



The Comet

The Newsletter of K. International School Tokyo

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“Set your goals high, and don't stop till you get there.”
—Bo Jackson

From the Head of School



Time is a gift

In the age of coronavirus, social distancing expectations and guidelines put into effect to slow the spread are in place across the country, making life feel far from normal. While we are no longer living the way we did just a year ago, it is possible to use this time to our advantage. Rather than spending time at home watching Netflix and using the Nintendo Switch, many people are utilizing this extra time at home to accomplish some of the goals they could not find the time to do before.

Here are some suggestions I have found:



Spending more time as a family

Since the beginning of the pandemic, tabletop games have been in high demand. [The Japan Times](#) described many games that have become family favourites recently, including Nanja Monja (Toddles-Bobbles in English), Uno, Hanafuda, and Catan. Other popular boardgames include Monopoly, the Game of Life, and Scrabble. Tabletop games are a wonderful and entertaining way to spend quality time together as a family.

Cooking with our children can also be a fun activity with many hidden benefits. The biggest barrier to cooking with our children is often time, or a lack of it. Due to the pandemic, many of us are currently having more meals at home with our families and spending more time with our kids every day or on weekends. Exposure to different foods and being involved in their preparation can have a positive influence on eating behaviours. Other benefits include honoring a family's native culture, increasing a child's willingness to try new foods, and developing an appreciation for one's food.

Another option is to read together as a family! It seems there is never enough time for families to read together. Turning off the TV and YouTube and diving into a book as a family is a great way to make the most of this extra time.

Take up hobbies you always wanted to

With all the extra time people have had on their hands over the past year, many have decided to take up hobbies. A surge in sales was reported this year by many guitar manufacturers such as Gibson, Martin, and Fender.

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DATES TO REMEMBER



March 2021

- 20 School day
- 20 (K1-G9) Student-led conferences
- 20 (G10) DP options session
- 20 (G12) DP Visual Arts exhibition
- 21-28 Spring vacation
- 29 School resumes for all students

April 2021

- 2 (G1-G10) KIST cross country meet [*Postponed or cancelled]
- 5 School photographs (for new and absent students)
- 5-13 (G10) IGCSE mock examinations [*Cancelled]
- 8-9 School musical (workshop for students)
- 16 (K1/K2/K3) Cross country [*Date changed]
- 20-21 (K1/K2/K3) Kindergarten concert (rehearsal and recording)
- 21 (G9) PSAT
- 23 (G12) Last day of classes
- 26-30 (G12) DP study week
- 29 School day
- 29 (G8) MYP Community Project exhibition [*Cancelled]
- 30-May 21 (G12) DP examinations

May 2021

- 1-9 Golden Week vacation
- 12-21 (G10) IGCSE final examinations [*Tentative]
- 12-13 (G1-G8) English writing diagnostic testing
- 19-20 (G1-G5) Mathematics diagnostic testing



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Practical arts such as sewing have also shown an increase in interest over the past year. Sewing machine sellers are also reporting a surge in sales. Access to online lessons and free video tutorials has made it much easier to take up a hobby.

Spending more time at home can be exciting and productive depending on how we plan to use it. Staying productive and trying to accomplish something every day is a great way for us to remain positive

during this challenging time. People often talk about what they would do if they had the time to do it. Let's make the most of this time, because as they say, time is a gift, a treasure not to be put aside for the future, but to be used wisely in the present.

Kevin Yoshihara
Head of School/Elementary School
Principal



PYP News

Changes to writing assessments in the elementary school

Last year, I wrote an article to explain some new writing assessments that we were introducing. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, these could not go ahead as planned at the end of the school year. We have started using them this year and are just about to administer the second round (the first for Grade 1), so I thought I would take this opportunity to explain them again in a little more detail.



For the last two years, Grade 5 students at KIST have been taking the externally marked Pearson Edexcel examinations in June. These assessments are globally recognized and allow us to level the progress of our students against those in England and those using the international version of England's national curriculum. In writing, students are assessed across six criteria:

- Form** – how well the students organize their work
- Communication** – their word choice
- Purpose** – their connection to the task and sense of audience
- Grammar** – the structure and accuracy of their sentences
- Punctuation** – the accuracy and variety of their punctuation
- Spelling/transcription** – their spelling and overall presentation

These criteria link very nicely with our focus on the six traits of writing (ideas, organization, word choice, voice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation) so our students are getting everything they need to be successful on these examinations.

One way we hope to prepare students for this writing assessment and other assessments with rubrics that they will encounter in the future is to adapt this test for lower grades in the elementary school, as well. We took the grade 5 rubric and modified it with age-appropriate objectives for Grades 1–5. Now all students at KIST will sit similar writing assessments, and it is hoped that this consistent approach will benefit our G5s come June. Changes have been made to the schedule so rather than having writing assessments in August and May, we will now be doing them in November (for G2–G5), in March (for G1–G5), and in May (for G1–G5). These writing tasks will be a little shorter (30 minutes) and will be linked directly to the writing genre or topics covered by the units of inquiry. This way, we can ensure that our students are being assessed on a wide variety of text types during their time at KIST, and that we also have the flexibility if we want to adjust some of our units of inquiry.

While the academic achievement of our students is extremely important, it is hoped that by spreading these assessments out and by having them in a more familiar format, anxiety levels will be reduced, and the children will enjoy the process as the topics are based around their own curriculum. The purpose of assessment at KIST is always to celebrate achievement as well as identifying areas where our students can grow. By creating our own personal writing assessments, we can ensure that this is happening and that there are no gaps in our assessment process.

This issue of *The Comet* will be released just after the March assessments so please discuss the experience with your child, and if you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch.

Oliver Sullivan
PYP Coordinator
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Early Childhood News

Hello KIST families. I hope you are all doing well.

It's hard to believe that a full year has already passed since the Prime Minister announced to close all the schools in Japan! Just a few days later, KIST began its first ever period of distance learning. This was a very challenging experience not only for our staff, but also for those of you who were supporting your child/ren at home.

We were excited to welcome students back to campus at the beginning of this school year, as we believe that face to face education is much more meaningful for students, especially our youngest learners in K1–K3. It is essential for children in this age group to develop their social skills in an environment where they can interact with their peers and familiar teaching staff while they learn. We are so grateful for the efforts of our families, staff, and the children themselves in helping to keep our campus disease free in order to make such a learning environment possible.

At school, the children in K1–K3 are working hard (with reminders!) to remember to:

- Wash their hands before and after each activity.
- Not talk while they eat.
- Not make physical contact with others.

Teaching staff in K1–K3 have been:

- Wiping and disinfecting toys and resources in the classroom every day.
- Monitoring whether children are washing their hands properly and spraying hand sanitizer on their hands when necessary.
- Providing entertaining and educational videos and audio materials for the children to watch and listen to while they eat.
- Organizing and arranging classrooms and classroom materials for each child to be used in a



safe manner (e.g. each individual student has their own stationery box, fewer students share each table, space between students during the day.)

These new safety measures are not easy for young children to follow. Especially now after spending more than a half year together, the children are feeling safer and more comfortable in their environment and want to get physically close to their teachers and friends to play together or give hugs, and this unfamiliar situation has been a challenge for the staff, as well. But we are working together and doing our best to keep everyone in the ECE community (and the KIST community at large) safe!

We will continue to take all necessary measures to ensure a safe environment for our students, and to keep encouraging the children to follow our school safety measures so that we may all continue learning together at school.

Here are some photos of the ECE children eating their snacks and lunches in the classroom—I wish I were able to record and share with you how quiet they are while they eat! We are so proud of their efforts to keep our school safe.

Please stay healthy, everyone!

Eri Ozawa
Early Childhood Coordinator (K1–K3)/
K1B Teacher



K1 Transportation Provocation

Our unit, 'How we express ourselves,' which focused on transportation, was a fun unit for all the students in the two K1 classrooms. For our provocation, the K1 classes inquired into the students' prior knowledge of transportation. We set out a blue tarp in the classroom in front of the mat. On one side of the tarp was Japan, and on the other side was the Philippines (K1A)/ England (K1B).

We told the students the other side of the blue tarp where they were sitting was Tokyo, Japan. The blue tarp was water, and the big picture was the Philippines/ England. We then asked the students, 'How can we go to the Philippines/England from Japan?' The students had to use their skills as thinkers to figure out the answer, and then reflect on possible answers. Each student then role-played how to reach the Philippines/ England by using a tissue box as a type of transport. They showed that they were risk-takers by acting out their boxes to the Philippines/England.

Some of the students' replies were:

Yuri: "Walk."
Lola: "Swim." "You ride the bike."
Sebastian: "I just went to the boat."
Runxi: "You ride the car."
Arisa: "The bus."
Anika: "Swimming."
Xiaoyu: "Walking."
Kikka: "Bird, flag"
Shusei: "Blue, not Japan, blue flag"
Yoonie: "Castle"
Lui: "Shark"
Daiki: "Fish"
Riko: "Shark"



Claire Yoneyama
K1A Teacher



G2 Virtual Visits

This year, for our year-long unit on *How we organize ourselves*, the G2 students have been visiting the elderly care center, Fukagawa Yasuragino Sono, every month through virtual meetings on Zoom.

The central idea of the unit is "Individuals impact the function of groups." Previously, students of each class formed small groups, planned activities and games, and presented/shared them with the residents (in person) at the elderly care center. Origami, magic shows, drawing and stretches/exercises were popular activities. Fluent Japanese speakers supported the non-native Japanese speakers of the class as we all worked together towards this event every month.

This year, due to COVID-19, students have been limited to monthly meetings online and sharing their activities through microphones, speakers and screens. It has been difficult as the students cannot physically teach the elderly how to fold origami or draw a picture, and share a magic trick, not to mention the technical difficulties where the sound gets lost or the connections

are weak, but students, teachers, staff at the center, and the residents have all been working together to build an experience that flows across cultural borders. The students, in effect, have been enjoying the time immensely.

Through the process, we aim for the G2s to hone their communication skills, social skills, thinking skills, and self-management skills as they each learn how all of us have an impact on each other. As a big group of G2 students from KIST, we also hope to bring smiles and joy to the elderly who are also confined to their residential spaces during this pandemic.

**Aya McDonough and
Fernanda Guzman**
G2 Teachers



Elementary ELS

How transdisciplinary learning supports language development

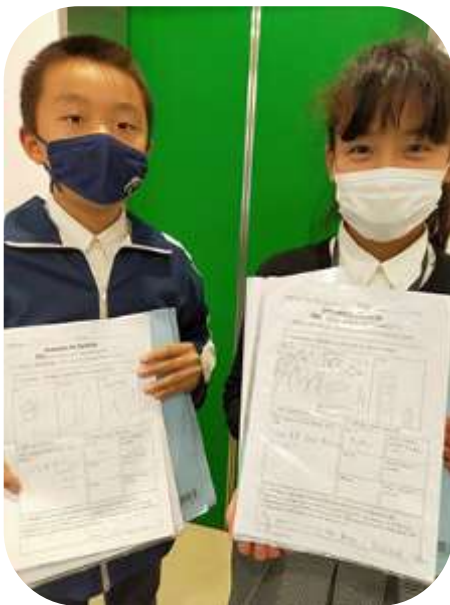
"Transdisciplinary learning" is a key feature of the PYP curriculum. It is also one of the aspects that really helps our students to push forward their English language learning. These photos from G3A's recent literacy and math classes show how investigating different aspects of a concept and topic through different subject areas can make students' language grow. G3A's current Unit of Inquiry is "*Natural landscapes have an effect on our communities*".



In literacy's Word Work Center, **Rury** and **Akiko** investigated the meaning of words related to natural landscapes. This vocabulary is in the Unit's main text—*The Land of Neverbelieve*—and will be useful for expressing their understanding of the central idea later in the unit.



In literacy's Writing Center, **Ashlesha** and **Kina** took notes about the island in *The Land of Neverbelieve* and started writing a travel diary of their "trip" there. The process of reading and writing about natural landscapes helps to cement the language needed to continue researching and discussing the central idea.



In literacy's Read-to-Someone Center, **Takafumi** and **Seira** read a non-fiction book *When the Earth Was New* and filled in a graphic organizer about it. Learning phrases and sentence patterns for describing landforms through this book feeds back into UOI class, where they will hear and use the same language again.



Here are **Chiwoo** and **Krishiv**'s Geometricity projects from math class. The concept of the central idea applies in part to this project, too, so conceptual understanding is reinforced as vocabulary contrasting manmade environments to natural ones is used.

Finally, the hands-on and interactive nature of all these activities leads to a lot of talk and concrete references for learning the meaning of unit-related vocabulary. Bringing the same concepts and same language into so many lessons throughout the week is a massive boost for language development.



Rachel Parkinson
ELS Coordinator (Elementary)/G3 ELS Instructor
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Staff 10!

In this month's *Staff 10!*, we are pleased to present **Rachel Parkinson** who joined our Elementary School team in August 2011. Originally working as a teacher's assistant, Ms. Parkinson subsequently moved into an English language support role. In August 2013, she was appointed Elementary ELS Coordinator, and this year, is also the ELS Instructor for Grade 3.



Ms Rachel, celebrating a decade of service to students at KIST!

1) Tell us something interesting about your hometown.

The town I grew up in Sydney, Australia—has colonies of different bat species living in some of city's big parks, and if you live in a suburb with tall flowering trees around, they may visit really close to your home. I'm nostalgic about the sound they make at nighttime, all chatting over a meal together.

2) What is your favorite place in the world?

It used to be Tokyo. But being stuck in a place changes that perspective a little. So it's hard to say now. I'm looking forward to traveling more with my family and finding new favorite places. Any destination suggestions are welcome!

3) Who would you like to meet if you had the chance and why?

There are many, many people it would be amazing to meet for so many different reasons—especially if time travel were possible! Edward Jenner and Jonas Salk are two of them—people from the past whose work we can feel the effects of now even so many years later. Thank you to them, and to those medical researchers now who are standing on their shoulders and helping us to get beyond COVID-19.

4) Do you have any special skills or talents?

Nope, but lots and lots of many varied interests and hobbies to keep me fully and happily occupied.

5) Please share a little-known fact about yourself.

I wanted to be a vet or biologist when I was a kid. One day I found an already dead frog near our place and brought it home to dissect, except since there wasn't time to dissect it immediately, I put it in the freezer to dissect later, without telling my mum...

6) What is your most prized possession?

My memories and the things they live inside of, like my photo collection.

7) Which IB learner profile attribute do you most closely identify with and why?

Inquirer, because life is bright when there is the hope of new knowledge just around the corner.

8) If you could live your life again, would you do anything differently?

No, but there are plenty of things that I don't want to repeat! And equally, plenty of things that I want to take the chance to do from now on.

9) Is there anything you are trying to learn/improve about yourself at the moment?

Yes! Many things, but as two examples, I would like to be much fitter, and I would like to be able to read the news in Japanese.

10) Do you have any special message for your fans?

I'll tell them individually if I can find them.

Student Care

There comes a time in everyone's life when we feel that there are situations or circumstances that are overwhelming or debilitating. Someone or something stands in the way of you feeling the way you ultimately would like to feel. Schools are equally susceptible, possibly more so, to the types of stressors and stimuli that can cause one to lose his or her balance and begin to feel vulnerable. Whether the school is your workplace or the space you come to learn, we all need help from time to time.

KIST is no different. There are plenty of possible triggers that can affect one's life and wellbeing. Younger students feel the separation from their parents for the first time. Language issues can make one feel excluded or insufficient. Power struggles on the playground can lead to nervous reactions. Teasing or bullying both negatively affect one's feeling of safety. Disputes over fairness, rules and regulations can change the course of friendships, if not tended to immediately at the time of occurrence, whether in the classroom or on the pitch.

Home issues, anger management, academic pressures, emotional stability and issues are just a few of the elements that can make life hard during one's school years. Through it all, people need someone who they can rely on to help "right the ship". Teachers, administrators and counseling staff are the closest adults that children can trust to help with issues that make us feel "out-of-control". Here at KIST, we have a student care coordinator in both the elementary as well as the secondary school. Anytime you find yourself feeling a bit out of sorts, ask your teacher or a staff member in your respective office if you can speak with one of the coordinators in the school.

In Elementary, please ask to speak with the Vice Principal, Mr. Bradley; in Secondary, please ask your teacher about the possibility of meeting with Ms. Holdaway.

Most importantly, remember that you are not alone and there is always someone to talk to.



Clay M. Bradley
Elementary School Vice Principal/
Student Care Coordinator (Elementary)



KIPS News



From the P1 classroom...

Hello from the P0 and P1 class! Recently, the children have been enjoying their weekly Japanese class, which takes place each Friday after morning circle. Each morning, we start the class by greeting everyone with an energetic "P0, P1 kurasu-no minasan, ohayo gozimasu!" ("Good morning, P0 and P1 class!") At the beginning of the school year, the children blinked back at us silently, but now, we are pleased when they are able to greet us back!

The children have also been engaged in activities related to the seasons and themes of the 8 terms of the KIPS curriculum. They love to repeat stories out loud when we read familiar books, and they dance and sing along with their favorite songs. We have a lot of fun watching them learn and grow! Recently, we introduced the children to the Japanese holiday "Setsubun" by showing them Japanese demon or "oni" masks and letting them touch a real holly leaf. They were especially excited to hold the leaf in their hands, but some children were surprised when the pointed parts hurt a little, and said "ouch!" or "itai!" to express themselves. After that, we sang the traditional Japanese song "oni no pantsu" ("The Demon's Underpants") and tried out "mamemaki," the Setsubun tradition of throwing beans, with the P2 children. The children were a little startled by the "oni" who visited us, but they did their best to say "oni wa soto" ("get out, demons!") while throwing balls at the demons.

Lastly, because the KIST Japanese New Year Party was unfortunately cancelled due to the COVID situation, the KIPS classes got together to have a fun KIPS New Year Party of our own! We discussed traditional Japanese New Year's games and tried out one such game, "fukuwarai." After watching the teachers'



Hitomi Shimizu
P0/P1 Teacher

examples, the children lined up and tried out sticking eyes, noses, and mouths onto the faces. It was the first time for all of the children to try "fukuwarai," so they had a blast and were very proud of their final products. It was also a great chance for us to share Japanese traditions that have been passed down over the years with the children.

From the P2 classroom...

Happy New Year! P2 has been busy making new memories with their friends since the last article was published. With the weeks leading up to the Winter Celebration in December, the children were abuzz with holiday cheer learning about Santa Claus and thinking about the presents they were going to receive from him! Their eyes lit up as we sang "Jingle Bells" and other songs while we waited for Santa to come. When he finally arrived, the children greeted him excitedly, saying "Santa! Santa! Santa!" Once Santa left, the students donned their Santa hats and played at the park.

After returning from winter break, P2 had a wonderful time experiencing different aspects of the new year such as making *shishimai*, and we even held our own Japanese New Year's Party here at KIPS! All the children in KIPS got together to read a story about mice who can do *sumo* called "Nezumi Sumo." Then, the students laughed loudly as they saw the silly faces Ms. Yoshimi made while adding the different parts for the *fukuwarai* game.

More recently, we've had parents come to KIPS to introduce their cultures to the class for the P2 unit "My Family." So far, we've enjoyed learning about Chinese New Year and belly dancing! We've also just begun to practice for the Spring Concert, and the children seem very excited to perform in front of their parents!



Brooke Esper
P2 Teacher



MYP News

MYP students explore language, culture and identity

An essential element of an IB education is the quality of international mindedness. The IB suggests that an engagement with the world and its connections is a "primary aim" of each of the programs. In the past, a focus on international mindedness flowed out of the annual World Cultures Day celebration.

World Cultures Day served as a reminder across the school of the central role of engagement with the world around us. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, we've had to change our approach to the celebration. Instead, we're encouraging students to look for international mindedness in other places.

MYP portfolios

One of the opportunities for MYP students to reflect on their international mindedness is the MYP Portfolio. Produced following a series of Advisory classes, the portfolio is used to offer focused time for students to engage with their progress over the past year. In addition to examining their academic progress, students prepare to speak to their families in Student-Led Conference sessions on the topics of school life, their approaches to learning, and on essential elements of the MYP.

It is during their reflections on the MYP Essentials that students have the opportunity to consider how their learning is connected to the world at large. In each of the MYP courses, students have repeated opportunities to examine the complex web of connections that affects their lives. Whether explicitly learning about other cultures and times or simply being reminded of how interconnected the world is, students are challenged to review their view of the world.



Grade 7 Advisory

Each semester calls on students to examine Learning in the MYP. This semester's Grade 7 MYP Advisory lesson was tied directly to a consideration of **language, culture and identity**. The students and their teachers reviewed and spoke about the complex nature of their language backgrounds and how this helped form their personalities. This reflection was assisted by watching a short movie produced by Community02.com, featuring the story of KIST graduate, **Yui** (Class of 2020). Yui's story arose from a similar reflection following a World Cultures Day seminar for MYP students.

Robert White
MYP Coordinator



Yui's story about language, culture and identity.

Artscape 2021

Every year international schools in the Tokyo region organize an art exhibition known as Artscape which celebrates the creativity of students in the region.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, it wasn't possible for an in-person show to be held this year; however, art departments at participating schools collaborated and were able to organize an online exhibition.

Elementary students were included this year as well.

Check out the link below to view some work from our talented KIST students!

[Web Artscape 2021!](#)

Andrew DiBella, Julian Dave, John McDonough
Visual Arts Teachers



G6 RoboSumo



Grade 6 students design, build and code Lego Mindstorms EV-3 Robots

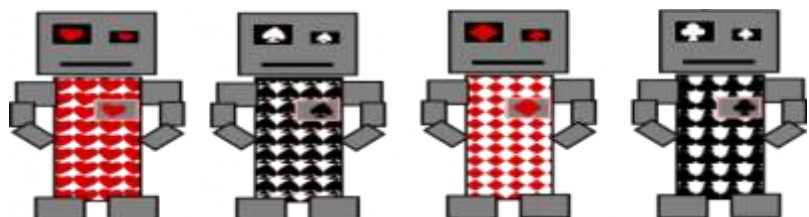
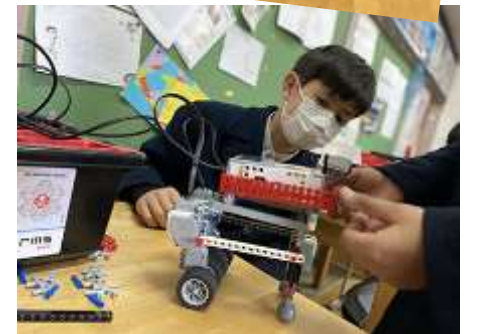
The Interschool RoboSumo event was sadly cancelled this year, but it is still going strong within KIST.

Students will nominate their classmates for the following awards:

- **Collaboration Award** – Collaboration involves two or more people sharing expertise and experience, working together to solve a problem and realize shared goals.
- **Form Award** – Form concerns the overall shape and configuration of a product. It relates to aspects such as aesthetics, shape, colour and texture.
- **Function Award** – The function of a solution refers to what it has been designed to do and how effective it is at enabling that action to be performed.
- **Invention Award** – An invention is an entirely novel product or a feature of a product that is unique.



Timothy Smith
MYP Design Teacher



Japanese Calligraphy Contest for G6–G8

The annual calligraphy contest for Grades 6–8 was held in all levels of Japanese classes again this year. Students formed teams of three with one representative from each of the levels in our Japanese classes and worked together to create a poem to fit this year's theme, "let's beat COVID." Students voted to choose the best team from each grade. The winning teams received certificates from Mr. Cowe.

Congratulations to the winners of the Japanese Calligraphy Contest!



Grade 6

**Vardaan (G6A), Riko (G6A),
Kokona (G6A)**



Grade 7

**Manya (G7A), Sasha (G7A),
Jacqueline (G7B) (not pictured)**



Grade 8

**Mano (G8A), Miki (G8A),
Pranav (G8A)**

The 2nd Japan Kanji Aptitude Test

漢字

Students in Grades 6–11 once again took the Japan Kanji Aptitude Test ("Nihon Kanji Noryoku Kentei Shiken," or "Kanken" for short) on January 28, 2021. This is an externally scored test that provides objective results. We will receive the official results from the organization that administers the tests (the Nihon Kanji Noryoku Kentei Kyokai) in early March.

Although the test results are not reflected in students' semester reports, the "Kanken" provides an opportunity for students to improve their kanji knowledge and take part in standardized testing to demonstrate their skills, especially as kanji is an integral part of Japanese language classes. The names of the students who successfully pass the test will be displayed on the bulletin boards in the hallway.



Secondary ELS



Language learning: some truths and tips

For both native and non-native speakers, language acquisition is a long and winding road; exhausting, but as you climb up the mountain the view becomes clearer and more vibrant. As with any journey one needs adequate provisions to make it a great one. Here are some quick tips to keep you on your way.

- **Peaks and valleys are normal (and so are you)**

You may be surprised to find out that you are not a robot. Your motivation levels for all sorts of activities will wax and wane throughout the year, month or even day. This is not a character flaw or a sign of laziness, rather, it may be a sign that you need to reassess both your goals and learning methods to those which suit your needs. A change of activity, pace or mode will reinvigorate your interest and, in turn, your learning.

- **Consistency is key**

There is a reason that 'slow and steady wins the race' is a cliché. As with any kind of study, cramming does not and has never worked, so don't do it. Retaining any information is helped by timed repetition over a long period of time. Five minutes of revision daily is far more effective than one day of mad cramming. It is also significantly less stressful.

- **Know what you don't know (and be cool with it)**

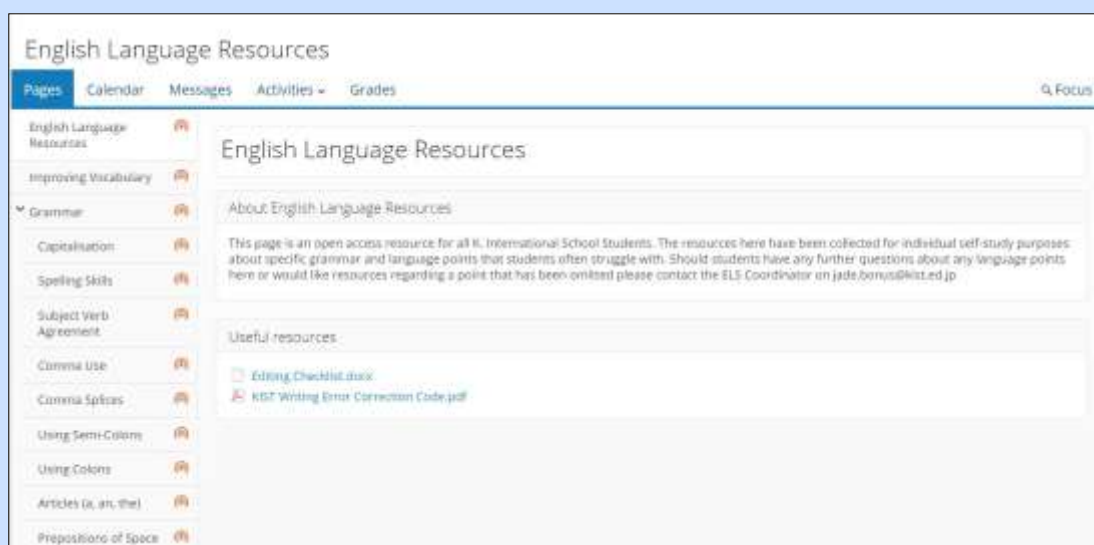
Approach your developing skills with a growth mindset. Only when you are aware of specific areas of concern can you make plans for improvement. Use feedback from teachers as a tool to help you set concrete goals that you can work towards.

- **It never ends (and not in a bad way)**

The nature of language is evolution. For both native and non-native speakers, communication is constantly changing to reflect culture. Therefore, language learning has no endpoint. Rather than an enduring challenge this infinite nature gives opportunity for infinite chances to marvel at this fascinating tool of human expression. Or, if that is a little too flowery (and I am quite sure it is), take solace in knowing that no one is an expert and we are all learning and you are not alone.

English language resources—a reminder

Since the last edition of *The Comet*, the ELS Department has continued to develop the English Language Resources section of PowerSchool Learning. Located under the 'Extras' tab on PowerSchool Learning, the English Language Resources section is accessible to all members of the KIST community. Should any teachers or students wish to see further resources in a particular area, please e-mail me.



Jade Bonus
 ELS Coordinator (Secondary)
jade.bonus@kist.ed.jp



Individuals & Societies Department Snapshot

Welcome to the Individuals & Societies Snapshot, which provides insight into what each grade level and subject has explored so far during the year!

Keith Erickson
Subject Area Coordinator—I&S



Grade 6

In the second unit of G6 I&S, students explored how maps provide people with a sense of time, place and space. Through the process students critically questioned the reliability of maps by examining their features and purpose. In the classroom we saw heated arguments on whether schools should stop using the Mercator map. Students also became cartographers for a lesson by producing a topographic map for their very own clay mountain.



Grade 7

The students took on different roles to discuss balancing sustainability and development in the Congo Basin. The students completed research to discuss the issue from their perspective and tried to come up with a solution that all could agree upon. "One of the challenges we encountered was the fact that while we all had a common goal, our decision would have a different effect on each person," reflected **Lander** (G7A). **Sasha** (G7A) added that "different perspectives have different opinions because they have different responsibilities." Each group came up with a solution which addressed the environmental and economic needs of the Congo Basin.

Grade 8

In G8, we have been exploring what makes up 'Culture', learning about different aspects of culture, how it can be expressed, how it can change based on time, place and space, and threats to culture. Finally, the students created a product to show how culture can impact one's identity. Many students chose to create art pieces, videos, presentations, and some wrote written pieces too. Here are some examples of artistic pieces exploring how culture can impact their own personal identity.



Eujin (G8A)



Kirin (G8A)

IGCSE Business Management

In IGCSE Business Management, students have been focusing on the topic of finance. Students learned about sources of finance, various financial documents, and tools to analyze financial information. One interesting activity that allowed students to apply what they learned was making a business board game. Students were challenged to make an enjoyable but educational game that included as many financial concepts as possible. All the students' final games were very creative, unique and educational! Here is a screenshot of a game a student has created. (Written by: **Sara** [G10A])

m Current Ratio

The current ratio is a liquidity ratio that measures the business's ability to pay short term debt and obligations due one year, and is thus vital for investors like you!

Can be found by:

$$\text{Current Ratio} = \frac{\text{Current Assets}}{\text{Current Liabilities}}$$

A current ratio of below 1 means the business doesn't have enough liquid assets. (Ideally 1.5 - 2)

Acid Test Ratio

The acid test ratio is a liquidity ratio that indicates whether or not a business has sufficient short term assets to cover its short term liabilities. The main difference with the current ratio is that it IGNORES INVENTORY, making it stricter.

Can be found by:

$$\text{Acid Test Ratio} = \frac{\text{Current Assets} - \text{Inventory}}{\text{Current Liabilities}}$$

Ideal Acid Test Ratio: Greater than 1

[Clemente] Its important to make Wise Choices when Investing! Let's explore the Acid Test Ratio, and the Current Ratio, which are two ways that'll help you make decisions when investing in a business!

IGCSE Economics

Students have been learning about the key macroeconomic objectives of a government, such as economic growth, low unemployment, low and stable inflation, and equity in the distribution of income. The students then considered the policy tools that governments use to achieve these macroeconomic objectives through adjusting levels of spending, taxation, interest rates and regulation in an economy. To place their learning in context, students worked in groups to investigate the effect that the Japan government's "Go To Eat" and "Go To Travel" campaigns have had on progress towards one or more of the macroeconomic objectives. The students are currently conducting both primary and secondary research throughout Semester 2 in order to examine the effectiveness of these campaigns.



Image reference: campaign photos from the official government campaign websites

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IGCSE Geography

G9 students have jumped straight into the IGCSE content and began their core topics of coastal and river environments. Students have showed a very strong understanding of key concepts and theories behind how geomorphic landscapes change over time. Students have also shown a brilliant understanding as to why coasts and rivers are threatened by global warming and other contemporary global issues. They have practiced debating, researching and presenting their ideas as part of their class work. Next, they have gone on to studying hazardous environments particularly focusing on earthquakes, tropical storms and volcanic eruptions. Last week students interviewed a volunteer who helped with humanitarian aid after the Nepalese earthquake, to gain understanding of the challenges developing countries face when recovering from disasters. Students were able to reflect on how Japan's responses to earthquakes are very efficient compared to other nations.



Students getting ready for their Zoom call interview with a humanitarian volunteer.

IGCSE History

G9 IGCSE History students have begun our first depth study into 'Dictatorship and conflict in the USSR, 1924–53'. They are learning about how Stalin came to power, and who the other contenders were for leadership at Lenin's death in 1924. To help remember what each candidate stood for, students made campaign posters to highlight the pros and attack ads to show the cons of each candidate. Note taking and discussions are vital to our learning in IGCSE History class, but making something creative is always a fun way to consolidate our learning! It encourages them to think critically about the people and events that we study and definitely helps them to remember!

Haruto (G9A)



Arnav (G9A)

Weekly Ledger Statement				Income Statement			
Particulars	2020	2021	2022	Particulars	2020	2021	2022
Share Capital	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	Revenue	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000
Reserves	200,000	200,000	200,000	Costs	(700,000)	(700,000)	(700,000)
Total Assets	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	Profit	500,000	500,000	500,000
Share Capital	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	Operating Expenses	(200,000)	(200,000)	(200,000)
Reserves	200,000	200,000	200,000	Net Income	300,000	300,000	300,000
Total Assets	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000				

DP Business Management

DP students have been examining the different business functions: human resources, marketing and finance. We recently studied the business function of finance, which focuses on utilization and acquisition of monetary capital for businesses to carry out efficient operations. The previous class assessment was an accounting case study. Provided with financial accounts such as income statements and balance sheets, we were tasked with identifying weaknesses in the company's finances. After identifying financial weaknesses, we suggested recommendations for the company justified through the case study and business theory. Provided is a photo of the financial statement. (Written by: Dharmik [G12A])

DP Economics

Recently, our class explored one of the many fundamental branches of Economics: International Economics. While this unit focused on a range of engaging topics from trade protectionism to exchange rates, one topic that truly fascinated us was 'Economic Integration'. In this topic, we analyzed the numerous benefits of countries integrating and reducing trade barriers, which lowers production costs, increases consumer choice, political cooperation, increased employment and most importantly, trade globalization. Learning about Japan's acceptance into the world's largest free-trade agreement (RCEP) bloc with 15 other Asian countries made us realize the growing significance of trade interdependence between nations and international cooperation. (Written by: Leah [G12A])



DP Geography

During the first quarter, students in G11 have covered an array of core Geographical units of population, global climate change and resource consumption. Students have adapted well to the DP style of learning and have shown to be hardworking, creative and critical thinkers. They have produced a number of presentations where they were able to showcase their talents through infographic posters, debates and even videos. Here you see students representing a country in our UN climate change talks. Each student represented a country that was either a low income, newly industrialized or high-income country. Students then had to conduct research on how their country contributed and or suffered the impacts of climate change. They had some great debating points on the accountability and possible strategies to tackle this complex issue.



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DP History

In DP History students are in the midst of learning about Japanese expansion in 1933–41. They have examined Japanese militarism and nationalism as crucial factors leading to Japanese expansion in Asia. To demonstrate their knowledge of a key event in their learning, they created a skit for the Manchurian crisis. Students collectively created a script and performed it on the following day. The skit was also filmed so they are able to watch this in G12 as part of their final revision.



KIST Middle School Spelling Bee



On Monday, January 28, the KIST middle school spelling bee was held in the LMC. We had an enthusiastic field of eight participants in grades 6 and 7. There were several very strong performances—and two very closely matched top performers.

Thank you and congratulations to the 8 participants:

Grade 6
Allen, Abhinav, Avni, Jash, Youn Ho
Grade 7
Ananya, Divyansh, Dhriti



After thirteen rounds, the winner was **Ananya** (G7B) who prevailed with the word "ivories." She narrowly defeated **Allen** (G6A) after several rounds in which the two were very equally matched.

Congratulations to our winner and thank you to all the participants and judges, as well as our announcer, Mr. Davignon. Ananya moved on to compete in the Japan Times National Spelling Bee on Saturday, March 6, which was held virtually this year due to the ongoing pandemic-related state of emergency. Quite impressively, Ananya advanced through several rounds, and out of 30 qualifying spellers from across the country, she ultimately placed fourth. Well done, Ananya and thank you for representing KIST so well.

Steven Otis
 Subject Area Coordinator—English



And the winner was...



Ananya (G7B)

Service as Action

All thanks go to the students who continued to care!

This year, service has been a very tricky business, indeed. The KIST service committee needed to be flexible to meet the requirements of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's emergency guidelines but still make sure the service clubs could continue.

It is only thanks to the truly committed students that we finished the first semester with most clubs contributing valuable service to the school community. Here are a few of those students and their stories of KIST Service as Action during the COVID-19 pandemic this year.

This group of students from G6B was determined to combine work with friendship. Meet Kanade, Joanne and Nonoka. Here is their advice to those thinking of signing up for next semester:



“ We would highly recommend other students to join a service group because you could get to know other students in different grade levels. Often, I would not talk to people in other grade levels since there is barely any connection. But after I joined the Green Team, people in the team say hi to me when we pass each other in the hallway. I also thought that participating and being interactive in a school service would help KIST a lot.”

“ We decided to join a service team because we thought it was a great experience joining into a group that we can all collaborate with each other, and able to get new abilities. We didn't have the choice to join when we were in elementary, so it was a new thing for all the Grade 6s. I knew from the start that joining a service team wasn't necessary, but I wanted to help the school in a positive way. Many of the service groups at school are fun, while being able to help the school, society and even the environment.”

“ We signed up partly because of influence from our friends, but partly the choice was made by ourselves. At first many people did not really know what service to choose, but the Green Team seemed interesting and popular, so many of my friends joined. Another reason we signed up for a service group is because we heard about the Green Team in Grade 5. The secondary students came to the elementary building and gave a presentation about service and the SDGs. That inspired us to join

Well done! It sounds as if it was a challenge but worth it.

Next, here are the thoughts about joining service from a G7B student, Jessica:



“ I decided to join a service even if it was not mandatory because during COVID, other activities outside and inside the school were cancelled. Service was one of the few opportunities to enjoy life when there is so little right now.”

Thanks, Jessica. Now let's hear more insights on the effect of COVID on service from Andrew in G8A:



“ During the COVID-19 pandemic, services had to undergo rapid change in order to adapt. This came with many consequences. In my experience, large service meetings were postponed or cancelled entirely, and the service had to be broken up into groups of people or "departments," and I was placed in control of a department responsible primarily for AI development. During the course of my time in this service, COVID made it challenging for our department to meet and discuss important issues and limited us to meeting only once a week.

However, especially during this time of boredom in the COVID pandemic, this service challenged me to manage people of a wide range of programming abilities and to apply my own skills in technology on a scale that I had never anticipated before.

We ran into challenges, but ultimately overcame them and developed our communication and coding abilities.

This service helped me develop my leadership skills and programming skills and most importantly, enriched my school life with difficult challenges involving both programming and management.”

Wow, what great ideas and great Service participants we have at KIST. Without you guys, Service as Action would be no Action, and thus no Service. We are grateful.

I hope all the kids at KIST in MYP G6–8 would heartfully consider these outlined advantages to joining Service and sign-up soon for a Semester 2 service. We need you and appreciate you.

KIST Service as Action Team



Nurse's Notes

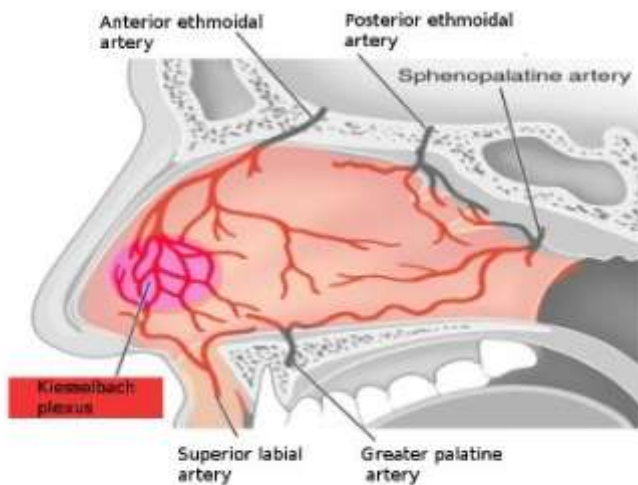
Nosebleeds in children

What causes a nosebleed in a child?

Nosebleeds are caused by bleeding from broken blood vessels in the delicate tissue inside the nose. The most common causes of nosebleeds are environmental dryness, infection, hay fever/allergic rhinitis, repetitive nose-picking, injury and the heat in the summer. Many nosebleeds come from the front of the nose, so they are not usually a sign of more serious illness and can be treated at home.

The Kieselbach area

More than 90% of nosebleeds in children come from the Kieselbach area on the anterior nasal septum. The area of this mucous membrane is thin and contains many tiny blood vessels that can be damaged easily. In addition, if the mucous membrane becomes inflamed, dry or crusty, it is more likely to bleed when it is disturbed. Children who suffer from seasonal allergies or hay fever are especially likely to experience nosebleeds from this area due to allergy-related conditions such as scratching at an itchy nose, picking of the nose, blowing the nose too hard, or rubbing at the nose.



How to treat a nosebleed

If your child's nose starts to bleed, instruct him/her to sit down, lean slightly forward and breathe through the mouth. Stay calm and try to reassure your child. If your child's nose bleeds back into his/her mouth, instruct him/her to avoid swallowing it and to spit the blood out. Gently pinch the soft part of the nose (just above nostrils) or press the bleeding side for about ten minutes. Applying a small icepack or a cold towel on the top of the nose may help reduce the blood flow. Nosebleeds usually stop within five minutes.

Cautionary points

Stay upright, rather than lying down or leaning back. Tilting the head backwards or assuming a position which may cause blood to flow down the back of the

throat can lead to nausea, vomiting or decreased blood pressure. Hitting the back of the head does not have a hemostatic effect. Do not have your child put his or her head between the knees. This can make bleeding worse. Avoid putting dry, coarse tissues or gauze in your child's nose as it may damage the mucous membranes more and cause further bleeding. Apply soft cotton with Vaseline instead—this way, the mucous membranes will not be damaged. Remove the cotton gently and smoothly once the bleeding has stopped.

Exception: Nosebleeds that require medical attention

If your child is showing symptoms of shock, such as the following, visit a hospital or call an ambulance:

- Pale face (e.g. lips and/or face are pallid or purple)
- Decreased level of consciousness (e.g. slow or no response when being spoken to)
- Clammy hands and feet
- Incidents when head or facial trauma may be the cause of the nosebleed

After the nosebleed has subsided

- Avoid blowing the nose soon after, as this could disturb the healing process.
- Avoid taking long baths and eating spicy food within the first 24 hours after a nosebleed as these may expand the blood vessels in the lining of the nose, increasing the chances of bleeding again.
- Keep the head upright when bending down.
- Talk to an ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist if your child has frequent nosebleeds or your child under two years old has a nosebleed.

How to prevent nosebleeds

- Use a humidifier in your home to improve moisture levels in the air you breathe. Clean the humidifier regularly so germs and mold do not grow in it.
- Avoid nose-picking.
- Blow your nose gently.
- Always follow the instructions that come with nasal decongestants.
- Apply medications to relieve the symptoms of allergies, hay fever or rhinitis.
- Use a saline spray or gel to keep the nasal passages moist.
- Wearing a mask is also effective.

Yukiko Yamazaki
School Nurse



Reference:

Michelle Pilar Tellado, MD. (2019, September). *Nosebleeds for Parents*. Kids Health. <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/nose-bleed.html>

University Guidance News

What's new in university admissions? (and how does this affect applications?)

These days, the articles talking about COVID and the effects of our new society are numerous. For better or worse, that applies to university admissions as well.

What does that mean for KIST students and how can we best position ourselves for success in this new landscape?

SAT changes have come!

The College Board has decided to make drastic changes to the SAT. They have moved forward with the **removal of the SAT with Essay and the SAT Subject Tests**. Now, our students will only have one exam to prepare for if they intend to take the SAT, which should streamline their study plans.

Until June 2021	August 2021 and beyond
SAT (3 hours)	SAT (3 hours)
SAT with Essay (3 hrs 50 mins)	
SAT Subject Test (1 hour each test)	

How does this affect applications? (Counselor's view):

Now more than ever, this means students should do their best to prove their efforts inside the classroom. We do not yet know if universities that previously required and/or strongly recommended subject tests will have a new test or requirement they want to see. So, until that time, we need to strengthen the things we do know will continue to affect admissions applications, including **classroom work, SAT and extracurriculars**.

Online courses are here to stay



Not only at KIST, but at universities around the world, there has been a heavy investment in online courses and plans are for these courses to remain into the future. Even after the pandemic

clears, expect that many schools will adopt what may be called a "hybrid-model" of learning or "blended classes", where more and more lecture-style classes remain online and smaller tutorial and lab work will be done face-to-face.

How does this affect applications? (Counselor's view):

Going to summer/winter programs at universities locally and overseas is still a good way to make new connections and build your student resume. However, universities may also want to see that students are prepared for a mix of both online and offline courses. Supplementing your holiday plans with online programs/courses offered from universities can show off your flexibility. A **quick Google search** will show you some of the many options available. Virtually, you can study almost anything, anywhere!

***NOTE** – It is suggested to find programs offered directly from universities before pursuing options with online education agents.

IGSCE and DP choices time

Students in both Grades 8 and 10 have been thinking carefully about what they want to take next year to best prepare for their futures. These decisions continue to be important, even with the increased flexibility that universities are offering for applications. However, there is a key focus for each grade to consider.

- End of G8 (IGSCE decision): Choose what is most enjoyable so you can get the best scores.** Universities will not consider whether you chose *Art & Design* or *Business*. They will, however, consider if you scored a "5" in the class instead of a "7". If you enjoy your choice, you may be able to continue it into the IBDP. If not, then you have freedom to change to something else!
- End of G10 (IBDP decision): Choose what matches your future the best.** This can be especially important if you want to study in a country where you choose your major before applying (UK/Canada/Japan/etc.). If you decide to pursue a different major halfway through the IBDP, hope is not lost! Please meet with your university counselor to discuss the best options.

How does this affect applications? (Counselor's view):

This allows students to have some freedom at the end of Grade 8 to really pick something that matches their personality and learn more about themselves. However, now that SAT subject tests do not exist, we may want to be more careful about our IB subject choices at the end of Grade 10 as we do not have as many backup options now.

Showing off our strengths

It can be easy to look at our weaknesses and areas we need to improve. These days, it is just as important that we find ways to **show off our strengths**, too. The MYP, IGSCE and DP curricula at KIST are designed to build well-rounded students. However, it is up to each student to decide what they want to show off as an individual.

Cialfo multiple intelligences: Students in G9 and above can view this now!

During semester 2 of G9, students will take the *Multiple Intelligences* assessment within Cialfo. Instead of considering weaknesses, this is where I want students to examine their "superpowers", start to consider what makes them unique, and decide how they can stand out amongst their peers.



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How does this affect applications? (Counselor's view):

Having more universities allowing students to apply without standardized tests such as the SAT or TOEFL means that applicants need to find other ways to show off what they can do. This provides freedom because you are not limited to all pursuing the same path. If you love volleyball, try to join some events outside school to really step up your game! If video games make you happy, start learning how you could code your own or what it may take to join a part time e-sports league (*online sports are just as valid on an application as real sports these days, especially if you can win a competition*).

The final summary

Global education is always changing. What worked for this year's graduates may not fit next year's graduates or those still a few years away. However, if students continue to improve themselves to the best of their abilities, they can be confident that when the time comes, their application results will reflect the work they put in and they will have no regrets.

Good luck!

Thomas Waterfall
University Guidance Counselor
thomas.waterfall@kist.ed.jp



Athletics Update

Winter season 2020-21

Though we started up our winter sports teams (basketball and soccer) last November, we were forced to put practices on hold when the school year resumed in January due to the state of emergency. The extension of the state of the emergency meant a cancellation of our U-18 boys' and girls' as well as our U-14 boys' basketball seasons.

The JV boys and girls football season may continue in spring depending on the state of emergency and drastic reduction of COVID-19 cases.

We were hoping to start MS girls' basketball (Kanto Plains) in preparation for the spring season as the girls missed their season last year, but this may not happen.

We hope to start up some of the ISTAA League futsal seasons with a delayed start, possibly in late April or mid-May.

Dennis Ota
Athletics Coordinator



LMC News



A couple things have changed in the LMC since the last issue of *The Comet!* First, we have added some new furniture, which we think makes the quiet study area

cozier and more inviting. Now we have two sofas on which students can relax and recharge from a hard day's work. The green rug is deceptively comfortable! This area has been especially popular with students who stay and study until closing at 6:00 p.m.

Another change has been very consequential for students. Half of the laptops that were previously in the LMC have been placed in a mobile cart on the first floor, where they are often used. This has significantly reduced the amount of time and effort involved in borrowing laptops from the LMC for class and has encouraged teachers to hold their classes in the library. The library supervisor has appreciated the shorter lines and the company! Students are urged to remember that laptops must be plugged in when returned and power cords should never be on the floor.



Finally, the LMC is launching a campaign between now and the end of the year sponsored by Library Elf, **Ami** (G6A). She explains below:



The library elves are hosting a new campaign that will let students find books that they would like to read. There is a poster outside of the LMC with custom envelopes on it. The envelopes include different genres; for example, Fantasy, Sci-Fi, Mystery, and so on. In addition, there is an envelope including blank slips. Students should use these slips to write the book they want to recommend and put the slip inside the envelopes. They should make sure that the slip is inside the correct genre. These will be displayed on the shelf under "Student picks." If the book chosen is not currently in the LMC, we will try to buy it. If there are any other questions, please contact: ak3278@email.kist.ed.jp or michael.davignon@kist.ed.jp. We thank you and hope you have fun reading in semester 2!"



Michael Davignon
LMC Supervisor

