

## School Year 2008-2009 Summary

With the support of all of our stakeholders, the 2008-2009 school year was enormously successful. Collaboration provided our students with fabulous opportunities. Please review our accomplishments.

First and foremost, SAMS is a school where students achieve at high levels. Terra Nova standardized test scores show improvement each academic year. This illustrates that the longer a student is enrolled at SAMS, the better they perform. Perhaps more importantly there was a significant *decrease* in the number of students at all grade levels scoring in the lowest quartile. Our 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students performed at even higher levels on our local assessment, the *Kidtest*, in language arts and reading.

Numerous high school credit offerings continue to be a significant opportunity. DoDEA's slogan is *Math Matters* and math is a major focus. We remain the only middle school in the Pacific with *geometry on campus*. Over one hundred students earned high school credit in algebra too. High school credit courses are a feature in the foreign language department too. Students can select French, German, Korean, Mandarin Chinese or Spanish on campus. Our students earned over three hundred high school credits in algebra, geometry and foreign language. No other middle school in the DoDDS Pacific/DDESS Guam comes close to this level of accomplishment.

Over one-hundred of our AVID, geometry and gifted education students took the PSAT. This test is designed for high school sophomores and juniors. Our students learned vital test taking strategies for this college placement exam and scored amazingly well in the process. The *Math Counts* students won first place in the Pacific-wide competition and placed second in the DoDEA-wide competitions. One student and our coach were selected for the competition in Orlando, Florida. The Korea District foreign language festival was attended by more SAMS students than any middle or high school. One student won a space camp scholarship to Huntsville, Alabama. Finally, perhaps the highest honor an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student can earn is the *President's Award for Educational Excellence*. Students must have a collective grade point average of 3.5 or higher and a score above the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile on the Terra Nova in reading, language arts or math to qualify. Nearly 40% of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were recipients of this prestigious honor and received an academic letter and a certificate signed by President Obama.

We are fully accredited by the North Central Association (NCA.) The quality assurance review accreditation team visit in February produced a glowing report. The first commendation was, "The climate of the school is very positive, students are well behaved, staff is collegial and respectfully to one another and the students, administration provides support and encouragement to all." Again our AVID program earned the title of "model/demonstration program." This successful course is designed for college bound students needing assistance with study habits and test taking strategies. The second commendation by the NCA accreditation team was, "The incorporation of AVID strategies throughout the school provides all students

with effective techniques and skills to become good students and lifelong learners." SAMS remains the only middle school with a string ensemble. Dozens of our chorus, strings and band students participated in the honors music festivals which represent Korea District and international schools throughout the peninsula. Another unique curriculum feature is combative sports that emphasize the Korean martial art of taekwondo.

Technology incorporation is prevalent at our school. All students created digital portfolios. Students were trained during various class periods in collaboration with science teachers and the educational technologist. The digital portfolio was also a part of the student-led conferences in April. Several hundred students enhanced their reading skills in the *Reading Counts* computer-assisted program. Students enrolled in computer applications, graphic arts, keyboarding, pathways to careers and video productions as elective courses. Our intranet and website dramatically increased the delivery of important information. Parents used "gradespeed" for regular updates of their student's academic progress, punctuality and attendance.

The continuing success of our impressive programs such as the bulldog ambassadors, peer mediators and the Students Against Destructive Decisions Club continue to improve the school climate. These model programs help to ensure success for students both socially and academically. The ambassadors welcomed dozens of new students and provided tours for distinguished visitors. The National Junior Honor Society students met new students throughout the summer to provide tours, have lunch, go to the pool and develop friendships. These groups reduce incoming students' stress and anxiety associated with a move. The mediator program continues to help students develop skills to solve peer-to-peer problems. Social services were available this year by our ASACS counselor and other community resources through collaborating with our counselors. Extrinsic factors that prevent high achievement are being reduced at many levels. The partnership with Seoul American Elementary School (SAES) continues to grow as joint peer mediator training was conducted. SAES 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and SAMS 6<sup>th</sup> grade students competed in the "Battle of the Books" for the fourth successive year. Fifth and sixth grade students shared a lunch time which was made possible with the cafeteria expansion. Welcome tours, an orientation and picnic, were conducted for fifth grade students by our sixth grade bulldog ambassadors. Several times the fifth grade students came to nutrition break as an incentive, again hosted by our bulldog ambassadors.

We have a highly engaged PTO, parent and community support system. Again to quote the NCA accreditation report: "Parents and community members actively support the school through the provision of human and fiscal resources." The volunteers worked on apparel sales, collected box tops for education, distributed books, held our annual orientation picnic, chaperoned study trips and served snacks through the Dawg House. The funds generated supplemented curricular programs such as the purchase of the student planners for every student, provided team incentive funds, purchased the PSAT for AVID and gifted education students and provided breakfast during Terra Nova testing.

Extra curricular activities were very successful. Our tutoring program was expanded to include a separate algebra session. The successful seminar intramural basketball program was also expanded. The season concluded with a student-faculty game attended by all students, interested parents, and community members. Interested students participated in cross country, volleyball and ski club. The National Junior Honor Society and student council had exceptional years. Both organizations involved the entire student body in affective domain activities such as sending Christmas cards to our troops serving in areas of conflict. The student council organized several dances to include the popular semi-formal dance at the Dragon Hill Lodge. The jazz band, chorus club and drama club enjoyed highly successful school years. Our student newspaper and yearbook produced stellar publications. Seventeen students traveled to Tokyo, Japan for the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium. Again, these are the highest numbers for Pacific middle schools. Teachers, parents and community volunteers sustain all of these initiatives.

Seminar is well organized to provide curricular support. Grade-level teams collaborated to form a "student support seminar" for students having academic difficulty. Improvement in achievement was found for these students. Club Day remains a student favorite. Students freely selected one of the forty offerings to learn a new skill while meeting with a teacher and a group of students their schedule wouldn't ordinarily afford. The seminar intramural program provides all students with the opportunity to engage in team building activities and sports. Students attended two 8<sup>th</sup> Army Band concerts, reviewed bus safety, held a student council election, attended three honor roll assemblies, were rewarded with team incentives, participated in the community commander's forum and held a talent show. These seminar events and others occurred without the loss of classroom time.

Students can check-out sports equipment for supervised play during nutrition break and lunch. Opportunities for age appropriate play abound. Students have demonstrated their appreciation for a more student-friendly campus by a decrease in serious discipline referrals.

It was an honor to serve as principal in our military community that supports high student achievement and a safe learning environment. Being the representative for our motivated, professional faculty and staff is a particular pleasure. With your assistance, SAMS will continue to be a leader in mid-level education. I'm confident school year 2009-2010 will be even more successful. Again, thank you for a banner school year!

Respectfully,

Darrell R. Mood

Principal