



REN news

news from the trunk
Thursday, December 2nd 2010

Quad Squad

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A Letter from the Superintendent, Greg Hughes

Over the last few weeks we were fortunate enough to have several outstanding guest speakers come to the school and share their knowledge and experiences with several of our classes. I was lucky enough to sit in and hear some of the talks. Beyond learning a lot myself, I was excited to see how engrossed and engaged our students were with the presentations.

One gentleman who came and visited our High School was a parent, Colonel Kgwete, who gave the students a talk on apartheid in South Africa. It was truly interesting to hear this story from someone whose people were most affected and who lived through this era and the perceptions and experiences he had. To be given a history lesson from a person who actually lived through this dark era of South Africa's history is something I am certain our students will never forget. As parents I am sure that as we grow older we often lose track of time, and to remember that apartheid happened in our lifetimes, but before our students were born is jolting in itself. Col. Kgwete's stories of segregations were shocking to many of our youngsters who can only imagine such things. His recollections of the protests and the other critical events that led to South Africa becoming the "Rainbow Nation" were highlights of his talk.

Our friends at the US Embassy also shared with us some of the time that they had with a visiting artist from the United States. Her name was Mahwish Chishty. Her work would best be described as modern art that has been heavily influenced by Islamic culture. In her visit to KAS she worked with the students looking at calligraphy and miniature art from Persia and Asia. For a school such as ours, it was refreshing for our students to experience additional support and inspiration.

Another parent approached me during the week to let me know that an expedition group was passing through Khartoum on a world record-breaking trek from Istanbul in Turkey to Sydney, Australia, using 4 wheeled, quad bikes. This group consisting of three young men from Australia was raising money for the charity Oxfam. They were extremely pleased to offer their time to come to KAS and tell the children all about their expedition and the adventures that they have had thus far. Their visit to the school was a massive hit with the children, who not only marveled in their stories, but also enjoyed looking at their quad bikes and the different paraphernalia they had on board essential for "roughing it" and camping in all parts of the world. I am sure parents and students would like to follow their progress and possibly donate to this good cause. More information can be found on their website at <http://www.expeditiongroup.org/>.

Quite often in my articles I reiterate that KAS is truly a community school. When I reflect upon the past week and think of the support we receive from all members of our community it only reaffirms to me that we not only have a wonderful school, but we are backed and supported by a collective group of parents, organizations and groups who go out of their way to help the students of our school. To these groups and individuals, I say "thank you" from all of us.

Studying Tips and Skills

Many children experience difficulty in school because they have weak study skills. Here is a list of suggestions and various strategies which promote efficient study habits and thereby enhance a child's chance for academic success.

How To Keep Your Place

If your child loses his place, skips lines or mixes up words in successive lines, use a place marker. If a pencil or fingertip doesn't do the trick, try using a blank unlined index card as a marker. The index card can also be effectively used on a page of questions to expose one question at a time. By doing this, the child can focus on each question without becoming confused or overwhelmed by all the writing on the page.

A Special Way to Read Textbooks

Just think of all the information one gets from watching a movie or television preview. Similarly, a student can gather much information by previewing and surveying textbook material. It is advisable to do this in order to know when to cue into important content as one goes along.

Strange as it may seem, do not have the student start at the beginning and read through to the end of the chapter. First, survey the chapter by looking at the title and paragraph headings in bold print. Suggest that the student think of these as "road signs" to help find the way through the chapter. Also look at graphic material (pictures, charts, maps) and read captions.

Next, read the summary and the questions at the end of the chapter. That's the **Preview!** By now, the student should have some idea of what the chapter will be about and what information he/she should look for.

Restate the Main Idea

This strategy is particularly effective when reading content area material. (Social Studies, Science etc.) After the child has read a paragraph, ask him/her to think about what was read and tell you the most important idea or facts in his/her own words. It may be necessary for the child to reread the paragraph. If difficulty persists, you may have to discuss several paragraphs and provide appropriate responses for each of them until the child is able to do so independently.



Be sure to stress that the overall main idea must be followed from paragraph to paragraph. For the student in the upper grades who finds this strategy helpful, he/she may wish to write down the main ideas or tape them. This will provide an excellent review format for tests.

Corroborate Answers

If your child works quickly and/or carelessly and makes errors when answering comprehension questions, try this strategy. Encourage the child to “prove” his/her answers by locating supporting information in the text. When demonstrating, point out that the words in dark print will help find the section that is most likely to contain the information.

(Again, think of the words in dark print as road signs to help you find the way.)

This strategy discourages “guessing” and promotes accuracy in locating information. The next time a similar assignment is given, remind your youngster that you expect him/her to be able to “prove” the answers.

Research

If research is assigned on a topic that is totally unfamiliar to your child and/or if reading skills are weak, ask the librarian to suggest simple books that deal with the topic. Explain to your youngster that if you, as an adult, were taking a first course in something you had never studied before (chemistry, physics etc.), a good place to start might be in a middle school or high school book...just to get some really basic information in simpler language, in order to build a foundation for understanding the harder material.

Repeat Information Aloud

For many children, just reading material is often an ineffective method of study. Verbalizing or repeating information aloud is an important aid to retention. Encourage your youngster to read a small segment (verbalizing softly). Then cover the material and quietly say to him or repeat aloud what he/she wishes to remember. This kind of “verbal rehearsal” is a beneficial strategy for many youngsters.

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Map of Where Quad Squad Has Traveled on Their ATV's

Dates to Remember

Friday, December 10, 2010	Turn in Overdue Library Books
December 13th - 14th, 2010	Final Exams
Thursday, December 16th, 2010	Early Dismissal (11:00am)
Friday, December 17th, 2010 through Saturday January 15th, 2010	Winter Break
Sunday, January 16th, 2010	School Resumes
February 11, 2011 PTA and Elementary Student Council Dance	Dancing Under the Stars



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Home Study Hints

It is helpful for a child to have a set place and time for doing schoolwork. The place the child works in should have adequate lighting and be quiet enough for concentration. Materials (paper, pencils etc.) should be organized and easily available. School papers should be secure from younger siblings and pets. But remember, needs vary. Your child may not wish to be isolated or may rely on some adult support while completing tasks.

When the child participates in determining his/her daily homework schedule, he/she is more likely to adhere to it. It should be flexible, allowing for changes due to special events. You may wish to vary it with the seasons to allow for outdoor play in good weather. Consideration might also be given as to whether one lengthy session or two or three shorter sessions are more suitable to the child's work style and attention span.

It should be agreed that during the planned time there will be no interruptions (telephone, television etc.)

Please contact the Learning Center if you would like additional information.

Soccer News

This week soccer season kicked off with 3 home games for KAS. The U14 boys played against NVA on Tuesday, November 30th. It was a slow start for the young squad, but the team came together nicely to come back from a 2-1 goal deficit and score 3 goals in the second half to win the game 4-2. The goals were scored by Arif Abayazi, Amir Abayazi, Jhenayron Paulsen, and Yousef Al-Harbi. Well done KAS!

The U19 boys played on Tuesday, November 30th against BES. The British school came out very strong and dominated most of the play in the 1st half with Ahmed El-Mahdi making some great saves for KAS in goal. KAS had few shots on goal, but kept pressing all game. In the end the score remained 0-0 and KAS had to settle for a Draw this week.

The U14 girls played against NVA on Wednesday, December 1st. The girls lost the game by 7 points. The score was 9-2.

Last week the U11 boys soccer team played their first matches of the season in a mini-tournament here at KAS. The boys played very well and came in 2nd place overall with a record of 1 win, 2 draws, and 1 loss. Way to go team! There were 2 goals scored in two different games by James Park and Bashir El-Nefeidi. The U11 boys have another mini-tournament again at KAS today, Thursday, December 2nd. GO KAS!

Overdue Library Books!

Students and parents! Overdue library books must be turned into the library no later than December 10, 2010. After that date, bills will be sent to parents. Each book costs 150 SDG. Are you unsure if you have overdue books? Ask the librarian.

General Association Meeting

Tuesday, December 14th, 2010 at 6:30pm

The first Khartoum American School General Association Meeting for 2010/2011 will be held on Tuesday, December 14th, 2010.

The meeting will commence at 6:30pm. All members (parents of KAS students) of the Association are requested to attend.

Should you have any item that you would like placed on the agenda please contact the Superintendent in writing before Thursday, December 10th, 2010.