



YINGHUA ACADEMY

英 華 学 院



**October Dismissal
Plan Information**
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**PE and Art Up-
dates**
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mation

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Sue's News

Sue Berg | Executive Director

Dear parents,

Thank you to those of you who joined us on Tuesday night for Back-to-School Curriculum Night! The enthusiasm of parents so willing to shout "Yo!" to learn just how many parents from each grade level were in attendance was fun to see. No doubt you were as thrilled with our fabulous new gymnasium as we and your kids are! The sight of the jam-packed bleachers and the entire staff "on stage" was visual evidence of our exciting growth. I hope that you found nuggets of new information in the general session in the gym and that you feel the commitment that the entire staff, the Board of Education, and the YACA Board feel to this new school year. Most of all, I hope you appreciated the opportunity to meet your children's teachers and to be able to openly converse in English! Don't tell the students!

Along with our partnership with you, teachers and administrators recognize the value of collaboration and aim to capitalize on our collective talent, too. Each week teachers within each grade level and within each department meet to discuss curriculum, instructional strategies, and behavior management techniques. In addition, teachers are encouraged to observe in each other's classrooms. We believe that this process will result in continuous growth for our entire school community. As an institution focused on learning not only for our students, this multiplication of talents makes perfect sense.

To add yet another perspective to the topic of homework, one of our Yinghua parents, Ruth Straub, has graciously agreed upon my request to share her insights. Not only is Ruth a parent, but a teacher by profession, and an active member of Yinghua's Academic Committee. I hope you find her tips helpful:

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Curriculum Corner

Luyi Lien, Ph. D. | Academic Director

Dear Parents,

Thank you so much for coming to the Back-to-School/Curriculum Night and allowing us to share our vision and goals for education with you. At the beginning of every school year, without exception, the most frequently asked questions center around the topic of homework: the purpose of homework, the appropriate amount of homework, the appropriate amount of time spent on homework, consequences for not completing homework, and how to help students at home, etc. I would like to dedicate this week's Curriculum Corner on this topic.

Homework is a valuable part of schooling that allows for practicing, extending, and consolidating knowledge/skills learned in class. Homework provides students with opportunities to deepen their understanding and skills relative to content that has been initially presented to them. Homework can have a positive effect on achievement and on developing lifelong skills of self-discipline, motivation, curiosity and confidence. It can serve as a communication tool between the school and the home and provides parents with insights into what is being taught in the classroom and the progress of

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Upcoming Events & Announcements

See below for school-specific events and announcements.

09

23

14

Parkway Pizza Day

Tuesday is Yinghua SPIRIT DAY at Parkway Pizza NE! Parkway is donating 10% of all sales, all day long (11:30 am to 7 pm), to Yinghua Academy! There will also be samples of YA Spirit Wear to try on. Dine in or carry out - everything counts.

09

26

14

Teacher Appreciation Day

Confucius is one of the most influential and important philosophers in Chinese history. To celebrate his birthday on the 28th, Yinghua will hold Teacher Appreciation Day on the 26th. Students are encouraged to bring small gifts for their teachers to show their appreciation.

Sue's News (continued)

• **Create a space for homework away from distractions and close to you.** When we first started having homework, I envisioned my eldest doing it in her room. However, the dining room table works much better for us as there aren't as many distractions and I can keep a better eye on their progress.

• **Don't be scared to take a break.** Some kids are totally wiped out after school. Sitting down to homework immediately after coming home is unproductive. With my eldest, I found that she finished at about the same time if she started immediately after school or if she played/exercised for a bit first and then sat down to homework - and her attitude was much better if she took that break. Kids need some free time too, and it's ok to put that as an equal priority.

• **Find out how much homework they have right away.** Although I let my kids have a break before starting their homework, I ask or check what they need to do immediately. That way, I can gauge how much time they'll need or if there are any extra items they'll need help with (like printing off pictures). This helps keep my stress level down - also important.

• **Break the homework up into smaller chunks.** Instead of telling an overwhelmed kid to do their homework, try asking them how long they think it will take just to get their Chinese character homework done. Ok, let's do that. Don't worry about the rest right now. See if they can get it done in their estimated time frame and congratulate them. Then, you can move on to the next subject.

• **Identify which subjects to start with.** Some kids do better starting with the things that are harder for them and getting them out of the way. Other kids do better starting with the easy stuff and feeling a sense of accomplishment. Help your kid identify what works better for them.

• **Be available to answer questions.** I know this is tough!!! However, being close at hand to answer quick questions as they arise can often mean that the kids finish quicker and free up more of your time later on.

• **Help beginning readers read through their math.** As a former HS math teacher, I love the extra emphasis our math curriculum has on word problems and applying mathematics. However, as mom to a couple kids who took a bit longer to learn to read comfortably, it can be frustrating. Reading through the problems or instructions with your child can help them feel more confident on what they're doing in math and help them to tackle the problems more quickly and with fewer errors. Remember, not every day is a heavy reading day in math, but some are and I usually count those towards our reading time for English.

• **Do the English homework when your schedule allows.** At some levels, English homework is given for the week, so feel free to divide it up in the way that works best for your family's schedule.

• **Encourage your child to utilize time at school to get their homework started!** Teachers are on hand to answer questions and kids can start their homework at the end of the school day. I let them know how thrilled I am when they get home and already have something done.

• **Try not to stress about it** (at least not in front of the kids). Easier said than done, but kids catch cues from us. I try my best to support their homework in front of them and to teach them when enough's enough and we just need to call it quits for the night. I also estimate their reading time rather than setting a timer as that adds too much stress for us.

It does take a village! Join us for our Study Skills 101 for Parents on Tuesday, October 7, at either 5:00 or 6:00 for the opportunity to learn and share.

Warm regards,
Sue Berg
Executive Director

THIS MEANS YOU! October Dismissal Plan Required for Every Student

By Libby Pomroy

The October Monthly Dismissal Plan online form is ready for your entries. This form is mandatory - we need a plan filled out each month for every student at Yinghua. Here's what you need to know about the plan:

• **JUST DO IT.** This information is critical for your child's safety. We need to know how your child is going home each school day of the month.

• **Fill out a plan for October.** You can find a link on the Yinghua webpage and on the Forms Page under Current Families.

• **FILL OUT** a separate form for each child in your family. The deadline is September 30 at 5 p.m. The form will be closed after this date.

• **CLICK ONE** of the following for each day so we know how you want us to dismiss your child:

o A = Aftercare

o B = Bus

o C = Curbside Pick-Up (either drive-up or walk-up)

o W = Walk/Bike

o S = Sports with Ms. Totall or Ms.

Thune (NOT enrichment classes)

This is a new option this month.

Click S this month on days your

child has soccer

(traveling or in-house), badminton or flag football.

• **WRITE DOWN** what you scheduled for each day. You currently can't go back and look at your submitted

plan.

• **CLICK SUBMIT**, and you're done.

• **CALL or EMAIL** the office if you need to make a change to what you've scheduled. Please don't submit a change yourself because you'll be creating a duplicate form. Be sure to call in your change before 10:30 a.m. on the day of the change.

NOTE that...

• If you filled out a bus registration form or Aftercare registration form, you **STILL NEED TO DO THIS ONLINE FORM** each month.

• There are no Enrichment classes or music lessons the week of October 13.

• There is NO Aftercare on October 3.

• You can sign up for Aftercare on October 13 and 14. NO Aftercare October 15, 16, or 17.

• Watch for information about non-school-day care coming soon.

• Email questions to libby.pomroy@yinghuaacademy.org and Mary. Schultz@yinghuaacademy.org.

Dr. Lien and Mrs. Berg lead Yinghua's first assembly in the new gym



Deng Laoshi and his students discuss their homework assignments



time for students to get started on homework and ask questions.

- We offer morning Homework Lab from 8:00 to 8:30AM in the cafeteria which is managed by both Chinese-speaking and English-speaking staff to help students with their homework questions. There is no need to pre-register - students can drop in any time the Lab is open.

- If a student stays in Aftercare, he/she can go to "Homework First" to complete homework assignments before participating in different activities.

It is crucial that parents and teachers collaborate and have the same understanding towards homework. Research shows that parents' attitude toward school, learning, and homework will have a big impact on students' overall success in

Curriculum Corner (Continued)

their children. Homework provides training for students in planning and organizing time, in developing skills to identify and use information resources, and in helping habits of study and concentration.

At Yinghua, teachers assign homework with much deliberation - we require teachers to plan homework that is challenging and purposeful, but not so demanding that it has adverse effects on a student's motivation and effort. For instance, our Middle School teachers work together to coordinate homework assignment schedules to even out the homework load. We also require a quick turnaround between students turning in homework and teachers providing feedback. The immediate correction and feedback is vital because the teachers can right away get a sense on how students are learning and if the lessons need any adjustments. Doing homework is practicing "school" and it is no different from practicing music or sport: one can know how to play piano in theory, but without practice, one will never reach the desired level of proficiency.

Naturally, we value students' family time and respect their commitments outside of school. We offer three different ways to directly support student homework:

- At the end of each school day, we dedicate 20 minutes of classroom

school. Please understand that parents' role in homework is to facilitate and support the activity and not to solve content problems for students. Depending upon the age of the student, parent assistance can range from reinforcing the concepts, acquiring resources, helping the student get organized, or simply conferring with the student to make sure he/she is on task.

As partners in your child's education, we would like to work closely with parents to help make the homework experience a positive one for our students (and families). For the first time, we will be offering Study Skills 101 to Parents on Tuesday, October 7. Parents can choose to attend either from 5:00 to 6:00PM or from 6:00 to 7:00PM. Please come and join us for tips on how to support your child at home, and share your ideas on meaningful connections between home and school.

As always, thank you for all your support and feedback. I look forward to a great school year ahead!

Sincerely,
Luyi Lien, Ph.D.
Academic Director

Yinghua Community Running Club

Next Thursday, September 25th at 4:15pm will be the first Yinghua Community Running Club meeting.

Mission: To create a positive and supportive community of adults within Yinghua's Northeast neighborhood community through running.

When? This will be a standing weekly running and walking group that will meet through the year every Thursday that school is in session at 4:15pm.

Where? We will meet at the corner of Buchanan St and 16th Ave (where the buses load). The routes will be in Yinghua's Northeast community, looping through the neighborhood. Northeast is a wonderful location in the city, whether you are familiar with it or not let's take advantage of the great neighborhood that is home to our school.

Why? For so many reasons! It is so good for your health. I have found that running is a wonderful and accessible way to me for exercise; all you need is a pair of shoes. I also noticed last year even through the cold winter months that spending time outside in the fresh air on a regular basis made me feel healthier, I didn't even get a cold! I also feel like it is a very good thing that I can do for myself; it isn't always easy, but I have seen growth in myself, and feel a lot of accomplish-



Kickball gets competitive!

Update from The Physical Education Department

By Sarah Totall

After a long wait, we finally held PE in the gym. We ran laps to music and played some tag games. Outdoor PE is not over. We will still have Capture the Pumpkin, Prey & Predator, sledding, cross country skiing, Wheels Week, Popsicle Run and more. We are excited to be adding rollerskating in the gym in December for Grades 1-8.

Yinghua Athletics

The 5-6th grade travel soccer teams got off to a great start this week. Both teams earned a win with some great passing and aggressive defense. Good job, Dragons.

In-house soccer, badminton, and flag football got into action this week. We have over 85 students participating in the Yinghua Athletic program this fall.



Ms. Thune and her students were eager to play their first game of dodgeball

Running Club continued from page 3

ment in setting and working towards goals. I have also enjoyed the social aspect of running; I love when I have the chance to run with a friend, or the community feel of a 5K race (maybe we'll sign up for one together!).

Who? You, if you want... This is for all levels. Headed up by me (Meghan Byram, Art Teacher) and English Teacher, Kim Gill, all Yinghua parents and staff are invited to join, but it is for adults. I will be planning to run 3 miles every Thursday leaving at 4:15 from our corner. I run between a 9 and 10 minute mile and can run slower. Participants can join for the whole thing, cut back after a mile or 2, or continue as a group for more. Kim will be heading up those in the group who are more interested in a walk run version. And of course members are welcome to take on routes and times

Ode to Tables

By Meghan Byram

It's easy for anyone to recognize the total awesomeness of the new art room. For starters, it has four walls, two sets of sinks, a storage room, kiln room, smartboard, prime location, and beautiful windows with views of our home on Northeast Park. But let me tell you, the best part is the tables!

We have 8 tables for students that are 3 feet by 6 feet. It gets better! Each table has a maximum of only 4 students assigned to it, meaning that each student has a work space measuring 1.5 feet by 3 feet. This means that when working on our largest project paper (12" x 18") students have space for their work on the table without having to overlap with their neighbor! Plus, the extra space means that students don't have to have their materials sitting on their artwork due to lack of space. With just four students at each table, not only is there space for the materials in the middle of each table, students can actually reach the materials from their own chair and work space!

Another great feature of the table is that the top comes in one piece. In the past, to create work tables that would allow our students to share the art materials we had to move the desks into tables, and being that each art class was typically held in a different room

Students of 3C hard at work



each period we did this countless times each year. Having tables saves lots of time, especially in the lowest grades where the little ones could not move them on their own.

Equally wonderful is the fact that our tables are flat! This is a feature we may not appreciate as much if we hadn't been using desks to create tables. Often times in the classrooms students' desks are different heights to accommodate our range of students. In art this meant lots of water and material spills as things inevitably were bumped off balance where desks and especially desks of different heights came together.

You will never again overlook the true greatness of an art table. Won't you stop in to appreciate these wonderful tables? We have extra spots for special guests, and families are always welcome!

as the group evolves and switch between groups.

Let's be a positive presence in the neighborhood and gain awareness for our school.

We hope to see you next Thursday,

Meghan Byram (Art Specialist) and Kimberly Gill (English Language Arts)