

# **STATE OF THE SCHOOL ADDRESS**

To the M'KIS Parent Association

May 26, 2010

Presented by  
Mrs. Linda Moran  
Head of School

## **OUR MISSION**

The Mont'Kiara International community is committed to enhancing the creative, social, emotional, and academic talents of the individual child by providing a world-class education within a compassionate environment. As lifelong learners, our students will acquire the skills and attitudes necessary to be caring, independent, productive and responsible citizens ready to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

## **OUR BELIEF STATEMENTS**

- Learning is a life-long process.
- Lifelong learners recognize the benefits derived from the skills, information and knowledge they acquire.
- Learning best occurs in context and when connected to previous experiences.
- Individuals are responsible and accountable for their choices and actions.
- Individual and cultural diversity enriches life.
- Appreciation of diversity of ideas, culture, gender and age contributes to a strong society.
- Honesty, integrity and mutual respect are essential character traits.
- Open, honest and respectful communication is essential to mutual understanding.

## **EXPECTED SCHOOL-WIDE LEARNING RESULTS**

M'KIS students will be:

Critical Thinkers  
Academic Achievers  
Involved Citizens  
Effective Communicators  
Self-Directed Learners

Thank you for providing the opportunity to share the information in this year's State of the School address, and thank you also for entrusting your children to the faculty and staff at Mont'Kiara International School. This is not a responsibility that we take lightly.

### **Students Served**

Our peak enrollment this year was 949, and we anticipate that this number will rise next year. During the 2009-2010 academic year, we served students from 52 different countries. As our numbers have risen, and as more and more families have wished to send their children to M'KIS, we have made some important decisions as to enrollment. M'KIS is special in that we choose to limit our growth in numbers, preferring to be a 'boutique' school providing a world-class education in a neighborhood setting. By design, the school maintains a strong East/West balance so that no one culture is dominant. Our students' parents are typically expatriates involved in either business or diplomacy here in Malaysia. Our Malaysian students' parents are also typically highly successful entrepreneurs or those with professions related to Foreign Service or government.

### **Faculty**

For the 2009-2010 academic year, MKIS employed 106 teachers and non-administrative coordinators, two Principals, one Curriculum Coordinator, one Coordinator for Student Support Services, two Assistant Principals, and a Head of School. The majority of our faculty members come from the USA, Canada, and Australia. MKIS also employs 59 additional academic and non-academic support staff members.

### **Accreditation**

Mont'Kiara International School continues to be fully accredited. In the May 2010 WASC Interim Report, the following required data was submitted:

#### Major Changes or Conditions Impacting the School Improvement Process Since the Last Report

1. Walt Morris, the prior Head of School, is taking an unpaid sabbatical year from July 2009 until July 2010. Linda Moran, the Accreditation Coordinator and former Coordinator for Student Support Services, moved up to the Head of School position for the 2009-2010 academic year. Walt will be returning to MKIS as Head of School for the 2010-2011 academic year. Linda Moran will be returning to the USA on 25 June 2010.
2. A new Middle/High Principal, Gary Melton, joined the Administrative Team at MKIS this year. Paul Brodie assumed the position of Coordinator for Student Support Services this year. Amy Sholdt assumed the Co-Coordinator position in regard to WASC accreditation processes at M'KIS.

### **Action Plan Progress**

Four major components made up our 2009-2010 Action Plan:

1. Supporting Continuous Improvement in Curriculum and Instruction
2. Achieving Organizational Effectiveness
3. Strengthening Student Support
4. Ensuring Clear and Transparent Communication

*Curriculum and Instruction*

Action Step	Status
<b>1.1 Utilize multiple measures of assessment to drive instruction, resources, and planning.</b>	
1.1.1 Consistently utilize disaggregated data from diagnostic, standardized, formative, portfolio, and common assessments to inform instruction.	Ongoing
1.1.2 Follow and update the specified annual curriculum review cycle.	Ongoing
<b>1.2 Update the articulation of the following on all curriculum maps: essential questions, standards and benchmarks, integration across the curriculum, differentiation strategies, and assessment strategies.</b>	
1.2.1 Provide instruction and models to ensure consistency in curriculum map documentation	Provided & Continuing
1.2.2 Update & analyze curriculum maps and other documentation for vertical alignment and progress toward Action Steps 1.1.1, 1.1.2, & 1.2.1	Mapping Updated, Council Review Limited
1.2.3 In-service faculty through focused professional development modules to support integrated information technology literacy, differentiated instruction, and assessment strategies.	Provided & Continuing
<b>1.3 Conduct IB Self-Study and complete all tasks related to the submission of the Five-Year Review Report.</b>	
1.3.1 Finalize the school-wide PD Policy.	Completed
1.3.2 Synthesize the various language-related policies and procedures & publish in one M'KIS Language Policy manual.	Completed
1.3.3 Synthesize the various assessment procedures & policies & publish in one M'KIS Assessment Policy manual.	Completed
1.3.4 Develop ESLR/IB Learner Profile correlation chart.	Completed
1.3.5 Gather evidence of each IB Practice (common & Diploma programme)	Completed
1.3.6 Determine IB Action Steps based on a review of the evidence [and include these in the updated 2010-2012 WASC Action Plan]	Completed
1.3.7 Write the IB Self-Study Document	Completed and Submitted

Steady progress has occurred in most steps related to Curriculum and Instruction. Our teachers are becoming increasingly skilled at using assessment data to inform instruction. All ESLR areas were addressed via the steps above. (Academic Achiever, Critical Thinker, Effective Communicator, Self-Directed Learner, Involved Citizen) Our Involved Citizen ESLR was particularly evident during our IB Self-Study’s examination of the CAS program. (Creativity, Action, Service)

Listing the specific steps required for the IB Self-Study (1.3.1-1.3.7) served to sustain focus this year. We will utilize a similar strategy in our 2010-2012 Action Plan Update in support of our WASC Self-Study.

You will note that the phrase ‘Ongoing’ is used in some areas. For some tasks such as the analysis of assessment data, we feel that this should never be considered as ‘Completed’.

### Organizational Effectiveness

Action Step	Status
<b>2.1 Refine safety and security procedures.</b>	
2.1.1 Refine procedures for all fire/evacuation and lock-down drills.	Accomplished
2.1.2 Improve student monitoring strategies.	Ongoing
<b>2.2 Maintain MKIS's forward momentum and commitment to the action plans for improvement in the face of upcoming changes in leadership.</b>	
2.2.1 Administrative dialogue to be conducted prior to August 2009 in order to ensure a shared understanding of and commitment to <i>Focus on Learning</i> procedures.	Accomplished
2.2.2 Administrative review of policies and procedures in order to determine the need to refine previous strategies (e.g., teacher evaluation, schedules, supervision)	Accomplished
<b>2.3 Plan for facilities that address the needs of current &amp; projected student numbers.</b>	
2.3.1 Conduct an analysis of current facility usage.	Accomplished
2.3.2 Review alternate strategies for needed spaces.	Accomplished
<b>2.4 Refine and update the technology plan within the limitations imposed by the infrastructure of the host country.</b>	
2.4.1 Undertake an analysis of the existing IT infrastructure at M'KIS.	Accomplished
2.4.2 Review feasibility of alternate infrastructure options.	Accomplished
2.4.3 Review ITL integration documentation on curriculum maps to determine variations in human resource use as well as need for increases in hard and soft IT resources	Ongoing
2.4.4 Update the IT Plan in order to guide strategies and resource purchases through the year 2012.	Accomplished

Organization received a stronger focus this year. Action Steps #2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 directly address Critical Areas for Follow-Up specified by the 2009 Visiting Committee. (See Critical Areas for Follow Up) Our Effective Communicator and Critical Thinker ESLRs are strongly linked to the above areas. We were particularly pleased with the improvements seen in our safety drills this year. Keeping students safe is always our top priority.

### Student Support

Action Step	Status
<b>3.1 Achieve consistency in all KP-12 Student Support Services. (ELL, Learning Assistance, Counseling Programs, Admission Support)</b>	
3.1.1 Consistently follow all guidelines and procedures as specified in the Support Services Handbook	Ongoing
3.1.2 Train new Support Services personnel in the administration of the following assessment tools: <i>WJIII Achievement Tests, WJIII Diagnostic Reading Battery, KeyMath, Flynt-Cooter Reading Inventory, IDEA Proficiency Tests</i>	Accomplished

Use of additional assessment tools supports students in the achievement of all ESLRs. Our teachers are becoming much more skilled in the interpretation of this standardized data.

Monitoring of procedures as specified in the Support Services Handbook is a task that is never completed. We feel that Action Step 3.1.1 is another one of those steps that should always be listed as "Ongoing".

*Ensuring Clear and Transparent Communication*

<b>Action Step</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>4.1 Ensure consistent and effective communication</b>	
4.1.1 Consistently apply procedures for publishing agenda and seeking input prior to formally scheduled meetings involving faculty (e.g. faculty meetings, home group meetings, department/grade level meetings, head of department/leadership council, teacher dialogue meetings, curriculum council meetings)	Ongoing
4.1.2 Ensure timely publication of minutes of all faculty meetings listed in step 4.1	Ongoing
4.1.3 Refine posting procedures to ensure ease in viewing data	Ongoing
4.1.4 Ensure effective communication between the Board and the Head of School continues.	Accomplished

Action Step #4.1.4 is linked to a Critical Area of Follow up specified by the 2009 Visiting Committee. There was no difficulty in accomplishing this goal. Steps #4.1.1, 4.1.2, and 4.1.3 were more problematic for some school divisions this year. This is an area in which we must improve during the next academic year, and are already working diligently to make this happen.

**Follow-Up on Critical Areas Specified by Visiting Committee**

The Visiting Committee identified four areas for follow-up. Following is a list of the identified areas and the action taken to date.

1. *The school needs to find ways to ensure that effective communication between the owner and school community is sustained, despite changes in leadership.*

Action Taken: Regular communication has continued between the owner and the Head of School. This has taken the form of monthly written reports submitted to members on both the Board of Directors and the Board of Governors; monthly meetings; telephone conversations; and email. The Head of School has been encouraged to request meetings or other forms of contact as frequently as she desires. The new offices for the Board are right outside the school campus, which makes it very easy and convenient for meetings.

2. *The school needs to maintain its forward momentum and commitment to the action plans for school improvement in the face of its upcoming changes in leadership.*

Action Taken: Commitment to the Action Plans focusing on school improvement has continued as noted in the Action Plan Progress section of this report. The current Head of School, Linda Moran, has continued in the role of Accreditation Coordinator throughout this academic year, which supported continued commitment. Walt Morris will be returning to M’KIS as Head of School for the 2010-2012 academic years—and will continue to support excellence at Mont’Kiara International School. [*Please note the attached Action Plan update for the 2010-2012 academic years.*]

3. *The school needs to continue to support teaching and learning by refining its technology plan within the limitations imposed by the infrastructure of the host country.*

Action Taken: A revised plan was developed and the school is working to promote upgrades in infrastructure. Much of the resource purchases planned are directly linked to infrastructure, such as installing a Network Monitoring Device and selecting two new internet service providers (primary and back-up). Although change in the infrastructure of our host country comes more slowly on occasion than many would like, change is occurring. We will be implementing some infrastructural changes ahead of schedule. (E.g. campus-wide wireless network)

4. *The school needs to plan for facilities that address the needs of its current and projected student numbers.*

Action Taken: A full analysis was conducted and classroom spaces are being utilized more efficiently. Some additional modification will take place during the summer months. This will include:

- Extending classroom E.3.8 to allow more movement for music sessions
- Installing a staircase from the H2 corridor to the lower courtyard
- Installing shade for the upper playfield bleachers
- Renovation of the server room and IT Coordinator office relocation
- Installing a scoreboard for the swimming pool
- Installing touch-pads for the swimming pool
- Replacing the floor tile surrounding the swimming pool
- Installing a multi-sport scoreboard for the playing field
- Renovation and extension of the Weight Room
- Engaging a professional to inspect our climbing wall
- Replacing all climbing wall equipment that are 2 years or older
- Installing rubber flooring in the Multipurpose Hall and Weight Room
- Installing an accordion door in the middle of the Multipurpose Hall to allow for shared usage
- Review the need for acoustic treatment at the Multipurpose Hall
- Convert Room A.3.1 to a full lab that can be used for science and cooking activities
- Begin work toward the renovation of 13 bathrooms, commencing with vendor and contractor selection. Degree of progress will be contingent on finding the best vendor and contractors for this important task.

## Special Challenges This Year

This is the twelfth year that I have worked at Mont'Kiara International School. Over the years, I have come to realize that M'KIS families, faculty, and staff members rise to meet all challenges.

We began our year with more than a little anxiety over the H1N1 Influenza. Following the guidelines developed by Mr. Walt Morris prior to his departure, the school implemented 100% temperature checks for six full weeks. M'KIS faculty members and staff gave up much of their planning and lunch times during this very labor-intensive time of the year. We were unable to prevent the H1N1 virus from entering our school, but primarily due to the conscientious efforts among all families, we have actually seen a drop in absences due to illness over the course of this school year. We do not want to have to worry about future pandemics, but we would love to see a continued diligence in guarding the students' health in future years!

Michael Daly led all the IB teachers through a very detailed IB Self-Study this year. Every individual IB standard and practice had to be analyzed and supporting evidence provided to justify the 'score' teachers determined was appropriate. We were very gratified to be able to show that we could specify and prove that Satisfactory Development was indicated for each standard. Our hard-working and diligent IB faculty members determined the following *Principal Proposals for Improvement* in their Self-Study Summary, many of which were included in our Action Plan for 2010-2012:

- *MKIS needs to ensure more effective use of planning and collaboration time.*
- *A greater emphasis on assessment and reporting needs to take place in next year's professional development segments.*
- *A greater degree of dialogue needs to take place between IB teachers and the Coordinator for Student Support Services if teachers feel students are low functioning.*
- *IB teachers need to make better use of the international network and local community expertise.*
- *Communication strategies need to be regularly reviewed for aspects that could be improved.*
- *More time needs to be spent on the analysis of assessment data.*
- *Continue to recognize the opportunities for supporting the Learner Profile within lessons and assignments by linking this to the school's more measurable ESLRs.*
- *Review inventories and student assessment data regularly to determine the need for additional resources.*
- *Develop teacher evaluations that are linked to their job descriptions and student learning.*
- *Broaden subject offerings in Group 6 (Arts & Electives)*

The loss of a beloved teacher was perhaps the greatest challenge of all this year. Lehar Shukor's death was very hard on many of us. Many thanks must be extended to the parents who provided immediate support to those who were grieving by providing yellow ribbons and an opportunity to honor Lehar via Madeleine Children's Fund. The memorial service coordinated by Danielle Rich and supported by so many others was another way of handling this loss. Celebrating Lehar's life and helping Malaysian children stricken with cancer provided many healing moments.

### **Special Celebrations**

The IB Self-Study was also worthy of being listed in this section of the report. Seeing a group of conscientious teachers come together for an in-depth analysis of our programs as a means of providing better support of our students is wonderful. As part of this celebration, we have already begun work toward broadening our Group 6 offerings. We have chosen the area of Music as our next IB offering and will provide a new course, Advanced Music, an Introduction to IB Music, in 2010-2011. IB Music will be offered in 2011-2012.

I think everyone will agree that many of this year's celebrations were centered on the Visual and Performing Arts. Dance, Music, Band, Drama, Theater productions, Theater Tech, Art, and Ceramics have become increasingly important to the families we serve. We are increasing opportunities for our strings students during the next year by increasing the numbers of classes offered during the school day. We will have a 3 blocks of strings instruction: elementary, middle, and high next year during the school day. In recognition of the special strides seen this year in Band, the Board went well above budget and authorized additional capital expenditures in support of Band, Strings, and Orchestra. At the Middle School level, Show Choir will be a new elective—and I know we are all looking forward to hearing some gleeful sounds! Hannah Northcott, James Instone, and Adeline Leong have become so inspired by the upsurge in interest in the Visual and Performing Arts that they have decided to put on a fully integrated production next year of *Honk!* This is musical adaptation of *The Ugly Duckling*. The West End production won the Olivier Award for Best Musical in 2000. It will be great to see what M'KIS can do with this in 2010.

Model United Nations has grown by leaps and bounds at M'KIS—and our students have truly grown as a result. At THIMUN, the world's largest and most prestigious high school Model United Nations conference, four M'KIS students were selected out of hundred of applicants, for leadership positions; Kuan Yu Shen, Editor in Chief of the Mutiny newspaper; Joseph Han, President of the Advisory Panel; Guan Zhen Tan, Deputy President of the International Court of Justice; Junichi Fukuoka, Deputy President of the Special Conference Committee. Two of our students were guest speakers at the closing ceremony with an audience of three thousand people and another was given a standing ovation by his committee. Seven other M'KIS students were selected for specialist committee positions at the conference: Abhi Guda, was selected as a Judge on

the International Court of Justice; and Sarah Han, Nina Kamaruddin, Finbarr Hession and Kim Harting were selected as Experts on the Advisory Panel; Miki Okumura and Fredrik Winsnes were selected to be on the Youth Assembly.

At THIMUN Singapore, the world's second largest high school Model United Nations conference, Guan Zhen Tan was chosen for the prestigious position of President of the General Assembly and Joseph Han as President of the Advisory Panel. Guan Zhen had the challenging role of presiding over the opening and closing ceremonies of the conference and chairing a two hour debate with 400 delegates. He carried out his role with confidence and unflinching dignity. Kuan Yu Shen, Marcus Stove, Abhi Guda, Sarah Han, Nina Kamaruddin, Eugene Foo, Miki Okumura, Rick Harting and Richard Martin were all selected for specialist positions.

The Malaysian Model United Nations (MYMUN) conference hosted annually by M'KIS senior students continues to be highly regarded in Asia for its professional standard. As one visiting Director commented: *I love coming to MYMUN; it's proof of what kids can do when you give them room to spread their wings and the confidence to fly high.* The MYMUN conference has a waiting list of schools wishing to attend.

i-MUN: New this year, several students have begun debating globally through Skype. Mahera Walia, Rafia Miah and Arthur Shen are so passionate about MUN that they wake up and begin debating across the globe at 11.45 pm Malaysian time.

Athletics and ASAs continue to be popular among a significant portion of our student population. Cross-country training and duathlons were very popular this year. M'KIS hosted the ISAKL Cross Country Meet for 600 runners. The elementary duathlon had over 150 participants. There was a marked increase in the number of girls participating in soccer and in baseball this year, and we were fortunate to have several parents step up on weekends. Parents stepped up to the plate through-out the school year in support of the highly successful Little League program. Trang Revere is a name that is truly revered by all Little League families!

Our middle schoolers—both the Under 13 boys and girls groups—have had a phenomenal year. This is a very talented group of athletes with many trophies in support of 'bragging rights'. Our High School teams also fared well this year, particularly in basketball, softball, and touch. Volleyball teams and badminton showed significant growth. The swim team boasted a number of medals in SEASAC this year. Annika Winsnes broke three meet records in the Under 15 category in swimming this year. Just as important as being a good athlete, our M'KIS students have a strong reputation for good sportsmanship. That is truly something to celebrate!

College Acceptances have been coming in fast and furious for our graduating class. The Korean Adv Institute of Science & Technology; Northwestern University; University of Warwick; University of Michigan; Queen's University, Ontario; University of Toronto; New York University; Purdue University; University of Virginia, and George Washington University are just some of the schools our students have chosen for their

continuation of studies. This year a number of our Malaysian students are applying for government sponsored scholarships, but information related to this will not be available until August 2010. Other scholarship offers have been made to several of our graduating class thus far; we anticipate that scholarship offers for this year's class will rise from the current US\$711,000.00 to US\$1,000,000.00 before the end of the summer. This is a significant amount during a relatively weak economic period in most parts of the world.

Our MKIS students continue to shine as Involved Citizens. We are very proud of the many efforts seen in support of others: Madeleine Children's Fund, Habitat for Humanity, Turtle Week, World Food Day, Project Cambodia, Helping Hands, and much, much more. Mont'Kiara International School was recently featured in the May edition of the *EARCOS Triannual Magazine*, which is distributed by the East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools.

### **Next Year!**

Walt Morris will be returning as Head of School next year and is ready to lead as we move into our WASC Accreditation Self-Study. This Self-Study will begin in the 2010-2011 academic year, and will continue into the first semester of the 2011-2012 academic year. Our new Action Plan will be the one in place until the next Self-Study is completed, and it is very ambitious! A full copy of this is available, but here are a few highlights of the Plan:

- Assessment analysis
- Curriculum reviews for Science, PE, and Health
- PD emphasis: Assessment that Informs Instruction
- WASC Self-Study Steps (We will need a few parents to serve on committees!)
- Refine safety and security procedures
- Review and revise faculty roles and expectations
- Continue with facility analysis and improvements of space
- Continued growth in the IT infrastructure and instruction
- Review human resource needs
- Further develop Athletics/ASA procedures and consistency of follow-through
- Ensure clear and transparent communication

In conclusion, the State of the School is simply great—thanks to the many parents, faculty, and staff who work diligently in support of our students. These are the people who have helped M'KIS become a very special place for students to grow.

In closing, I would like to give special thanks to our ever-supportive Chairman of the M'KIS Board, some of the best support staff members with whom I have ever had the privilege of working, those very special faculty members among us who always go the extra distance, a truly dynamic Parents Association, and Our Darlings—the wonderful students of Mont'Kiara International School.

*Linda S. Moran*