



Message from the President



Greetings to everyone! We were back in school with Elementary and Middle School students for a short time, and it was good to have their presence on campus. It looks like we will continue to navigate amidst the unknown throughout the school year and according to developments with COVID-19. As the movement restrictions continue, it is natural to feel fatigue for both the challenges we have encountered, as well as for the unpredictability that lies ahead.

We continue to be focused on our vision **"empowering individuals to be architects of their own learning"** with the goal to develop knowledgeable, skillful, ethical citizens of the world. Our very diverse and multicultural campus provides a unique platform where students can come together, from different backgrounds with different perspectives, to collaborate and work in harmony under one 'roof'. Our students continue to make us proud even on the virtual platform and it is noteworthy to witness the resilience with which they manage the many demands coming their way. Faculty and professionals have been unwaveringly supportive through this journey and parents continue to be the third important piece to the golden triangle: students-school-parents.

Despite the challenges there is so much to share and celebrate. I particularly want to share with you student successes and faculty development and to invite you to join us in celebrating some of these significant highlights. Wishing you; our ACS Athens community, safety and wellbeing

Peggy Pelonis, Ed.D.
ACS Athens President

Message from the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees wishes all families well as the year continues to challenge us. We would like the community to know that we have been working very closely with the ACS Athens President to ensure the wellbeing of our institution. As the scope of the Board is fiduciary, we work towards specific goals that will advance the school's Mission. Thus some of the goals that we have jointly agreed on are: facility expansion and upgrading, fundraising and ways to ensure that all stakeholders understand the role of the Board. In line with the accreditation processes set forth by our accrediting body; the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges, it is important to be reminded that the Board of Trustees does not represent any particular body or voice, but has the broader scope of ensuring the wellbeing of the institution in order to continue providing a holistic education with excellence. The school President and her administrative team lead and manage the school on a daily basis. As such, please address questions accordingly. We, the Board of Trustees, in turn, will continue to work towards the goals that advance our institution. In line with the President's message, we are proud to work with an institution that brings together such diversity and works to guide students, faculty and staff towards a vision of collaborative practice for the wellbeing of all.

We wish you and your loved ones a healthy and happy year.

Suheil Sabbagh,
Chairperson
ACS Athens Board of Trustees



News & Events

A Moving Comeback for ES and MS Students!

The students picked up from where they left off, as if they never missed a beat! They modeled respectful, ready, and responsible behaviors, wearing their masks without suggestions, following classroom procedures and rules without reminders. However, the most touching scenes were during recess; children gathered in small groups while wearing their masks to catch up on lost time with friends and peers. Nothing truly replaces the face to face relationships and play time activities our young children require.

BBB Developments for Elementary School

ES teachers kept their virtual doors open for students who were unable to attend school in person. Daily virtual schedules for Elementary School included three core subjects plus Foreign Language classes throughout the week. This balanced approach allowed students to participate in the core subjects (such as Math, Language Arts, Science) while limiting screen time and avoiding the idle stares into the classroom.

Middle School

Students are encouraged to use their imaginations without computer time. Ms. Akrivou's Social Studies sixth grade classes recreated an Ancient Egyptian Shaduf and appreciated ancient engineering and technology, incorporating the sciences in Social Studies, and creating an off-screen activity. As Ms. Akrivou told the students, "I am aware that you may have limited resources. If you do, even better. That means your mind has to be more resourceful and creative. What happens if it falls/fails? That means you are a scientist! Do your best! Try to reflect on why it did not work "

What is shaduf?

<https://www.britannica.com/technology/shaduf>
Background: It is related to steam.

ACS Academy Student Life has Gone Virtual

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Student Life at the ACS Athens Academy is faced with an incomparable opportunity to stretch communication skills and create more personalized and adaptive bonds for our students. Currently, it is more important than ever to **cultivate a sense of belonging and connection with our students.**

Greek National Debate Team

TWO OF OUR OWN!

Congratulations to **Euthymia (Emma) Soulanticas** who has been selected to the Greek National Debate Team and to **Thalia Kalai** who is serving as a first alternate to the team as well as practicing on the Greek National Development Team. They are currently participating in the Eurasian Schools Debating Championship, and Emma will compete with the Greek Team at the World Schools Debating Championship, which will be held virtually this coming summer.

Model United Nations (Virtual)

The theme of **The Costeas**

Geitonas Model United Nations Virtual Conference

(Dec. 11-13,2020) was "Conflict Resolution in a Changing World". Our ACS CGSMUN Team represented The Russian Federation and secured the following top leadership positions: Ambassador of The Russian Federation: Yun Zhang; Chair in the Human Rights Committee: Zicheng Zhang; Judge in the International Court of Justice: Ann Marie Martinou, who was also recognized with "The Best Judge" Award. All of our Delegates actively prepared for the experience, while studying the history and role of the United Nations

The Human Rights Virtual Summit

(Dec. 12, 2020). The theme was "Rights and Freedoms in Times of Pandemic" Our ACS Human Rights Team collaborated with the Hisar School in Istanbul and were prepared to debate and resolve the following Topics: Ensuring Equity in Education During the Pandemics and Lockdown and Freedom. The following students were representing ACS Athens: Evdoxia Mikropandremenou, Elena Dimitriou, Eman Khurram, Ariadne Daskalaki, Konstantinos Andriopoulos, Angelika Sieti, Nefeli Macdonald.

The Hague Model United Nations Virtual Conference

The Hague Model United Nations Conference took place virtually on January 25-29, 2021. The theme was "Moving Forward". Our ACS THIMUN delegation worked extremely hard and for many hours to ensure the top leadership positions granted by THIMUN, a conference of over 3000 delegates from around the world. Our ACSTHIMUN Team represented Somalia and our very own, Tommaso Alocci was the Student Officer in the Political Committee. All of our Delegates diligently prepared to finish their resolutions for the virtual conference. If this is not a cause for celebration we do not know what is. In our professional opinions, such events should not go unnoticed.

ACS Athens Resilience Award

Congratulations to the latest Resilience award recipients: Noah Wilbert Lahti Levis (9), Evangelia Karagkou (9), Eman Khurram (10), Vasiliki Nestora (10), Zehe Lan (10), Emilynn Grace Bello (11), Chanel Benoit Mballa Kayou (11), Maria Pantelina Bitsika (12), Styliani Adamantia Pipa (12). All recipients are recognized in a new display in the front hallway of the Academy.

The Margaret Sanders Award by the Near East South Asia Council of Overseas Schools (NESA)

Congratulations to Elina Pipa, Class of 2021. The scholarship is awarded to students who demonstrate character strengths such as persistence and motivation, resourcefulness, as well as acceptance of other cultures and points of view.

Student-Athlete Leadership Conference

Members of the ACS Athletic Council presented in Leadership Conference: ACS Athens promoting equity and quality education; Academic-Athletic Scholarships. Congratulations to Anne-Marie Martinou, Kaya Ketter, Francesca Kouroupos, Will Laitinen, Tommaso Alocci & George Pliakas.

Dynamic Resiliency Summit

(Sponsored by Ideagen)
Theme: "The relationship of Man and Machine." Students: Raneem Ghoneim, Jason Somoglou and Evangelos Botsios joined Dr. Peggy Pelonis and Carlos Carpizo, Co-Founder of Kosmos.

Ideagen: Dynamic Resiliency Summit
January 27, 2021

 Dr. Peggy Pelonis ACS Athens President	 Carlos Carpizo co-founder Kosmos	 Evangelos Botsios Innovator & Creator of Green Team	 Jason Somoglou ACS Athens Highschool Student	 Raneem Ghoneim ACS Athens Highschool Student
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Ideagenglobal.com | Presented Globally by Microsoft

Virtual Assessments

ACS Athens has invested in Education Technology software for conducting assessments online, meeting the academic integrity criteria.

National and International Recognition

Senior Jason Somoglou co-coached the PLAISIOBOT Robotics Team that received a gold medal in the international Robotics Olympiad (Daegoo, Korea) for inventing a visual impairment device. The Team was recognized and congratulated by Greek Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

Healthy Food Challenge

In December of 2020, the Incubator Council (ISCI) organized the Healthy Food Challenge, an event largely inspired by a United Nations initiative aimed at promoting health and wellness. The purpose of this activity was to raise awareness on maintaining a healthy lifestyle, particularly during the uncertain times of COVID-19. This challenge was open to the entire ACS Athens community, including students, families, and faculty members. In order to participate, everyone was asked to create any kind of healthy meal that preferably encompassed four key criteria: healthy, creative, innovative and delicious.

326 students voted! Participants were Yirui Wang (11th grader), Ann Marie Martinou (11th grader), Thanasis Sitinas and Max Makarigakis (11th graders), Thisseas Kambouroglou (11th grader), Wenya Yu (12th grader) and Dr. Crain (Middle School Principal). The winners were Yirui Wang and Ann Marie Martinou, with 177 and 170 votes, respectively.

After School Tennis Program & Activities

While school campus was open our Elementary and Middle School students were happy to participate in the Tennis program. The program continues with restrictions. We were happy to hear young voices on campus again!

COVID Tests

COVID tests were provided for returning faculty and staff prior to returning to school.

Clubs and Activities

All clubs and activities have been maintaining a stable online connection even though they are not physically together. Students participate and stay involved in their chosen clubs while taking part in meaningful experiences as Student Life builds affinity and a sense of belonging, and fosters peer connectedness.

- **"KINONOS"** organized a holiday pizza dinner for homeless citizens in Athens;
- **"Take Action Club"** currently working on an aesthetic project, which will promote school spirit;

- **"The Role Playing Club"** battled orcs, goblins, skeletons, zombies, and evil wizards (to mention a few), and have accumulated quite a bit of gold, not to mention awesome magical items (e.g. rings, wands etc.);
- **"The Intersection Club"** created an Escape Room from scratch! Intersection members have been researching, organizing, and advertising what promises to be a great experience for all involved;
- **"The Environmental Club"** is addressing different environmental issues on and off-campus, and ultimately creating a green school;
- **"The Mathletes Club"** has been working on various word problems taken from the Kangourou, Mathcounts and the AMC Competitions;
- **"The Psychology Club"** is focusing on Adlerian therapy and a person's sense of belonging;
- **"Save the Wave Club"** is raising awareness of

the plastic waste which ends up at our beautiful seas and beaches;

- **"The Geography Through Sailing Club"** is familiarizing students with the ecosystems of our planet (Polar Regions, Jungles, Coasts, Deserts and Grasslands, Freshwater Ecosystems, Forests, Open Seas) and the challenges from the increasing human activities;
- **"The Public Sphere Club"** is exchanging ideas, information, and opinions as discussions evolve around topics of interest in a civil environment;
- **"The Media Club"** selects and conducts research on topics of interest and incorporates them into the student news site;
- **"Forensics"** is preparing for the virtual PHF Tournament taking place in April.
- **"Youth to Youth Program"** continues with Daphne Stamou and Ann Marie Martinou providing academic support to Y2Y students online.

Five ACS Athens Faculty Approved to be IB Examiners

Congratulations to:
Dr. Elina Prodromidi,
Dr. Angeliki Stamati,
Dr. Liana Tsigaridi,
Ms. Matina Katsigianni &
Ms. Natalia Dadidou

Professional Development for Faculty and Staff

2020-2021: **71** PD sessions completed
49 Faculty & Staff attended PD sessions
Specifically:

64 online courses and webinars attended

2 members pursue Postgraduate Degrees
12 external PD providers

Action Research participation by all
2 Leadership & Administrative Retreats

PTO

PTO Virtual Walk Bike Run 4 Fun. A big thank you to all who participated – it was a great success – see prize winners and pictures at <https://bit.ly/2Za14q6>
Follow us on fb
<https://www.facebook.com/ACSAthensPTO/>

Please join our fb Community Share Page to buy and sell, to connect and to share ideas and interesting Athens info:
<https://bit.ly/3d2jVvr>

PTO Parent and Principals' Meetings. We continue to organize these online during the first week of every month. Thanks for your

support. Please remember you can view all recordings and minutes at:
<https://bit.ly/3jJVnc4>

Please contact us at pto@acs.gr anytime.

We are happy to be Connecting, Supporting and Informing for the ACS Parent Community on campus and online. Hope to see you soon!

ACS Athens Partnership for Success Parent workshops

Facilities

- Annex Building Reconstruction is complete. Next project: landscaping surrounding areas.
- New Property purchase- adjacent to the courtyard in front of the Academy - 400 square meters.

- **October 2020:** Dr. M. Kougioumzoglou: Stress Management & Anxiety.
- **November 2020:** Dr. A. Mordoh: Raising Resilient Children & Adolescents.
- **December 2020:** Mrs. E. Kehayias: Setting Boundaries & Saying No to our Children.
 - **January 2021:** Mr. S. Zoukas: Dealing with the Psychological Effects of Covid-19: news, media, illness and bereavement.
 - **February 2021:** Ms. G. Thanopoulou: Introduction to Emotional Intelligence.
 - **March 2021:** Ms. G. Thanopoulou: Emotional Development During Pre-Adolescence
 - **April 2021:** Ms. G. Thanopoulou: Emotional Development During Adolescence.
- **May 2021:** Ms. M. Kaplani: Techniques of Effective Communication: Parents vs Children.

Donations

Thank you to our donors for their generous donations:

- Digitized phone system-Danaos.
- Name a Seat fundraising initiative continues to attract donations.
- Endowment fund continues to attract donations.

In the Media

World Human Forum. Dr. Peggy Pelonis joins hosts, Alexandra Mitsotakis and Periklis Douvitsas and panelists Cynthia Farrar, Josh Ober, George Pagoulatos, Costas Synolakis and Mireya Tabuas, for a timely discussion on the Future of Democracy. This event took place on the day of the US presidential inauguration, was co-organized with Nefeli Publishing and coincided with the publication of the children's book "Red and Blue".

New Greek Television featured an interview with Dr. Pelonis regarding the ACS Athens philosophy and methodology of teaching as a school at the forefront of education bit.ly/3aWFBjr

Business Partners Magazine (American Chamber of Commerce) featuring Dr. Peggy Pelonis, ACS Athens President (February 2021), highlighting her journey as an educational leader.

Parent/Student Well-Being

The well-being of our community members is foremost on our mind; particularly our students. Please know that there are numerous support systems in place:

For Students:

- Individual counseling/psychology sessions
- Group counseling/psychology sessions
- New student welcome meetings (ongoing)
- Monday counselor open spaces
- Planned lunch meetings with Principal and Vice Principal

- Clubs and activities
- Child Study Team meetings (when there are concerns)

For Parents:

- Partnership for Success Series
- Wellness sessions
- Consultation sessions with counselor/psychologist
- ACS Athens CARES Newsletter

Our Beliefs

We believe that:

- ACS Athens is a student-centered institution in the pursuit of academic excellence, building upon each student's unique talents and abilities.
- Student learning is a shared responsibility of the student, the school and the family.
- Students learn and develop best in an environment of cooperation, belonging and trust.
- Diversity takes many forms and that respect for and acceptance of diversity is a source of richness in our community.
- Possessing a strong sense of civic responsibility and an ethic of service is fundamental to effective global citizenship.
- Education exists to promote intellectual,

emotional and physical wholeness and ethical decision-making.

- Our community exists to provide opportunities for all of our students to reach their full potential.
- Learning is a life-long process.

Our Mission Statement

ACS Athens is a student-centered international school, embracing American educational philosophy, principles and values. Through excellence in teaching and diverse educational experiences, ACS Athens challenges all students to realize their unique potential: academically, intellectually, socially and ethically — to thrive as responsible global citizens.

Publications by ACS Athens Authors

Publications by ACS Athens authors:

- Pelonis, P. (2020). Transforming Education in Light of COVID-19; Four Suggested Necessary Pillars to Develop Conscious Young World Citizens. International School Journal, Fall edition
- Tokatlidou, J., Avgerinou, M.D., & Pelonis, P. (2020). Transitioning a JK-12 international school from blended to online learning in response to an external shock: Lessons learned. Presentation Annual EDEN Conference (pp. 75-81). Available at: <https://proceedings.eden-online.org>
- Avgerinou, M.D., & Moros, S.E. (2020). The 5-Phase process as a balancing act during times of disruption: Transitioning to virtual teaching at ACS Athens elementary school. In R.E., Ferdig, E., Baumgartner, R., Hartshorne, R., Kaplan-Rakowski, & C. Mouza (Eds.). Teaching, Technology, and Teacher Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Stories from the Field (pp. 583-589). Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE). Available at <https://www.learntechlib.org/p/216903/>
- Karamelas, Antonios (2020). Developing and delivering a high school Artificial Intelligence course in blended and online learning environments. In R.E., Ferdig, E., Baumgartner, R., Hartshorne, R., Kaplan-Rakowski, & C. Mouza (Eds.). Teaching, Technology, and Teacher Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Stories from the Field (pp. 583-589). Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE). Available at <https://www.learntechlib.org/p/216903/>

Our Vision

Empowering individuals to transform the world as architects of their own learning