

The Value of MIS– A Model of 21st Century Education in Missoula

Decisions we make about our children’s education are among the most important decisions we make as parents. Early educational experiences lay the foundation for the kind of student your child will become. Choosing MIS for your child is choosing to prepare them for their lives and the world in the 21st century.

Google “21st Century Education” and you find words that describe the skills people need to confront the challenges of the 21st Century with success. 21st Century skills include critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, communication, multilingualism, curiosity, inquiry, and connection. At MIS we do more than just talk about these words. Our students are engaged every day in learning experiences at school that nurture and develop the essential skills needed to succeed in the rapidly changing landscape of the 21st century.



*Julie Lennox,
Head of School*

Take a virtual tour of a day at MIS...

- Preschool students discover and explore the world of school and friends through active play where they develop new social skills while they also create the foundation for an additional language-Spanish.
- K/1 multiage students read, write, and converse in the second language with confidence and ease. They develop a strong literacy base in Spanish that translates into strong English skills when they enter 2nd grade and beyond.
- 2/3 multiage students share their second language and their simple machine projects with students from the International School in Portland, Oregon through a Skype video conference.
- 4/5 multiage students synthesize what they have learned about the human impacts on wild trout habitat through an original creative movement and bilingual theater piece.
- Middle School students learn how to extract DNA from a tomato and think critically about the relationship between science and ethics.

As an independent school, MIS has the opportunity to be more nimble and less encumbered by the limitations of larger educational systems and to promote creativity among its teachers and students. As an IB World School, MIS has a well-researched and organized framework to bring an internationally relevant education to its students. As a language immersion school, MIS develops critical communication skills in its students alongside the lifelong cognitive benefits of learning in two languages. Investing in an MIS education now will reap dividends for your child’s future. MIS is a model of a 21st century education - in Missoula, Montana- we are very lucky.



2011-2012 Re-Enrollment Deadline is Wednesday, January 19, 2011

PYP Classrooms Connect in Cyberspace

Pajama day, holiday treats, and Skype presentations made the last day before winter break memorable for the 2nd and 3rd grade multiage classes. Back in October, Patty Cano traveled to Portland for an educational conference hosted by PNAIS (Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools.) She had the opportunity to talk with teachers from The International School (TIS), which is an IB World School with a Spanish/Chinese/Japanese immersion PYP program. During her visit, the teachers realized that they were working on a Simple Machines unit at about the same time, following a similar central idea and line of inquiry. Patty proposed a Skype video conference to give the students an opportunity to share their projects, their second language, and establish new friendships. “I thought this would be a great opportunity,” Patty shares, “not only to share knowledge and projects on simple machines, but also to make new friendships with another school in the U.S.”

The students from both classes gathered around the video screen and microphone to share their projects and ask questions. Sophie Larsen enjoyed seeing the different approaches to the project, “I liked it because they made their machines out of Play-doh and we used all kinds of different materials to make ours.”

Patty looks forward to the possibilities of establishing a sister school relationship with TIS and hopes to have more Skype conferences in the future. Will Erving commented, “It was really cool talking to someone in another state who was doing the same unit and speaking in Spanish with me.” Overall, MIS students found it was not difficult to understand what the Portland students were describing and in some cases, they enjoyed helping them with certain vocabulary words, like how to say “locker” in Spanish. Patty remarks, “The presentations demonstrated how well they understood the Central Ideas and the Lines of Inquiry in the unit. I was very excited that this was possible!”



Watch a short excerpt of the Skype conference!

Spanish Language Corner

Reflexiones del “Wild East,” Episodio 3

Journey to the Amazon, episode 3, by Ted Muhs

Aquella noche la aldea estaba misteriosamente tranquila y a medida que se caía la noche vimos las casitas alumbradas por velas. Nos enteramos que el único generador del pueblo que



provee electricidad estaba descompuesto y nadie sabía cuándo iban a llegar los repuestos. Los únicos sonidos vinieron de los loros acomodándose

en los árboles de mangos, el zumbido incesante de las cigarras, un ocasional ladrido de un perro y el murmullo de las familias charlando suavemente a oscuras. Regresamos al hotel donde disfrutamos de una puesta de un sol que parecía estar ardiendo por el humo del chaqueo.

Al día siguiente fuimos al mercado y a una tienda para aprovisionarnos para la segunda etapa de nuestra aventura. La tienda era igual que las tiendas en las películas del Oeste Antiguo. Vendía toda clase de comida básica en forma seca al lado de herramientas de mano, cerveza junto a municiones y gasolina, hasta lujos como cigarrillos y caramelos. Compramos los víveres básicos que raras veces se encuentran fuera de las aldeas, como arroz, frijoles y cebolla. La señora que nos ayudó sacaba de los sacos de yute grandes cucharones de lo que pedimos y lo pesaba por kilo. Después de cargar la camioneta, salimos de Magdalena camino al noreste traqueteando por el sendero lleno de surcos.

Aldea	village
Alumbrada por	illuminated by
Enterarse que	to find out that
Decompuesto	out of order, broken down
Cigarra	large, tropical cicada (insect)
Ladrido	barking
Disfrutar de	to enjoy
Toda clase de	all kinds of
Herramientas	tools
Municiones	ammunition
Viveres básicos	basic staples
Sacos de yute	burlap bags
Cargar	to load
Camino a	headed for
Traquetear	to rattle along
Lleno de surcos	full of potholes

The Journey Continues...the Self Study Collaboration

by Laura Bovard, Librarian

In August 2010, MIS embarked on a year-long journey of self-reflection and assessment called the Self Study. When the Self Study is complete, MIS will be prepared to invite an accreditation team, comprised of independent school educators and administrators, to a site visit in order to become an accredited member school of the PNAIS (Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools.)

Over the past months, the teachers worked together to describe how their own assumptions about how students learn are reflected in their daily teaching and curriculum decisions. The Self Study challenges the teachers to describe how they incorporate inquiry, ethical development, and internationalism into our school. This process initiated productive discussions, sometimes challenging assumptions and at other times affirming them.

Our Board of Trustees is just beginning its own inquiry and reflection of the parts of the Self Study that pertain to institutional leadership, finances, school plant and mission. It is completing a long term facilities plan and a long-term financial plan, providing MIS with the necessary tools for an enduring future. One of the most important parts of

this process is a survey of our parents, teachers, students, and alumni. The purpose of this survey is to inquire into the strengths and weaknesses of our school and to gather data that will help us in planning. After careful research, we have decided to use a survey tool developed by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS). ISACS is an association like PNAIS that represents over 200 independent schools in 13 states.

The advantage of using this organization is that ISACS will administer the survey electronically, tabulate the results, and provide comparisons with other schools. The only disadvantage is that there are a few questions on the survey that do not pertain to MIS. We hope that every parent participates in this important component of our Self Study. More information and the link will be sent via email soon.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD! Take the Survey:

The MIS survey will be available electronically from January 31st-February 11th. It should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. There will be computers set up at school for your convenience. Receive one bonus parent volunteer hour for completing it!

Students Ponder Ethics, Become More Empowered



Kelso the Frog is "talking it out."

This January, in the spirit of Martin Luther King, Jr., MIS students and teachers began working with the Kelso's Choice curriculum, taught by MIS parent Dara Newman. Kelso's Choice teaches conflict resolution skills for children of all ages, with an emphasis on giving children the tools to solve their own conflicts peacefully. Students are also taught to recognize when help from an adult becomes necessary.

In the Middle School science classroom, Helena Koelle will lead a discussion around a speech given by MLK, Jr. in 1964 warning about the growing disconnect between science, technology, and ethical awareness.

Students in the 2/3 English classes are writing reflections on the "I Have a Dream" speech. Music teacher Eletra Vandenberg will introduce children to the musical heritage of the Civil Rights Movement, teaching songs such as, "We Shall Overcome" to the 2nd through 5th grades. Everyday situations out on the playground, discussions in the classroom, and interactions between siblings at home provide opportunities to empower children with an understanding of the choices they have to become more principled global citizens.




Martin Luther King, Jr.

I have a dream for my community, "That nobody will be judged, ever." -Oliver Beck

I have a dream for myself, "That I have a never-ending amount of knowledge." -Will Erving

I have a dream for the people of the world, "That people can agree instead of having wars; people will treat others the way they want to be treated." -Ella Kurtz

Looking ahead...

January		February	
13	Tuition Information Meeting 9a.m.-10a.m.	14	Valentine's Day
14 NO SCHOOL	Professional Development Day	21 NO SCHOOL	President's Day
17 NO SCHOOL	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	25	PA Council Brown Bag Series TBA
19	2011-2012 Re-enrollment Contracts Due	26	SALSA BALL 2011
21	PA Council Brown Bag Book discussion: <i>Little Girls Can Be Mean</i> by Michelle Anthony and Reyna Lindert.		

MIS Happenings

“Swimming Upstream” Explores Ecology Awareness

Swimming Upstream is an inquiry into watershed management as it relates to resource sustainability and conservation. Students visited Rattlesnake Creek to collect aquatic invertebrates and created a classroom trout habitat. The classes then toured the Jocko River Trout Hatchery to compare an artificial rearing environment with a natural one. They transported trout eggs to the classroom to observe firsthand the miraculous changes trout undergo as they develop.

Each group inquired into a specific stage of the bull trout's life cycle and human threats to the habitat. They then created a class mind map to articulate their findings and produce a creative movement piece with the help of MIS parent Stacy Ohrt-Billingslea to teach others the importance of conservation.



Lorraine Gardner plays a happy trout with clean water.



Students describe their research with their families.

CONGRATULATIONS!

The 4/5 multiage classes were recently awarded a \$500 Mini-Grant from the Montana AGATE foundation (Montana Association of Gifted and Talented, Inc.) to purchase equipment to enhance their math and science projects. Many thanks to MIS parent Betsy Sanella, who submitted the grant on behalf of MIS, highlighting the recent unit of inquiry on trout habitat and the need for improved observation equipment. Great Job!

**50/50 Steppin' Out Salsa Ball
RAFFLE TICKETS ON SALE NOW
Grand Prize: 50% of Ticket Sales!**

Celebrate the XV Años!

Give a child a step up with an education at MIS

\$15 each, Need not be present to win!

SALSA BALL 2011 Tickets are also on sale now! Join us Saturday, February 26th for dinner, dancing, and making a difference for MIS kids! \$25 per person.



DID YOU KNOW?

MIS has its very own digital photo album where you can download or order gifts of your favorite moments at MIS. It's easy! Simply visit www.mismt.org and click on the digital photo album.

Password: mismt