

# newsCAST

The Newsletter of Collegiate American School

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CAS GENERAL

SECONDARY

ELEMENTARY

Mid-Year Report February 2018

Dear parents,

The first semester of the academic year closes this week. This is a natural time for the school to review the School Plan and refine the goals midyear. The timing is ideal as we have also been notified of the annual inspection.

The school is in the final preparation phase for the Dubai School Inspection Bureau (DSIB) visit with confirmed dates of February 19-22<sup>nd</sup>. (To revisit last year's report click here: [2016-17 report](#)) Collaborative efforts and feedback from all stakeholders are an ongoing process that Collegiate American School considers when developing and implementing the school growth plan. Please see updates below on the National Agenda and school goals as a midpoint review.

### ***National Agenda Parameters***

As you are aware, schools are held highly accountable for their contribution to Vision 2021. Just to recap two of the goals pertaining to the National Agenda Parameter for Schools:

- To rank among the top 15 countries on the TIMSS which evaluates the math and science skills of students in grades 4 and 8.

- To rank among the top 20 in the PISA exam, which evaluates the reading, mathematics and science skills of 15 year old students.

At Collegiate American School, students took the TIMSS and PISA in 2015. The next assessments will take place in February 2018 for TIMSS and 2019 for PISA. Results are as follows from 2015:

## TIMSS Results Summary

Grade & Subject	CAS Mean Score 2015	CAS Targets 2015	UAE Mean Score 2015	Dubai Mean Score 2015	Dubai Private Schools Mean Score 2015
Grade 4 Math	<b>534</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>521</b>
	Rank – 17		Rank – 35/42	Rank – 26	
Grade 4 Science	<b>536</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>530</b>
	Rank – 13		Rank – 41/47	Rank – 24	
Grade 8 Math	<b>524</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>524</b>
	Rank – 8		Rank – 21/33	Rank – 13	
Grade 8 Science	<b>505</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>538</b>

## PISA Results Summary

Subject	UAE Mean Score 2015	Dubai Private Schools Mean Score 2015	CAS Target Scores 2015	CAS Mean Score 2015
<b>Math</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>448</b>
	Rank – 49/73			Rank - 45
<b>Reading</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>455</b>
	Rank – 48/73			Rank - 43
<b>Science</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>443</b>
	Rank – 48/73			Rank - 47

Since 2015, the school has taken extreme measures to support academics including:

- Leadership at all levels aligning to the mission and vision of the school
- Accreditation process for CIS, NEASC and IBDP studying all curriculum, assessments, teaching and learning and the routine practices of the school to enhance its outcomes for students which led to the following:
  - ◇ Alignment to the State of New York within the Common Core State Standards framework
  - ◇ Vertical review of all curriculum and outcomes by grade/subject
  - ◇ Ongoing professional development for school leaders and teachers enhancing professional expertise and exposure to the newest research based practices in education globally
  - ◇ Using the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) and the Child's Progress Academic Achievement (CPAA) to streamline external data analysis leading to robust plans to support students in learning. Evaluate the curriculum through the lens of TIMSS and PISA in support of reaching the targets for 2018/19 respectively
  - ◇ Data triangulation for all students so the school can best support each individual student with their specific needs
  - ◇ Members of College Board and site administrators for university admission examinations

- Strategic plans encompassing a growth mindset and outcomes for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners

KHDA evaluates all schools' results and new targets are set for the next examination cycle based on the individual school data and trends within Dubai Private Schools. Clear and accountable systems are in place for KHDA to monitor the trajectory of attaining the parameters. One predictor towards a school's progress on the National Agenda, is the international examination called PIRLS (Progress of International Reading and Literacy Study); Collegiate American School, undertook this test in 2016. Recently, we have received positive results from this.

## PIRLS and e-PIRLS Results Summary

Subject	UAE Mean Score 2016	Dubai US Private Schools Mean Score 2016	CAS Target Scores 2016	CAS New Targets 2021
<i>PIRLS</i>	527	466	550	565
<i>ePIRLS</i>	539	483	556	571

The school attained "High International Benchmark" in both the PIRLS and ePIRLS. The school also outperformed the mean of US private schools in Dubai significantly. We find these results to be promising and the direct result of the comprehensive planning the school has undertaken since the administration of these exams.

We are excited about the data of student academic progress as it affirms that the growth model developed has had positive impact on student achievement.

### *School Goals*

This year, we have facilitated the School Growth Plan with three specific areas of focus:

1. Literacy and the Year of Reading
  - a. 2016 and 2017 were announced as the "Year of Reading". The school developed comprehensive plans supporting literacy in academic classes including Arabic. The library doubled its annual order to expand on student selection throughout all grades as well as considering mother tongue languages and Arabic. E-books were new to the collection. Literacy was promoted via special events, awareness efforts and exposure to various authors and research projects and in preparation for university. The curriculum has been annotated to focus on comprehension strategies and analysis.
2. Student initiatives in learning, leadership and activities
  - a. Leadership opportunities for students were increased this academic year. The Regents and House Captains were implemented in the middle and high school years to offer exposure to students to leadership practices and characteristics. Additionally, the two Eco Clubs in the school are completely led by students in terms of their sustainable actions and awareness campaigns around the school. The Student Councils continue to plan events, drive philanthropic efforts and gain student feedback to report to school leaders.
  - b. The school has also been supporting students in being leaders of their learning by setting goals, self-reflection, building their portfolios and choices in learning activities. There are so many success stories of the school. In the coming weeks, we will be hosting a showcase celebrating great things at the school.

### 3. Integration of higher order thinking

- a. Not only was the whole school required to build a cardboard boat, they had to analyze and redesign to ensure success of boats floating in the regatta. STEM Regatta 2017 was a way to kick off the year with critical thinking and design around STEM principles. Amazing races and loads of smiles lent support to the potential of each of our students that participated in the event. In daily classes, the use of Bloom's Taxonomy assists taking learning to higher levels. Curriculum focus on global connections, community awareness and communication supporting the holistic approach are a priority in the school.

#### ***Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework***

In December, 2017 the KHDA unveiled a new framework driven by Dubai Disability Strategy 2020 (DDS) requiring all schools to align their practices of students with barriers (SEND) to provide equitable educational experiences. The [framework](#) was devised to ensure that all students with disabilities or barriers have equitable access to the schools and were provided with support systems to access curriculum and social networks. We are pleased that Collegiate American School has had inclusion as an embedded practice in the school since 2012. The Framework was easily adaptable to the current practices of the school. Our next steps for the Inclusion Department is to consider alternative curriculum for individual students designed for their needs and to progress in life. The school 'Champions of Inclusion' are currently the principal, Tammy Tusek and Senior student Mishel Zaychenko.

#### ***STEM@CAS***

The STEM lab has proven to be a valuable asset to the school as students are exposed by STEM experts to science, technology, engineering and mathematics principles and their applications to daily life. The instructional team at Collegiate American School consist of our STEM instructors and the math and science teacher planning collaboratively for the lessons. Lessons are linked to the curriculum students are learning in their classes. The support of this instruction team in every lesson lends support to being able to connect the learning not only in the current classroom units but revisiting prior knowledge in support of new learning. We have seen the student interest peak and innovation become an embedded practice. This also leads to curiosity. Recently a group of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students approached the ICT teacher with their idea of the school app. Use the QR code below to see their creation.



### ***Updates to Child Protection***

In conjunction with UAE Law No3 of 2016, the Child's Rights Law, each school must have a comprehensive Child Protection Policy. Annually, this is reviewed and rights are shared with teachers, students and parents. The new coordinator for Child Protection at Collegiate American School is elementary counselor, Nedra Brown. Our officers are Sharanya Venkotaraman and Sophia Bazile from the counseling department as well. The school keeps an updated copy of the policy on our website.

### ***Advisory Council***

The Advisory Council meets a minimum of three times a year and is an extension of the Board of Directors from Innoventures Education. Representatives include board members, the CEO, outstanding community partners, parents and students. The Senior Leadership Team attend as special guests. The most recent meeting was held on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018 with an agenda of the following:

- Review of the School Evaluation Form for DSIB
- Discussion of Moral Education and the integration of the curriculum in classes
- Q & A session from teachers
- Visit of classroom monitoring teaching and learning
- Feedback from parents on overall school climate and perceptions

The team transitioned to the library where committees regarding the National Agenda Parameters informed stakeholders of the progress the school has made. A meet and greet extended to all parents completed the afternoon. School leaders appreciate the process and feedback but most importantly the support of the parents.

### ***Class of 2018***

We are pleased to announce the 'Class of 2018' is finalizing their university applications and portfolios. The school anticipates 23 American Diploma recipients, 2 IBDP recipients and 2 American and IB Courses Certificate recipients. University selections are global in nature and we look forward to keeping you abreast of developments of these young trailblazers.

### ***Parental Feedback***

Recently, you have been requested to provide your feedback via a short survey from Innoventures Education. The responses have been forwarded to the school. We appreciate the likelihood of recommending the school to others as a rating of 7.92. The feedback is instrumental as we consider the planning for the next academic year. We offer sessions in varying ways inclusive of focus groups and open door policy with administration, meetings with the classroom parent representatives, conversations and feedback at all these activities are always discussed in consideration.

Currently, we are seeking participation in the KHDA Heart and Minds Survey. If you haven't had the opportunity to, kindly login to <https://www.khda.gov.ae/Parents/Survey/Index> for your opportunity to commend the school.

### **CASPA**

As you are aware, a new executive council of CASPA had emerged this year. The start has been a bit slow so we will be reconvening the group and any other parents interested to brainstorm ways to engage this important organization to enhance community and student life. If you are interested, email Ms. Tammy ([tammyt@casdubai.com](mailto:tammyt@casdubai.com)).

Thank you all for reading the updates in the school thus far. We are well prepared for our visit by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau and anticipate positive feedback for our ongoing quest of keeping the school vision alive.

Warm Regards,

Tammy Tusek | School Principal