



10th February 2016, Gothenburg

## **2016 February spring term update from the Head of School**

Dear Parents,

Fortunately we have had a much smoother start to the term in school compared to the mixed weather conditions outside! For the first time in ISGR history, we had to cancel a school day due to an overnight snowstorm. Whilst this delighted many students, we understand that some parents with busy mornings and distances to travel, did not share the excitement. We tried to get the message out as early as possible, however it took some time to confirm the provision of essential services needed to run a school day (including heating, electricity, water supplies, transport for staff & students, and student lunches) some of which depend on third parties.

If unforeseen conditions occur in the future, please be sure to check the homepage of our website, where we will post information at the earliest possible time, as well as messages through ManageBac for the international section and SchoolSoft for the national section.

### **French exchange programme**

A highlight of the term so far has been the French exchange programme. In January we had the visit of 27 French students and 3 teachers from our partner school Lycée Joliot-Curie in Rennes, France. This high achieving school contacted us last year hoping to start an exchange programme; today we have an established programme involving IHGR and ISGR (national and international sections).

During the visit, the French students attended classes at our school and lived with ISGR/IHGR families. They also had the opportunity to enjoy off-school activities including visits to “Nordens Ark”, the Gothenburg biscuit factory (‘Göteborgs kexfabrik’) located in Kungälv, as well as ice-skating and sledding. Some of them even experienced for the first time walking over a frozen lake. They discovered the Swedish cuisine and enjoyed our “fika”.

Now it is time for us to go again to this unique French region “Bretagne”. We will visit the “Mont Saint-Michel” and the wonderful city of Saint-Malo and of course we will enjoy the Bretagne speciality “crepes”. Our students will live with French families and apply all their



language skills. The French teachers at ISGR/IHGR are very proud that our school provides such an opportunity to our French language students, but the opportunities do not stop in France - we are also starting a Spanish exchange with a private school in Zaragoza, Spain.

### **Strategic planning and school goals**

The Leadership team at ISGR has been working with our long-term goals, developed in conjunction with our Vision and Mission for the School. The ISGR goals are to: cultivate one internationally minded school culture; ensure empowered learning for the future with relevant technologies; and further develop our methods for differentiated learning. To achieve our goals, we have developed focus areas across the organisation, including ICT and Information Systems, One School Culture, including the National section bilingual programme, and Differentiated Learning. In addition, we have a team looking at communication and branding to further unite the School community and strengthen our identity. Groups comprising members of the Leadership team and pedagogical leaders are working on the plans.

Our strategic planning also links to the requirements of our accreditation bodies - the Council of International Schools (CIS), the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, and the Swedish LGR curriculum and its governing body, the Swedish School Inspectorate. Further information on our strategic planning and long-term goals will be shared in the next parent letter, along with information evenings beginning with Differentiated Learning (15th March) and an overview of goals and focus areas (19th April). These information sessions will be held at 18:00 in the Aula at Götaberg Campus. Provided here below is more information on the evaluation processes, and attached to this letter is a timeline to our re-accreditation.

### **Evaluation processes**

CIS is a global non-profit membership organisation, providing accreditation to educational institutions which ensures ongoing external quality assurance process to enhance student learning. ISGR was first accredited by CIS in 2008 and has since maintained accreditation for grades K-10, in PYP and MYP Programmes, and also grades 0-9 in the National Section.

Our CIS evaluation process is currently moving into a very important stage with much of our self-evaluation taking place this term. We are currently reviewing the analysis of the opinion survey taken during the Autumn of 2014. These findings will help us with the next step in the self-evaluation process. We welcome further parental involvement so if you are interested in participating in any of the self-study groups please contact our CIS Coordinator:

[Fredrik.Wilen@isgr.se](mailto:Fredrik.Wilen@isgr.se)

*The CIS groups are:*

Section A - School Guiding Statements  
Section C - Governance and Leadership  
Section D - Faculty and Support Staff  
Section E - Access to Teaching and Learning  
Section F - School Culture and Partnerships for Learning  
Section G - Operational Systems

In January we began our Self-study and evaluation process for the upcoming IB PYP Evaluation. Our PYP was first accredited by the IB in 2003 and since then has gone through two evaluation cycles and this will be the third. The MYP will be reviewed in 2018 so this period will focus on the PYP.

The IB Evaluation process is a 12 month reflective period in which all stakeholders participate in assessing and reflecting on the school's implementation of the Programme Standards and Practices. You can view the Programme Standards and Practices at [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org).

Teachers, students, parents, members of the school board, and the school leadership team contribute to this process. The end result is a detailed and authentic action plan for areas of improvement. We also take this opportunity to celebrate our achievements!

*The IB (PYP) Evaluation groups and dates:*

January 2016 - Evaluation and Self-study begins  
February 2016 - First Parent Focus Group Meeting  
March 2016 - Parent Survey to all parents  
April 2016 - Parent Focus Group Meeting  
May-June 2016 - Parent Focus Group Reflection meeting  
September 2016 - Parent Focus Group meeting  
January 2017 - IB Visits ISGR

For further information on how to contribute to the IB Evaluation process for PYP, please contact the PYP Coordinator: [Ellen.Trelles@isgr.se](mailto:Ellen.Trelles@isgr.se)

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate 'Skolinspektionen' is responsible for evaluating and assessing schools to ensure compliance with Swedish rules and regulations. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has postponed its visit for this year and indicated that its next visit to ISGR will be in Spring 2017.



## **Facilities update**

The Guldheden building Landlord ('Lokalförvaltningen') is working on the outside, repairing the brickwork and changing all the windows in the building. They are also going to paint all the external woodwork.

Internally, we have plans for some improvements to the inside of our buildings. During the Week 7 break ('Sportlov'), we will begin painting corridors and toilets in A-Wing at Guldheden. There will also be some maintenance and repairs completed inside, with similar plans at Göteborg Campus. In addition, we have a group looking at ways to brighten and refresh our Reception areas at both Campuses.

## **PTA fundraising**

The fantastic fundraising efforts by the PTA during 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years has made possible some exciting plans to improve playground facilities, focussing on Guldheden. Devising the plans has included contributions from the student council, which wished to see paintings on the ground. Plans also include new sitting places near the hill for outside learning, and a shelter for children to be under for playing. Implementation of some plans have been delayed due to building renovation at Guldheden campus, so the PTA has proceeded to buy small items of playground equipment in the interim. Longer-term plans are continuing with discussions between the Principals, the building landlord, the PTA, and our student council of course, to ensure a list of priorities to efficiently use funds. At our middle school, money raised has previously gone towards ICT devices, including ipads and chromebooks, and for this year, funds will go to musical instruments for the music department.

## **Embrace the old, discover the new!**

Finally, You may have noticed that this letter is appearing on our new letterhead! The new, cleaner look is a part of our updated branding, designed to feature our accreditation and introduce a new 'curved' horizon line to remind us to look beyond our own horizon to other cultures, countries and communities, to continue embracing diversity and exploring the world!

I wish you a productive week through until the 'Sportlov' break in Week 7. The next Head of School letter will be sent out in Week 9.

Yours faithfully,

**Birgitta Sandström Barac**

Head of School

[birgitta.sandstrom.barac@isgr.se](mailto:birgitta.sandstrom.barac@isgr.se)

**T +46 (0)31 708 92 15**

