



May 31, 2007

The only consolation to the tearful farewell of our beloved seniors is the promise and excitement of meeting a whole new generation of high schoolers.

I begin this May newsletter by bidding farewell to our beloved seniors. Join me in congratulating the 75 young adults who have worked hard for 15 years to arrive at this important milestone. We are confident again that we are sending forth into our ever changing world a very talented group of purposeful learners, critical and creative thinkers, effective communicators and community contributors. It has been our honor to guide them on their journey of academic excellence.

I also take this opportunity to say thank you and goodbye to **Ms. Julie Spiesel**, our high school counselor. Julie joined us at ASFG six years ago and has since left her mark as a caring and dedicated advocate for students who supported them tirelessly in their emotional and academic needs. We wish Julie the very best in her new job in Florida.

Final Exams in high school are scheduled from June 13-18. Like our 1st semester exams, students will take two exams per day. We made this change for two reasons. First, students learn when they are engaged in meaningful activities in the classroom with their teachers. By taking two exams per day, we increase contact time by 6 complete school days. Educational researchers call this “opportunity to learn” and have found it to be one of the strongest measures of an academic program’s quality. Second, over the years, our total contact hours had fallen below our SACS accreditation requirement of 130 hours per credit. In order to stay within their guidelines, we needed to find ways to increase contact time.

After instituting this change for first semester exams, we measured its effect on exam grades. We found that students this year taking two exams per day did almost two points better on average than last year when they took one exam. Furthermore, an informal survey of other quality international schools found that almost all of them apply two exams per day.

We ask parents to continue to stress the importance of final exams with their children by following these recommendations:

1. Begin Your Studies Early – Students should begin reviewing their notes two weekends before exams and take advantage of every minute teachers use in class for review.
2. Use Your Time Wisely During Exam Week - Because students get out of school by 2:00 each day and do not have homework, they are able to spend a at least 4 hours studying while still getting 8 hours of sleep each night. Social engagements should not be scheduled during exam week.
3. Eat Well – eating a diet of complex carbohydrates and plenty of liquids during exam week is a good defense against fatigue and promotes mental acuity.

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION OF GUADALAJARA, A.C.

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4. Get Enough Sleep – students should plan their studies around 8 hours of sleep per night.
5. Turn off Messenger – again, this week is not for socializing, especially on instant messenger.
6. Study at Least 10 Hours for Each Exam, more if your grade is low.
7. Study in a Variety of Settings: Study alone, with your teacher, with a conscientious classmate.

Please remind your sons and daughters of our **textbook return policy**. Students must hand in their textbook the day of the exam. If they fail to do this, they will have to take the exam on the make up day on Tuesday, June 19 with a 20% deduction. If your child believes he lost his book, he should pay for it before the exam. If the book is found later, a 100% reimbursement is given. Lost books should be paid for at the cashier and the price can be obtained from Irma.

We are very excited to announce the date for our 2007 **Career Fair**. On Wednesday, September 19th we will host upwards of 20 professionals from the community who will present their careers to small groups of interested high school students. We are still looking for presenters so if you would like to volunteer, please contact me at david.mcgrath@asfg.mx. We like to offer a wide variety of careers including business, medicine, research, art, public service, journalism, and any others that might pique our students' interest.

Thank you to parents who attended our first annual **AP Night** last Tuesday, May 15. We were pleased to share this hallmark program of the American School with over 30 interested parents from grades 7 – 10.

Lastly, I extend a huge congratulations to the seniors and their two English teachers, Mr. Parker and Mr. Clark for all their hard work on the **Senior Projects**. Thank you to parents and community members who attended the showcase event on Wednesday, May 30. The projects were impressive and the students did a great job explaining and defending their theses. We continue to look at ways to grow and improve this important assessment tool and further integrate the [ASFG Learning Goals](#) into our curriculum.

I will send one more newsletter at the end of June that will include a summary of our academic goals, an introduction of the new teachers for 07-08 and a few information items for the start of the new school year.

Until then, have a wonderful close to a successful school year.

Sincerely,

David McGrath