

End of Year Update

A BRIDGE TO A NEW NORMAL

Taipei American School remains open and strong in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic

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As more schools close their doors—and prepare to keep them closed until late fall—at Taipei American School, we have found a tentative new normal on our home island of Taiwan. Our students are on campus, and will finish this year on campus, after two brief distance learning sessions this spring. Our faculty and staff continue to pursue the highest levels of excellence, whether on campus or online. Our parents continue to adjust and support their children and the entire community. Our administrators work (and worry) around the clock to protect our entire community's safety.

But we're doing all of this on campus during a season when school closures have impacted nearly 98% of the world's student population, according to UNESCO. Because of our home in Taiwan, TAS is one of very few schools in the world that is able to keep its doors open for the better part of the school year—in person. In this time of global education disruption, we feel gratitude for a home country that benefited from strong leaders who took a long-sighted view to the potential dangers of COVID-19. This leadership has enabled Taipei American School to continue to serve and protect the bodies, hearts, and minds of the community it serves.

TAS has always been a bridge from an island to the world, but it is now something more. For its students and staff, for its parents and administrators, during this difficult pandemic, the school is now a bridge from a troubled world to an island of normalcy.

This spring, Taipei American School has been able to pivot and show resilience in its people, places, and programs. Here are just a few areas in which TAS has demonstrated flexibility in a rapidly changing educational environment.

PARENT AND BOARD EVENTS

Board Election & Meet the Candidates Webinar

Although the parent community was not allowed on campus due to social distancing concerns, the school held its annual election process online without missing a beat. All board candidates provided profiles and videos that were posted to the school's internal parent portals online so that parents could learn about the six candidates. The school also hosted a virtual "meet the candidates" webinar with two mediators to ask candidates questions about their values and priorities. Finally, the voting took place digitally, with over a third of our parent body taking part. Although this wasn't a historic high for election turnout, the school received many emails in praise of the streamlined process this year, which allowed more parents to participate in the election meetings than in prior years.

Spring 2020 Association General Meeting

The school also went digital for its spring "Association General Meeting," an event held by the Board twice a year. The spring AGM usually includes time to review activities from the prior school year and announce the results of the election for members of the Board of Directors. This year's spring AGM included Zoom presentations by Tina Koo, the TAS Board Chair; Dr. Sharon D. Hennessy, Head of School; Debbie Hsu, Election Committee Chair; Gayle Tsien, Management and Resources Committee Chair; and Joseph Hwang, Governance Committee Chair.

Spring PTA Boutique

When the annual Spring Fair was canceled, the PTA opened a new Community Sponsorship Grant and took its popular Spring Fair Boutique Sale online. Parents donated genuine,

lightly-used designer bags, shoes, and clothing, which were displayed in the school's foyer and promoted on the PTA Facebook page. While some students asked whether the display might be a collection of lost property, the parents, faculty, staff, and guards knew better! Together these initiatives raised almost NT\$ 1 million, which will be used for the PTA Special Grants program.

