascot. Mrs. Norman, wife of the base commander, is a welcomed participant in the selection process.

Seoul American Elementary School

Contributions by Kris Yoho

First Graders Master Graphic Organizers

One of the continuous school improvement (CSI) goals of SAES is that all students will improve reading comprehension across the curriculum using nonfiction text. The intervention for this goal is the use of graphic organizers. First graders in Ms. S.'s class have learned to use webs to help them learn material from nonfiction text.

"Our first grade class has embraced the strategy of using graphic organizers to help us remember and include all the facts in our writing. We have made class webs after a field trip to the fire house and also after studying about Christopher Columbus. We have used the webs to write individual reports on the trips and also to help us with our pictures," Ms. Sennett said.

Above: SAES first grader B. M. points to one part of her web as she explains about Christopher Columbus. She used her web to help her write a short story about the famous explorer.

Below: SAES first graders H. S. and T. S. draw pictures and write stories based upon information from their graphic organizers.

Fourth and fifth grade students in SAES art teacher Ms. S.'s classes have learned about various traditional Korean folk painting.

Fourth grader T. S. uses watercolors to paint a traditional folk tiger.

Daegu American School

Contributions by C. V.

Daegu American School celebrated Fire Safety Month with a visit from the Fire Department. Students from grades Pre-K through 6th explored the fire engine, listened to safety tips, watched how the water hoses worked, and learned how to keep safe from fire.

Daegu American School conducts annual health screenings for all elementary grades; they are screened for vision, hearing, height and weight checks. High School students are screened every other year and they are checked for vision, hearing, height, weight, blood

Daegu American School celebrated Fire Safety Month with a visit from the Fire Department. Students from grades Pre-K through 6th explored the fire engine, listened to safety tips, watched how the water hoses worked, and learned how to keep safe from fire.

Student Standouts!

J. C., winner of the 2007 C division Championship at Sung Nam Golf Course. J's scores were 92, 95, and 99. J beat about 20 gentlemen in his division. J is a 6th grader at Seoul American Middle School and has been playing golf for two years.

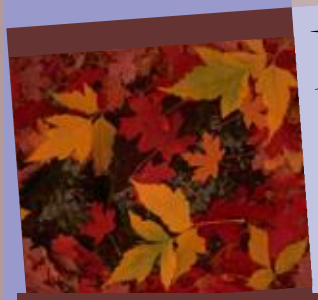
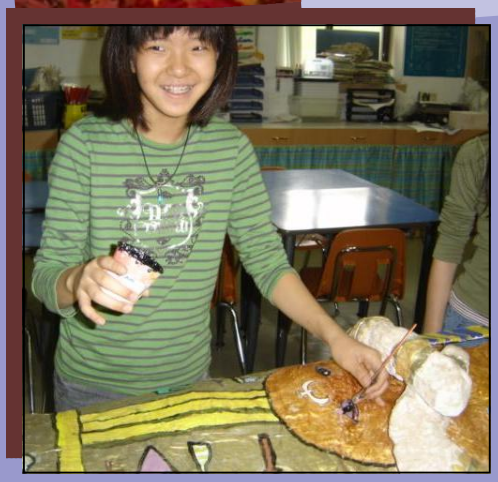
Congratulations to S. W. from Seoul American High School. Sean was nominated for the 2007-2008 US Senate Youth District. Sean will compete against other DoDEA nominees for one of two DoDDS delegate positions.

KOREA STUDENT STANDOUTS

www.korea.pac.dodea.edu

KOREA

DISTRICT ▪ UNIT 15549

▪ APO AP 96205-5549

KOREA DISTRICT SNAPSHOTS