



Message from the President



Greetings ACS Athens Community Members!

As Greece and the entire world continue to navigate the pandemic challenge, educators and educational institutions across the globe are feeling the result of the past two-years. Fatigue, mental and physical, as well

as discouragement due to related ongoing challenges, continue to be at the forefront. The traditional narrative of education, which has been explicit, competitive and required, is shifting. Global conversations speak to education becoming more tacit, impactful, inclusive, innovative, collaborative and desired. That's a lot to take in, and though experts speak of this necessary change, it can also be daunting.

In spite of these challenges, we have many exciting things going on at ACS Athens and much to celebrate. Creativity and innovation continue to embrace the campus as many faculty and students have embarked on projects, clubs and initiatives that are truly inspiring. The upcoming accreditation review of the 12 Standards reminds us of how far we have come with the Sustaining Excellence protocol. By the way, the Middle States Association is considered the Golden Standard of accrediting organizations and its highest protocol "Sustaining Excellence" presupposes that institutions undergoing accreditation under this standard, create new knowledge. The Action Research process across the school place ACS Athens at the cutting edge of educational institutions internationally.

As we continue to navigate the unknown, sometimes the old way of doing things just doesn't work. We have to reinvent, recreate, reimagine. Yes, it means moving into the unknown, but it can also be exhilarating because we have a voice as to where education is going.

I would like to share with you some of the many exciting things going on as we celebrate the individual and collective wisdom on this campus aimed at developing Conscious Global Citizens who will position themselves to improve life and living on the planet.

Peggy Pelonis Ed.D, MS, MBA, LFT
President, ACS Athens

Message from the Board Trustees

Dear Parents and Guardians,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to welcome you back to ACS Athens. As the school year progresses, I am happy to report that our students are happily attending their classes face to face and enjoying a "normal" school life by participating in the many co-curricular activities provided for them throughout the day and after school. All the health and safety regulations are being adhered to and everything seems to be running smoothly on all levels.

As Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you some information about the Board and our role regarding the school.

The school is comprised of 18 members, 6 of whom are US based Trustees. An Executive Committee consisting of 7 members is authorized by the full Board to conduct business on a more regular basis between the three full Board meetings.

The Board of Trustees have fiduciary responsibilities on behalf of ACS Athens. Our role is to advance the mission, vision, and strategic goals of this institution, set policy and direction and work with the ACS Athens President. Further to this, the BoT works to ensure the financial viability of this institution, including fundraising, to continue providing the best educational experience for our students. The management of the school lies with the President and her leadership team.

The Board of Trustees do not represent any particular body or voice. Rather, we are responsible for strategic planning that will work to ensure the future of the school. Questions regarding management and daily operations of the school are addressed by the ACS Athens President and her leadership team.

It is a pleasure serving ACS Athens and working to ensure an excellent educational experience for our students.

Suheil Sabbagh
Chairperson, ACS Athens Board of Trustees



UN Chair of the Human Rights Committee, Fotini Pazartzis visits ACS Athens on UN Day

Dr. Pazartzis, Professor of International Law at the University of Athens and Chair of the UN Human Rights Committee and ACS Athens alumna, honored us with her presence On November 17th, to speak to MS students about the United Nations and the UN SDGs. Dr. Pazartzis spoke about the UN foundation treaty, the three pillars, and specifically the Human Rights Committee in which she has been unanimously elected as Chair.

Dr. Pazartzis was introduced to the students by Dr. Pelonis who also gave the message that the purpose of education is to take positive action to improve life and living on the planet.

<https://bit.ly/30XNF8w>



Virtual School

- The Greek Language and Culture Virtual courses as well as the English Language Acquisition courses were launched in the summer of 2020 and fall of 2020-21, increasing the number of Virtual Courses to 28.
- This academic year a Perspectives in Literature course will be offered.
- The IB Spanish Ab Initio course is being developed as a 2-year virtual course only for ACS Athens students.

Information Technology

Enrollment

The following new initiatives have been implemented to ensure a smooth and efficient admissions process:

- Admissions virtual meetings allow all families abroad to initiate the application process in a convenient and faster way.
- Admissions process combines with Buddy System - building a sense of community and belonging for a successful transition for the whole family.
- A new checklist system drives a more User-friendly Application process.
- Automated Parent email process reduces response time to families applying for admission
- "Best Fit" evaluation of new students reflects vision and mission of ACS Athens.
- More than ever online admissions tests and ESL/EFL interviews conducted for 2021-22 academic year.

The following "most significant points" in ACS Athens Information Technology have been made:

- Moodle theme has been upgraded introducing a simpler user-friendly navigation with many customizable options.
- Zoom is now our official meeting platform used schoolwide for meetings and synchronous hybrid sessions. Zoom is integrated with Moodle providing a secure, stable and reliable environment.
- Forty new laptops in the Elementary School for student classroom usage.
- Twenty new laptops for Middle and High School student to check out on a need basis.
- Redesigned the Wi-Fi infrastructure to accommodate high density and high bandwidth demands.

<https://bit.ly/3FpX7kh>

School Wide

- A formal teacher evaluation process based on standards and benchmarks is being implemented this academic year.
- Developed a school wide professional development process aligned with the school's Mission and Vision.
- Institutionalized Action Research to develop Reflective Practitioners

The Institute of ACS Athens

The Institute of ACS Athens has relaunched! Originally started in 2011 providing a vehicle for innovation and creativity, The Institute of ACS Athens was the brainchild of the late and beloved Steven Medeiros.

Following the ever changing and constantly challenging global environment, we recognized the need to offer our students, our community, our alumni, and eventually the world, an innovative approach to advance learning that will transform mindsets to improve life and living on the planet. At the Institute of ACS Athens we aim to enhance the power of K-12 international education. Our mission is to inspire children to contribute to the manifestation of their happiness through innovation and creativity. To empower children's wisdom, and teach children to turn their knowledge into skills.

Major Facility Upgrading Projects



- Structural reinforcement, Architectural and Electromechanical renovation of the Annex building;
- The landscaping and renovation in the Annex ground floor surrounding area is currently in progress;
- Renovation of the outdoor athletic courts is in progress;
- The new Cisco Telephony VOIP system is installed and operational;
- New car traffic warning flashlights, signs and pedestrian crossing lines were installed at the Garyttou street school entrance for students' safety;
- The older components of the Annex's Electric Power substation were replaced for safety;
- New fire protection stations were added at the Indoor Gym and Pool buildings;
- New WIFI access points were placed around the campus. All buildings and outdoor areas have 100% high speed Internet coverage;
- An external fuel tank was added to the school's electric power generator expanding its operational capacity in emergencies. The generator supports all critical operations of the school;
- Numerous school equipment was purchased; laptops, document cameras, video conferencing cameras, outdoor furniture, smart boards, projectors, e.t.c.;
- The plot of land adjacent to the school that was recently purchased has been used to extend play areas and to provide a gym for students;
- USA Security Grant, (new state of the art Public Announcement system to cover all classrooms buildings and campus areas, and install Anti-breakage window film to all school glass windows);
- USA Health Grant, (60 air purifiers devices to be placed throughout the school, which can filter and clean indoor air from dust, smells and viruses, including destroying the COVID-19 virus);

Due to the COVID-19 virus and the financial disruption it created, the school administration is concentrating primarily on projects involving safety, including the Annex building structural reinforcement that was found to require immediate attention.

Professional Development

- Dr. David Chojnacki, Consultant on Governance recently held a one-day training session with the ACS Athens Board of Trustees and President.
- Two administrators and four teachers took part in this year's NESA Educators Conference.
- Three administrators participated in the Mediterranean Organization of International Schools Conference.
- Science and Math teachers participated in a conference by Emma Anderson, learning to integrate social emotional care into the respective disciplines.
- Five administrators and six faculty taught Action Research in Master's level university program.

Youth to Youth Program

The Youth to Youth Social Integration and Education program began on Nov. 6th. ACS Athens students and faculty support refugee minors to learn English, Greek and sport.

IB News

IB students and faculty returned to school in September with a great deal of enthusiasm. Some of the highlights so far include:

- An online presentation at the IB Virtual Conference by Dr. Prodromidi and Ms. Chamosfakidis on the intersection between psychology and biology and how students learn through cross-disciplinary projects.
- IB art students went on a field trip to two Athens museums – EMST and NEON.
- IB theater students visited the Odeon of Herodes Atticus theater in Athens, and students performed a scene from "The Threepenny Opera" during lunchtime at ACS.
- IB science students dedicated October 13th to "Science IA Day", where they collected data for their Internal Assessments.
- 5 IB teachers attended IB workshops on best practices for implementing the IB syllabus in their courses.
- Year 1 students were introduced to CAS (Creativity, Action and Service) and encouraged to become involved in service projects and explore their interests in new and creative ways.
- The IB Student Council was formed, which consists of students who will work with the IB Office to create effective communication and cooperation between IB students, teachers and administrators in the Academy.

Middle School

Middle School has had a smooth start to the new school year with many reasons to celebrate. Our students have done a remarkable job observing the safety protocols that have enabled them to engage in clubs and activities during lunch, after school activities, and meaningful learning opportunities during class.

- Activities and Club Kick-Off in September was a success resulting in 19 clubs/activities that meet during lunch or after school.
- Student Council hosted the first Spirit Week where students and staff showed their school spirit by wearing house colors, wearing something that represents music and ended the week dressing up for Halloween and decorating their Advisory Class Doors.
- Thank you to the PTO for supporting our celebration with a Pumpkin Carving Contest and Costume Contest.

Further to the above and as part of the studies on the Mayan Civilization in Spanish Class, students had the opportunity to learn about the Day of the Dead which honors those who have passed.

- Students created masks with the help of their math teachers who reinforced mathematical concepts.
- Students researched the Day of the Dead and created presentations with partners and then presented their learning during the Language Arts classes.

This is a good example of how our teachers work together to create interdisciplinary learning opportunities for our students.

Elementary School

- ES Halloween Carnival - activities and home-room celebrations made for a fun day!
- ES Parent/Teacher Conferences took place on Friday, November 5th online with great success!
- Writing Celebration is taking place across all grade levels and the students are sharing their narrative pieces with their classes.



Academy

Student Life: The Academy has over 35 different clubs and activity groups that meet on a regular basis during lunch, after school, and during select X Blocks.

Model United Nations: Try-outs were on Oct 27, 2021. Three teams: CGSMUN-Russian Federation and Bolivia, THIMUN-Turkmenistan, PSMUN-To-Be-Announced.

KOINWNOS - Planning a book drive and waiting for permission to cook/serve at the soup kitchen downtown. Student Councils are all planning year ahead. IB Council has been formed

Local Field Trips: The Academy has seen small group field trips including the following: IB Theater 1- visited the Acropolis & the Irodition; IB Visual Arts 1 & 2 - visited the Modern Art Museum; Humanities - visited Delphi and the National Archaeological Museum

Parent Teacher Conferences: Parent Teacher Conferences took place virtually on November 23, from 4:00-6:30 pm and on November 24, 9:00-1:00 pm. Parents were able to schedule their sessions beginning November 15th through Skyward Family Access.

10th Grade Capstone Project: All 10th grade students have begun their Capstone research projects. The Capstone project provides opportunities for students to complete formal research projects of their choice, integrated with the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN (SDGs), as well as their career goals and motivations.

American Math Competition (AMC): More than 65 Academy students participated in the AMC competition on Wednesday, November 10th. The event celebrated mathematics and the opportunity for our students to engage in friendly competition with students in American schools around the world and in the USA.



Donations

To date and for this academic year, we have received a total amount of €10,973.17 in donations to support: scholarships, the Name a Seat Fundraising initiative, the Youth to Youth Program, and the annual Board Training Session. We thank everyone who supports ACS Athens and its programs!

American Farm School visits ACS Athens

The President of the American Farm School in Thessaloniki and two of his colleagues visited the ACS Athens campus on November 19th and discussed a possible collaboration about sustainable projects with Dr. Pelonis.

Student Affairs

The Counseling Office has been buzzing with students since September. Here are what our Counselors have been doing:

- The Buddies Program has been launched school-wide and new students have been paired up with their Owls, Buddies and Peer Mentors.
- Schedule change requests have been completed.
- Seniors have been working with their Counselors on College/University applications. Congratulations to several students who have already been accepted to various universities in the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe!
- Virtual visits are ongoing from various universities. For example, representatives from the Overseas Schools Project spoke to ACS Athens families about admission to Colleges/Universities in the United States.
- The Academy Counseling team prepared an orientation presentation for 9th grade families about the Academy.
- Individual visits and appointments with ACS Athens community members are ongoing.

Athletics / Recreational Activities

"Once again our ACS Athens students are back in action through sports and activities!

After almost a year and a half of major COVID-19 restrictions that greatly affected our after school programs, the fall season of competitive sports is well under way. We have:

- Nine Competitive Junior Varsity & Varsity teams and more than 150 student-athletes!
- Over forty Middle School Students and over 100 Academy students are members of our Soccer, Volleyball & Cross Country teams and will have the opportunity to represent our school during competitions.

Competition will soon start with our teams, coaches and everyone involved following all the necessary safety protocols required by all the schools that we usually compete with. We are all very excited to see them back in action!

In addition, participation in Recreational after school activities exceeds 300 students, of which more than 200 are Elementary students! The program consists of :

- Twenty four activities that are sports, arts or technology related and the majority of the participants have signed up for two or more activities.
- All activities take place after the typical school day and give our students the chance to learn, socialize and have fun!"

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 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.

Our Vision

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

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.

President Invitations /Professional Contributions

Moderated Global panels with guests including:

- Professor Ephraim Isaac, Chairman of the Board of the Ethiopian Peace and Development Center. Scholar- Peacemaker
- Balaji Rajagopalan, Dean of the College of Business, Northern Illinois University
- Members of the Hellenic Basketball Federation, including our own Annie Constantinides

Invited to participate in the World Innovation of Education Summit: Generation Unmute; Reclaiming our Future through Education

Invited to work with IBM International Services- Reflective Leadership Training

A panel on the Future of Education sponsored by the Hellenic Chamber of Commerce

