

Tamagawa Academy - IB Division NEWSLETTER

Issue 03

July 2026

English Drama Club

From long rehearsals to production, members work together to bring stories to life.

ITC

We had a Big Win at the International Trade Challenge (ITC)!

Learner Profile Awards

Small actions and positive attitudes can make a lasting impact on our community!

Jiyukenkyu

This month's feature explores some of the achievements of our Rosaku students and discuss their creativity and commitment to independent learning.

Reihai

On June 22nd, we had a Special Chapel Service for IB Grades 6 to 9, featuring a lecture by our Head of School Mr. Yoshiaki Obara.



Mr. OSAWA

20 years at Tamagawa!

In this special interview, we celebrate Osawa-sensei's remarkable 20-year journey in education, reflecting on the experiences, challenges, and successes that have shaped his career.

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS

- Canada trip briefing
- Service workshop
- Rinkangakkou briefing

MOCK EXAMS

Grade 12 students recently completed their mock exams! Read about their experience and listen to the voice of our parents that helped students identify areas for further growth.

Mr. Furnival's Message



Kobato Kindergarten

Students spent time with young children through fun games, activities, and plenty of valuable learning experiences.

One Stage at a Time

Y.K. in Grade 11 recently appeared in a play called The Wedding Dress in Tokyo. Learn more about her journey so far!

Exchange



Program

STUDENT COUNCIL EVENT



Mr Furnival's message



Welcome to July's Newsletter.

June was as busy as ever in the IB Division, both inside and outside of the classroom and I hope you enjoy reading about everything that has been going on. A running theme in this month's newsletter is our students' success in the performing arts; both at school through the EDC, and through their own interests, I hope the interviews and reports inspire other students to take part.

I spoke recently at an IB Assembly about the power of song in creating identity, community and a shared sense of history. I have seen this in action watching Grades 6-12 prepare for the Music Festival over the last couple of weeks. I have been moved by the power of the students' voices and the passion of the Music Department. I hope that you are able to come to our Music Festival to celebrate our students, we are very proud of them. Talking of history, we were honoured to have Mr Obara present our chapels this month, where he taught us all about the origins of our school's philosophy, which is just as relevant now as it was in 1929.

I often talk about the importance of community and the link between teachers, students and parents. This can be seen through two articles this month.

Mr Osawa has been a big part of our school community for the past 20 years, which is quite an achievement and one we managed to celebrate at an IB Assembly. It was great to see S.A. and K.K. interview him which provided a lot of reflection and memories of Tamagotchi!

Grade 12 got a taste of the external exam environment in their Mock Exams, I am sure the experience will help to calm their nerves in the run up to the final ones in November. I would like to thank all of the parents who volunteered to invigilate for us. It is great to see so many parents wanting to make such a positive contribution to our Division and it took a lot of work off the teachers' hands! I enjoyed reading your reflections on the experience.

As I write this, Japan have just been knocked out of the World Cup by Brazil. While this is very disappointing, it is worth noting how far Japan have come in the last few years. I first arrived in Japan in 1998 when they had just lost every game at the World Cup. They are now a force to be reckoned with on the world stage and can beat anyone on their day. They have won many admirers through their positive attitude and team work. We can all learn a lesson from them. My country England are still in it...for now! I will be glad when it's over as every game is very stressful to watch!

As summer approaches there is still a lot to look forward to and a lot to do. From Grade 6's Rinkan Gakkou to Grade 12 oral examinations, our students are always so busy and they make us proud every day.

I hope to see you at the Music Festival on Thursday.

Oliver Furnival
Head of IB Division

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LEADERSHIP COMMENTS



Mr. Cook

As part of our commitment to leading cutting-edge International Baccalaureate pedagogy, our academic team is already proactively preparing for the upcoming Enhanced MYP framework launching in August 2027.

The future changes will place a sharper focus on the '3Cs'—Content, Concepts, and Context—while simplifying our assessment framework down to three core criteria to maximize clarity and feedback for students. Rest assured, our core curriculum strengths remain intact, and we are working collaboratively across departments to seamlessly transition our unit planners and 'Lines of Inquiry' to ensure our students continue to thrive in an evolving global educational landscape.

I am so proud of our Grade 12 students for completing their mock exams. This was a challenging and intense week, with students following the same procedures and regulations as the official IB examinations.

Throughout the week, I was impressed by their determination and resilience. Despite the pressure and long hours, they continued to support one another, and there were still plenty of smiles and laughter along the way.

Completing these mock exams is an important milestone, and I hope the experience has helped build their confidence and prepare them for the official IB exams ahead. Well done, Grade 12s!



Ms Wei



Mr. Soai

I was deeply moved to hear that IB 10th and 11th graders came to the aid of others in quick succession. Not only did they approach a third-grader suffering from dehydration, but they also bought the child a drink from a nearby vending machine, gave it to them, and divided up the task of contacting the teacher—allowing the student to return to school safely. In another instance, they noticed an elderly parent walking ahead of them who was staggering, so they approached the person, helped them rest at the campus store, and ensured they made it home safely. While these aren't everyday situations, making the right decision on the spot can sometimes be difficult. I'm incredibly proud of these younger students who “responded with a smile first.”

Throughout June, Tamagawa Academy echoed with students singing for the Music Festival, reflecting our philosophy: "We begin with song, and we end with song." Music is a natural part of daily life here, not just a performance. Creating music together fosters sensitivity, compassion, and emotional expression.

"Art" is one of our six Zenjin Education values. Whether singing or admiring paintings, engaging with art nurtures empathy and an appreciation for beauty, bringing vitality to daily life.

We hope the festival allow you to see our students growing into well-rounded individuals, and that it moves your heart, too.



Ms Takahashi

LEADERSHIP COMMENTS



Mr. Serpico

With the World Cup in full swing, I know football is on everyone's mind. Mine, however, is on basketball. I've always admired Steve Kerr, head coach of the Golden State Warriors. Kerr has won nine NBA championships—five as a player and four as a coach—but the idea I remember most from him has nothing to do with X's and O's. It's his belief that the best teams “play with joy.”

Like teaching, basketball can be intense, demanding, and full of pressure. There are expectations, mistakes, difficult moments, and days when things do not go according to plan. In schools, it can be easy to get pulled into the stress of deadlines, meetings, emails, and the many challenges that come with supporting young people.

Kerr's idea reminded me that joy is not something we wait for once the work is finished. It is something we choose to bring into the work itself.

For me, teaching with joy means noticing the small moments that make this work meaningful: a student finally understanding a difficult concept, a class laughing together, a thoughtful question, or a young person showing growth after struggling. Those moments don't remove the challenges of teaching, but they do remind me why I chose this profession in the first place.

Joy doesn't mean pretending every day is easy. It means choosing not to let the difficult moments define the experience. There will always be deadlines, challenges, and days that don't go as planned, but there will also always be opportunities to laugh, to learn, and to celebrate growth. At the end of the day, teaching is a privilege. Every year we are invited into the lives of young people at a stage where they are discovering who they are and what they can become. I don't want to lose sight of that. If I can keep that perspective, I hope I'll continue to not only teach with joy, but inspire others to do so.

Not only in Japan but in many countries, governments and lawmakers are restricting or considering restrictions on the use of social media and other platforms. Why is regulation necessary? Are there really issues that warrant such restrictions?

Now, are there any problems with the way you use these platforms? Are you perhaps violating etiquette without even realizing it?



Mr. Iizuka



Mr. Hinchey

This month we awarded four students with their Raz Kids Completion Certificate. Students receiving awards have completed all the books in Raz-Kids, listening, reading and passing comprehension questions for each book. This was an enormous undertaking for MYP students and a testament to their self-management skills and perseverance. The students were A.Y. and Y.M. in grade 8 and H.K. and L.O. in grade 9. Congratulations to them! We hope to award more students in MYP after the up-coming Summer Reading Challenge.



LEARNER PROFILE AWARDS



Y.S. (G6) - Knowledgeable, Communicator: In Math class he demonstrates a thorough understanding of fractions and successfully applies his knowledge to solve problems in familiar and unfamiliar situations. He has no hesitation to share his knowledge with others in I&S class and he focuses on the class really well.

Y.H. (G6) - Self-management: She always comes to class prepared and demonstrated her understanding by having the appropriate materials on her desk.

R.Y. (G7) - Knowledgeable: In Math class she showed a solid understanding of the key mathematical knowledge and skills in Unit 1, and applied them accurately to solve problems.

R.Y. (G7) - Principled, Caring: In Science class he always does things the correct way even when it's difficult. In Homeroom Ren demonstrates strong leadership in smoothly managing daily beautification and cleaning tasks.

R.O. (G8) - Principled: She found a lost PASMO card and gave it to her homeroom teacher to get help in finding the owner.

Y.O. (G8) - Principled: She found a lost PASMO card and gave it to her homeroom teacher to get help in finding the owner.

Y.O. (G8) - Communication skills: She consistently shows a willingness to answer questions and share her ideas confidently in class.

R.T. (G9) - Thinker: He is a cheerful, focused and helpful student. Rido applied critical and creative thinking skills to solve complex problems and communicated the strategy he used in applying mathematics for solving new problems in Science to his classmates to help with understanding.

Y.O. (G9) - Risk-taker: He was fast with completion of work and when called upon he took up the challenge to share his strategy of solving problems in Science with the class and explained the steps of problem solving.

S.I. (G10) - Thinker: He demonstrated that he can think on his feet during the May Trial Lessons where he demonstrated his Jeopardy game from the 2026 Math Day. He noticed that the Grade 4-5 participants were struggling to answer the questions even with the help of the Tamagawa students since his game was meant for Grades 6-8. So, he made a simpler version of the game during the break so that the second group could have a more enjoyable and fulfilling experience!

E.I. (G11) - Research and Communication Skills: In ESS class she researched and presented about the UN Sustainable Development Goals extraordinarily well.

Y.S. (G11) - Research and Communication Skills: In ESS class he researched and presented about the UN Sustainable Development Goals extraordinarily well.

S.O. (G12) - Inquirer: In ESS class she asks relevant questions that benefit her and her classmates as they prepare for their mock exams

E.Y. (G12) - Inquirer: In ESS class she asks relevant questions that benefit her and her classmates as they prepare for their mock exams

S.C. (G12) - Inquirer: In ESS class she asks relevant questions that benefit her and her classmates as they prepare for their mock exams

English Drama Club



Behind every unforgettable curtain call are countless hours of hard work, passion, and club spirit. We caught up with H and K from the English Drama Club to find out exactly what goes through a performer's head the moment the music starts—and how it feels when the auditorium finally erupts in cheers.

H.K. - Grade 9

What was going through your head the exact moment the music started?

When the music started, the first thing that flooded my mind was all the feedback from my Senpai (seniors). Their advice reminded me exactly what I needed to focus on throughout the performance. But right after that, a wave of memories from our club practices came rushing back—the moments we worked so hard, and the pure excitement I always felt when dancing and singing with everyone. Ultimately, my biggest feeling on stage was just absolute joy and excitement to finally perform our culmination.

What was your favorite reaction from the audience?

My favorite reaction was definitely the massive cheering when the song ended! Hearing that crowd made me feel so incredibly energetic and accomplished. It made me so glad that I pushed past my comfort zone and challenged myself to take on this performance.

K.V. - Grade 9

How did the English Drama Club decide to bring some musical theater magic to the school ?

The English Drama Club decided to bring musical theater magic to the school because the slow transition of mundane school life to a world of musicals seemed interesting. The performance starts in the setting of an ordinary classroom, then, through singing and dancing, the setting slowly transforms into a musical theater. By adopting a slightly different concept from previous English Drama Club performances, we were able to create a sense of storytelling that was fun to watch. The English Drama Club also hopes that our Summer Concert has been able to help you get through the hot summer!





As grade representatives, we supported our Student Council President, M.M. and Vice President, S.S. in planning and executing the June 10th House Event. In the planning phase, we prepared two major activities for approximately 345 students. A “Scavenger” with various stations like the Drawing Relay and Photo Challenge and “Ousama Tori” (King Hunt).

Unfortunately, because of sudden rain on the day, we had to cancel the highly anticipated Scavenger Hunt. Instead, we quickly adapted and moved “Ousama Tori” into the gymnasium. In the tighter indoor space, we strictly managed the boundaries by clearly separating the game zone from the spectating area. Furthermore, teaching the rules to 345 students was a massive challenge. The Student Council, especially the President and Vice President provided repeated explanations, ran live demonstrations, and guided students constantly to ensure the game ran as smoothly and safely as possible.



Looking back on the event, seeing students from Grade 6 to 12 work together, developing relationships, and showing great effort made the experience incredibly rewarding. Through this event, we developed our leadership and risk-management skills, which will be valuable in the future. We would like to give special thanks to M and S for their leadership and guidance, and to all the teachers, especially Mr. Maoate, for supporting us throughout the entire process. Their support played a huge role in making the event a success.





Department focus: LANGUAGE B

English Language Acquisition

K.H. - Grade 6

In our Grade 6 Language Acquisition class, we are currently studying friendship, including email communication.

In this topic, I am enjoying learning about what kind of relationships we should build. Honestly, I don't really understand how we should build better relationships, so I want to use this opportunity to become better friends with my classmates. For example, I can start by talking to classmates I haven't spoken to very much before or sending a kind message to someone who needs help with their homework.

This unit connects to ATL skills, especially Communication Skills and Social Skills, because communicating helps us make new friends, and Social Skills are important for building better relationships.

From now on, I want to improve my Communication Skills and Social Skills with my classmates. My goal is to create the best possible class where we can understand and respect each other. I'm very excited to build better relationships with my classmates by using what I have learned in Language Acquisition class!



MYP Japanese Language Acquisition

H.I. - Grade 8

In our Japanese Language Acquisition class, we learnt about school rules in Japan and around the world, especially strict school rules. Before starting our research, we discussed what should and should not be allowed at school, such as whether school uniforms should be mandatory. We then researched school rules from different countries and shared our findings with each other. We also discussed why some unusual rules exist and what purposes they are meant to serve in different societies and cultures.

As a class, we did roleplaying as students, parents/guardians, and teachers, and discussed whether some rules should be changed. We had a lot of fun taking on different roles. I think this activity helped us understand different perspectives and see that school rules can be created for different reasons depending on people's roles and viewpoints.

The ATL skills we mainly utilized were Communication and Thinking Skills. We discussed many ideas in class and thought about why some rules exist around the world. We also considered how school rules can reflect the values and expectations of different societies.

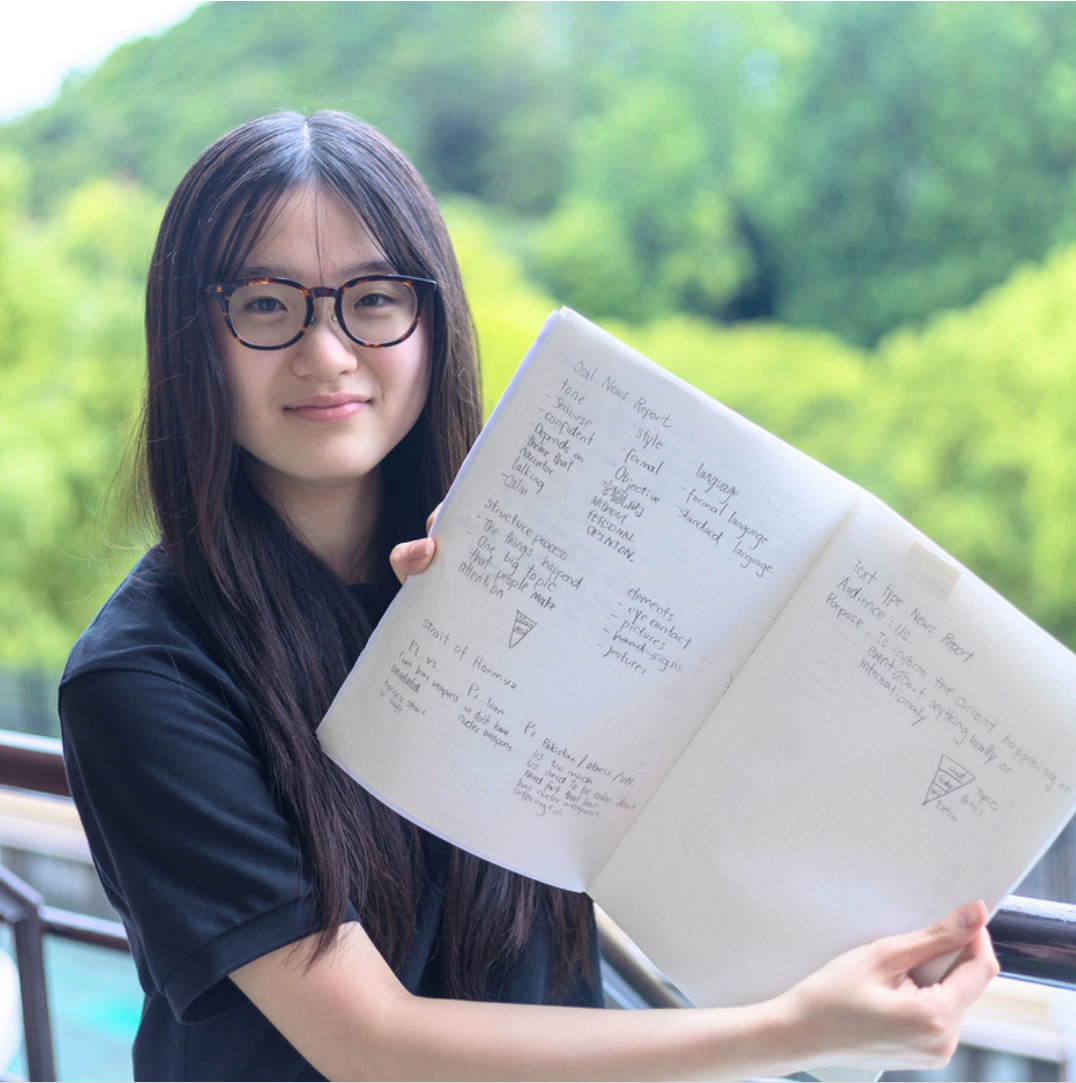
Overall, I really enjoyed this unit because it was fun to communicate with my classmates and interesting to learn about school rules from different perspectives.

English Language Acquisition
Y.U. - Grade 8

Currently, in our English Language Acquisition class, we are writing an essay about the movie True Spirit. It is a biographical film that follows 16-year-old Jessica Watson as she refuses to give up on her dream—and ultimately achieves it—to become the youngest person to sail solo around the world. For this assignment, we are writing a reflective essay focused on how Jessica’s family continuously supported her throughout her journey.

What I am enjoying most about this topic is analyzing Jessica’s feelings and actions, and then exploring how her family supported her through those emotions. In the movie, there are moments where you have to read between the lines and infer her feelings from her expressions and behavior, which made it really fun to expand my imagination and think deeply about it.

I believe this directly connects to the Thinker attribute of the IB Learner Profile. By interpreting Jessica’s emotions and using those insights to analyze her family's support, I was able to strengthen both my Critical Thinking Skills and my imagination.



English Language Acquisition
L.O. - Grade 9

Have you ever wondered why a small misunderstanding sometimes escalates into a big fight? In our Grade 9 Language and Acquisition class, we are currently working on a unit called “Resolving Conflicts”. In our daily lessons, we analyze different news articles and videos to explore a wide range of topics, from global and national conflicts to everyday misunderstandings. Through this learning, we learned how important it is to consider different cultural perspectives and points of view to achieve peaceful resolutions.

This unit was particularly exciting because of the collaborative activities we did in pairs. We were presented with a specific argument and had to immediately decide either to agree or disagree with it. Together with my partner, I had to quickly come up with supporting arguments and present our reasons to the whole class. Through this challenging task, my ATL Thinking and Communication skills improved.

Through these experiences, I was able to develop key skills from the IB learner profile and strengthen my critical thinking. By learning to respect different opinions and understand their value, I became more open-minded. Furthermore, presenting my ideas with a partner helped me grow as a communicator. I enjoyed this unit because it is directly connected to the Global Context of fairness and development, and it provides useful techniques for managing conflict and building peace.

Japanese Language Acquisition

N.Y. - Grade 10

In our Japanese Language Acquisition class, we have been exploring the profound role of sports in society, focusing on the idea of “connections.” We began by examining the different categories of sports and discussing the effects of cheering and support, such as stress relief, motivation, and the creation of social bonds. These discussions helped us understand that sports can strongly impact not only individuals but also communities and countries.

A significant portion of our unit has been investigating “chiiki ikou”—the transition of school club activities into regional community clubs. Through this topic, we analyzed important social issues in Japan, such as declining birthrates, fewer students participating in clubs, and the increasing workload of teachers. We practiced writing opinion columns to express our perspectives on whether this transition could create new opportunities for connection or weaken traditional school culture.



The ATL skills we used most in this unit were Thinking and Research skills. By examining this issue from multiple perspectives, we developed the IB learner profile attributes of being Open-minded and Reflective. What I personally enjoyed most was hearing different opinions during class discussions, as it helped me see new viewpoints and think more deeply. This unit showed me that sports are not only about competition, but also about building relationships, strengthening communities, and creating a more inclusive society.

Mandarin ab initio

S.C. - Grade 11

In Mandarin Ab Initio, we are currently learning **about the theme of Identities. For instance, we learn** how to talk about **daily life** topics such as timetables, weather, **clothes** and Chinese New Year celebrations.



Besides learning Mandarin through the textbooks that focus on reading and writing, we have been building our speaking and listening skills through different activities such as analyzing the package of some Chinese sweets, posters, or the games using vocabulary or picture cards.

One of the things I enjoy most about learning Mandarin is that it helps me understand a different language and culture from my own background that I did not know before. It feels rewarding when I can understand something new or successfully communicate something simple that I could not before.

The structure of the Mandarin class also helps me clearly see my progress because the curriculum is designed for beginners. Learning Mandarin has helped me become more open-minded and appreciate different ways of thinking through learning about the culture.

This course has helped me develop ATL skills, especially Communication and Self-Management. Since learning a language requires regular practice, I have learned how to stay organized and take responsibility for my own learning. I was able to challenge myself by taking the HSK Level 2 (Chinese Proficiency text) outside of school for the first time, and I achieved an almost perfect score after only studying for 6 months. The course also connects to the IB Learner Profile by helping me become a communicator, an inquirer and a risk-taker.



At Tamagawa, jiyukenkyu (Independent Research) is a historic cornerstone of the curriculum that is deeply intertwined with the school's foundational philosophy of Zenjin education. Instead of relying on traditional classroom memorization, this program empowers students to pursue their unique personal passions through a continuous cycle of inquiry, action, and reflection. This month, we are focusing on Rosaku and we interviewed a student who chose that exact philosophy for his jiyukenkyu project.

What’s your name?
K.M.

What is your Jiyuenyku?
Rosaku.

Why did you choose Rosaku as your Jiyukenkyu?
My mum loves vegetables and I heard that I could plant them in Rosaku. I saw that Rosaku sold vegetables at Pegasus last year and I think it is a good idea to do it.

What do you do during Rosaku?
We go to the farm and plant seeds. This year we have planted tomatoes, potatoes, luffas and onions. We received two onions each. I took them home and my mum used them for gyudon. They tasted nice and I felt proud that I was eating the food I helped to grow. We also take plants that have gone rotten and put them on the compost. We have to kill bugs which are harming the vegetables. I don’t like doing it but understand that it has to be done. If it rains, Mr White makes quizzes about plants.

What is the link between Tamagawa and Rosaku?
Tamgawa has a lot of nature and it is good to use our environment.

What is the link between the IB and Rosaku?
We use Communication Skills in Rosaku. One example is that I ask students in other grade levels for help when I don’t know what to do. I enjoy working with students from grade 6 and 7. We talk about our hobbies and I have made new friends.



What do you hope to achieve in Rosaku this year?
I want to make more vegetables for my mum. I also want to be able to sell them to other people for charity.

What are the best things about Rosaku?
I can plant vegetables for me but for others too. I am helping the environment.

What skills have you developed already?
I have learned how to dig using tools; this is the first time I have done it. My mum grows flowers and I would like to help her in the future.

Why would you recommend Rosaku as a Jiyukenkyu next year?
It is a lot of fun and you can get a lot of new experiences. You can learn new skills. A lot of schools do not have a farm and it is good to work on one once a week. Rosaku is good exercise too!

20 YEARS INSPIRING STUDENTS

An Interview with Mr. Osawa

Mr. Osawa has spent more than 25 years at Tamagawa Academy as both a student and a teacher. S.A. and K.K. interviewed him about how the school has changed, what inspires him as a teacher, and the advice he would like to share with future educators.



What was Tamagawa like when you first came here? What is the biggest difference between students then and now?

I actually first came to Tamagawa as a junior high school student, not as a teacher. At that time, there were cows where the Scitech Center now stands, and the area in front of the Central Building was a hill where we played on sleds whenever it snowed. There was no new gymnasium, and there was no artificial turf, so we played soccer on dirt fields.

Although the campus has changed a lot, I don't think the students themselves have changed very much. Today's students still have the same potential as they did in the past.

Was there a trend during your school days that you really liked?

Definitely Tamagotchi! Everyone attached one to their school bags. We also played Tetris during class and sometimes even played cards with our desks pushed together. Looking back, it wasn't exactly the best behavior, but they're funny memories now.



If you could give one piece of advice to yourself on your first day as a teacher, what would it be?

I would tell myself to be more natural and simply be myself. When I first started teaching, I felt that I had to be very strict so that students wouldn't underestimate me. I built a wall around myself because I believed that was what a teacher was supposed to do.

Looking back, I realize that I focused too much on discipline and not enough on helping students enjoy physical education. Although I wanted to share my love of sports, I think many students only saw me as a strict teacher. If I could start again, I would remind myself that building trust and encouraging students is far more important than trying to appear tough.

When do you feel the greatest sense of achievement as a PE teacher?

For me, it's not about seeing students who are already good at sports become even better. The most rewarding moments are when students who struggle with physical activities begin to enjoy them and finally succeed.

For example, I remember students who were afraid of the vault. When they finally managed to jump over it, the smiles on their faces were unforgettable. Seeing that kind of growth is what makes teaching so meaningful to me.

I always try to observe each student carefully. Sometimes a student is afraid, sometimes they simply haven't learned the right technique, and sometimes there is another reason they are struggling. Once I understand what is holding them back, I can give advice that fits their needs. When that support helps them overcome the challenge, I feel that all the effort has been worthwhile.

What has kept you motivated to continue teaching for so many years?

First of all, I have always had the support of my family, and I am very grateful for that. More importantly, I truly love being a teacher. Like any profession, there have been difficult moments and many challenges over the years, but I have never seriously thought about quitting.

I feel incredibly fortunate to be able to turn something I love into my career. Every day, I have the opportunity to work with students, watch them grow, and support them as they pursue their goals. Seeing their progress reminds me why I chose this profession in the first place.

Looking back on the past 20 years, I believe teaching is one of the most rewarding jobs anyone can have. I have been lucky to work in a wonderful environment, and that is one of the biggest reasons I continue to enjoy coming to school every day.



What do you hope students learn through club activities?

I hope students learn perseverance, teamwork, and the importance of supporting one another. In life, success doesn't always come quickly, and there will always be difficult moments. Through club activities, students experience working hard together, encouraging their teammates, and continuing even when things don't go as planned.

Those experiences become valuable skills after graduation as well. Whether at university or in the workplace, the ability to cooperate with others and keep trying despite challenges is something that cannot easily be learned from textbooks. That is why I believe club activities continue to play an important role in helping students grow, not only as athletes but also as people.



Finally, what advice would you give to students who want to become teachers?

Teaching is one of the most rewarding jobs in the world. Although the media often focuses on its challenges, it is an amazing career because you can support young people as they chase their dreams. My biggest dream is that one day, Tamagawa graduates will return to become teachers here.

I hope I can be the kind of teacher who inspires them to do that!

GRADE 12 MOCK EXAMS



The desks are cleared, the final timers have buzzed, and the collective exhale can be heard across the entire school. Grade 12 Mock Exams are officially over! Our seniors spent one week fueled by caffeine, flashcards, and sheer determination. They tackled the practice papers, survived the essay prompts, and stared down the clock. While these were "just" the mocks, the effort they put in was entirely real—and they made it to the other side!

A special thank you to our incredible parent volunteers who stepped up as invigilators, ensuring the exams ran smoothly while providing a calm, encouraging presence for the students. Their comments are below:

Ms. K : As a Grade 6 Homeroom Parent Representative, I had the opportunity to support the DP mock exams as a volunteer invigilator for the first time.

It was a wonderful experience to see the students arriving early in the morning to self-study and witnessing their dedication up close as they took their exams. I also discovered many unique aspects of the DP exams that differ from traditional Japanese tests—such as being allowed to use dictionaries or calculators depending on the subject, and having a five-minute reading time before the exam started. It was a day filled with new learning for me.

Furthermore, having the chance to speak with the IB teachers and experienced parents allowed me to gain valuable insights into the students' future learning and school life. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to participate.

Ms. I : This was my second time participating, following my experience last autumn. Through this volunteer opportunity, I was able to witness the exams and the atmosphere of the venue up close, which greatly deepened my understanding of the school and the IB program. In particular, I strongly realized that the DP exams are conducted under strict regulations, and that they run so smoothly thanks to the meticulous care and dedication of the teachers who support the exam administration.

I was also deeply impressed by the Grade 12 students, who maintained their absolute concentration and approached their exams with the utmost seriousness until the very last second.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the school for their warm and thoughtful coordination for us volunteers. It was also a wonderful opportunity to connect with parents from other grade levels, making this a truly meaningful and rewarding experience. Thank you very much for providing such a valuable opportunity.

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GRADE 12 MOCK EXAMS



Ms. M : This was my second time participating as a volunteer invigilator. While our role is to assist with exam administration and respond to student requests, the teachers are always there to support us, allowing me to participate with complete peace of mind. It was also a truly valuable experience for me as a parent to feel the atmosphere of the exam hall and witness the students' focused dedication up close.

What moved me most this time was when the morning exam ended—the students turned to us, bowed politely, and said, 'Thank you very much.' Although my shift was only for the morning session, the students still had the afternoon exams ahead of them after a lunch break. It would have been completely understandable if they were filled with tension or anxiety about their next test, or simply preoccupied with their own thoughts. Despite that, I was deeply touched to see them taking the time to express their gratitude.

While acquiring knowledge and academic skills is undoubtedly important, I believe that the ability to express gratitude to others through words and actions is an equally vital human strength. It felt incredibly reassuring to see that the Grade 12 students have naturally developed such a quality. The final exams are just around the corner. Please believe in the hard work you have put in so far and let your true potential shine. As a parent, I am rooting for all of you with all my heart.



Ms. I : Although this was my second time participating, the tense, exam-hall atmosphere—which felt just like the actual exams despite being a mock session—it once again made me feel truly focused and grounded. I was deeply moved to see students voluntarily arriving early in the morning to prepare, and by the serious attitude with which every single one of them faced the questions.

During the ESS exam, I was amazed by the wide variety of question formats, including interpreting graphs and maps, solving calculations using calculators, and writing long-form essays in English. It truly reaffirmed for me the depth of IB education, which offers practical learning that is valuable not only for university but also for life in the real world. I am incredibly proud of the students' daily efforts and their growth.



ONE STAGE AT A TIME

Y.K. in Grade 11 recently appeared in a play called The Wedding Dress in Tokyo.

Mr Furnival met with Y to discuss her journey into the world of drama. They spoke about how she first became interested in acting, her recent performance, the challenges of bringing emotional characters to life, and how she balances rehearsals with the demands of the IB. Y also shared her favourite study techniques, explained how the IB has helped build her confidence, and offered advice for students who dream of performing on stage.

How long have you been acting for?

I started acting two years ago.

What made you want to start acting?

I have dreamt of being an actor since I was very young but never had the chance to get started. I joined an acting workshop in Grade 9, which also included script writing and direction. The workshop was a lot of fun and made me want to continue.

What do you prefer, writing or acting?

I like both but prefer acting.

You wrote the script for the MYP Drama performance last year. How long did it take?

The base of the script took a couple of hours to write and then I spent time editing it.

You recently acted in a play called “The Wedding Dress” in Tokyo. Please give us an overview of the story and the character you play in it.

It is a story about Mami who is in a room getting ready for her wedding. The Wedding Planner is called Honjo, who organised everything for the day. Mami’s father is against the wedding which made her very sad. Mami and Honjo tried to trick her father to find out the reason why he doesn’t want Mami to get married. The rest of Mami’s family, other wedding planners and a television crew try to find the reasons for Mami’s father being against the wedding, from different angles.

I played Kaede, who is not in the main wedding scene as she was from the past. Kaede was pregnant before marriage, so she and her musician boyfriend planned to do so before the baby was born. Unfortunately, Kaede became ill with cancer as she planned for the wedding. Kaede had to choose to care for her own health or put the unborn baby’s life first. Kaede chose to have the baby, called Mirai (which means “future”) as she wanted to meet her. Kaede’s father said that if Kaede didn’t put her own health first, he would disown her. Kaede still chose to put Mirai first but unfortunately died.

We can see other people’s emotions through Kaeda’s story.

What techniques did you use to learn your lines?

The technique I used most often was to record my lines onto audio and listen to them on the way to school.

Can you remember information from your lessons in the same way?

I don’t usually record myself speaking when trying to remember school work but I think listening to audio or watching videos is a good way to remember information. I often listen to an audio textbook called Kognity and this helps me.



ONE STAGE AT A TIME

Do you recommend listening to information to other students as a way for them to remember new knowledge?

Yes, I do, it is a good way for us to learn a lot of information in a short period of time.

I agree. Students can do this as they travel to school and they can relisten to it as many times as they like. How do you manage to keep up with your school work and your acting?

It can be a challenge to find time for both and when shows are coming up they take a lot of time, so I have to use my time carefully. I know my studies are important and also know that I have to complete all of my work. I have to make sure I prioritise the work I need to study when preparing for my shows. I make sure that I focus on my assessments and homework first. I then do self-study if I have time.

What is the hardest thing about acting?

Acting is challenging as I have to understand the emotions and situations of the person I am portraying. I have to work their emotions out myself and then have to relay this accurately to the audience. This can be challenging as I sometimes have to bring characters to life who are going through experiences that I have not yet experienced myself. In my recent role of Kaede I had to play a sad part. Kaeda was the only person in the play who died, and she was pregnant. I had to show these emotions and could not use personal experience to help me. Directors can help me do this.



How can any of the work you have done in the IB help you when you act?

The IB has helped me as I was very shy when I was young and found it hard to speak to people when I first met them. Through communicating with others in the IB I have been able to build my confidence and now feel comfortable talking to others and acting in front of them.

What advice do you have for students who want to start drama?

Drama is a lot of fun. You get the opportunity to take yourself out of normal situations. Drama allows me to be dramatic and to move the audience's heart. Drama allows me to be dramatic and gives me the chance to express myself through different scenarios; I enjoy showing my emotions. My advice is to try to take yourself out of your comfort zone.

Many people want to be famous through different ways, such as acting, dancing or being an idol. My advice is to start small and advance step by step in order to reach your dreams.

What are your dreams in relation to drama?

I love acting in the theatre. The next show I want to be involved in is a drama which brings anime to life through a 2.5 musical. I would like to be a professional actor in the future.

Exchange Program

J.E. - UWSEA Singapore

Hi, I'm Julia Estey from Grade 10 and was able to go on exchange to Singapore in May to a school called UWCSEA. Although my time there was only 3 weeks, I was able to explore many sights and make new friendships that will hopefully last a lifetime!



Some of the best experiences I had were going to different spots such as Chinatown or Somerset with friends to hang out with. I made friends with people from many different cultures, including meeting another exchange student who came all the way from France, and I was lucky enough to be able to get close to her over my time there. I also met a few Japanese people through Japanese class, and it was fun getting to know many different people despite all the differences that we may have.

The school itself was also quite enjoyable with the classes, and the best part was probably the fact that school ended by 15:00 every day. I didn't take the IB program in UWCSEA, and the system was quite different so it was interesting to be able to learn how different schools from around the world have separate education systems as well.



Overall, my time there was short but I was able to learn and explore so much. If I could have, I would want to stay much longer, but I look forward to any other opportunities to be able to go on exchange or try different things.

To the younger grades who are considering the exchange program, I would 10/10 recommend this program!

Sogo Liu - Athenian School USA

It is one of the most impressive and unforgettable experiences that I have ever had in my lifetime. I stayed at Athenian School, which was able to provide me with a chance to have a totally different atmosphere than Japan. There were lots of natural scenes around the school and the atmosphere was free.



By doing these activities, I could gain not only a good skill in the English language but also a lot of other lessons about communication and connections with people. In the beginning, there were some problems due to the language barrier and cultural difference between us, but I could become more confident by talking with other people every day.

My host family also contributed to my experience greatly because they accepted me warmly and assisted me in understanding American culture through our daily interactions. Being around them made me feel like part of their family and gave me many memorable experiences, for example, board games.

Most notably, I was amazed at the high level of confidence that many Americans have as well as their goals for the future. It was amazing to see so many students who did not shy away from sharing their views and worked hard towards realizing their dreams. This motivated me to take my future seriously.



The lesson that I learned from this experience is to accept various cultures. The exchange program was much more than that for me. It gave me a lot of confidence and provided me with unforgettable memories and many friendships.

Volunteering at Kobato Kindergarten



Since 2023, our Grade 10 and 11 students have been engaged in service activities at Machida Kobato Kindergarten. Machida Kobato Kindergarten is a PYP-authorized school located in Hon-Machida. A unique feature of this partnership is that, as fellow IB schools, we can collaborate under a shared educational philosophy, while also making a meaningful contribution to our local community.

Our primary activities included assisting with the organization of Sports Day, planning and running game booths at the Summer Festival, and supporting after-school childcare. For our students, this has become a valuable opportunity not only to deepen their understanding of education through interacting with young children and supporting the kindergarten teachers, but also to foster essential qualities such as Communication Skills, leadership, caring, and responsibility.

Y.I. (G10): Volunteering at the Kindergarten Sports Festival was a meaningful experience. I mainly helped the children line up before their performances and supported them throughout the event. After the festival, I also helped the staff clean up by carrying equipment and closing the tents. My favorite part was getting along with the children. During the break, they played with me and even gave me hugs, which made me feel comfortable and welcomed. This experience taught me the importance of teamwork, and people helping each other to make the sports festival successful. Thank you for this amazing opportunity!





Grades 6-9 REIHAI

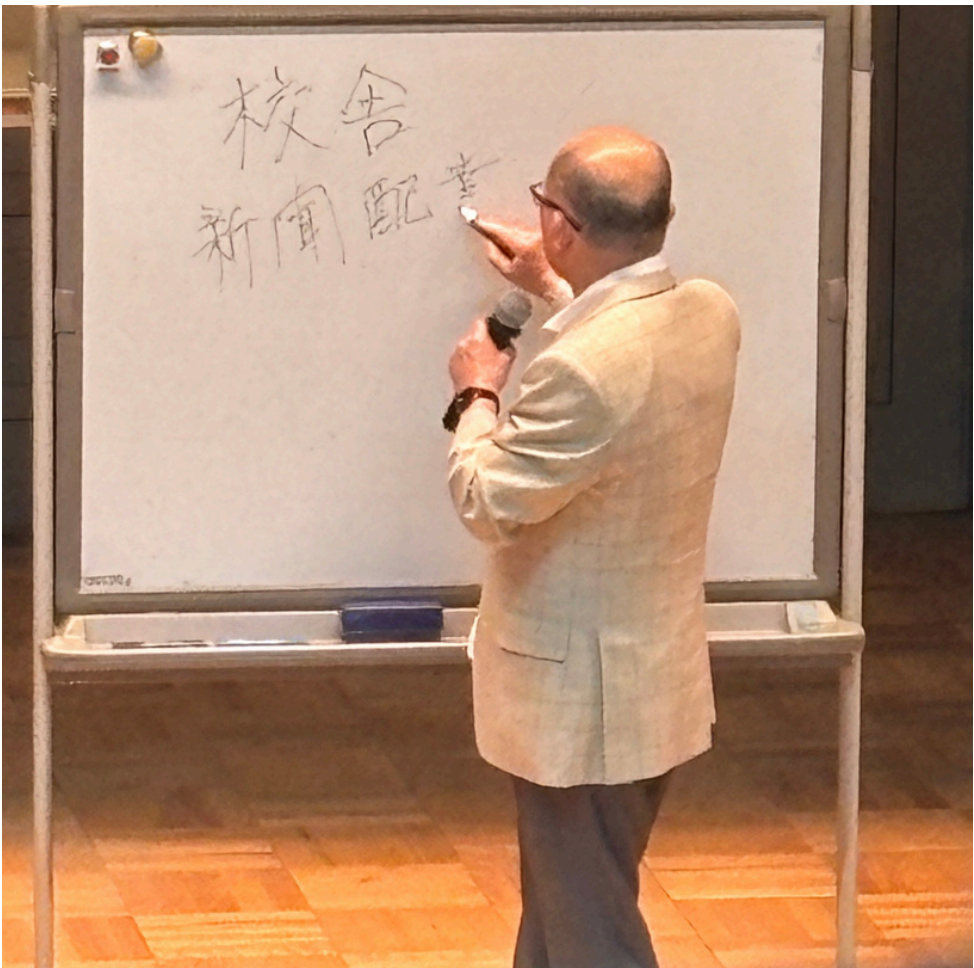
June 22nd, Special Chapel Service for IB Grades 6 to 9, featuring a lecture by our Head of School Mr. Yoshiaki Obara.

Every year in June, we mark the anniversaries of the passing of Mrs Nobu Obara, the wife of the founder Mr. Kuniyoshi Obara, as well as Mr. Tetsuro Obara, the second president. To honor their memory, the auditorium was beautifully adorned with white lilies—which Nobu-sensei dearly loved during her lifetime—and we held a special service, singing Hymn 496.

We were honored to welcome Mr. Yoshiaki Obara, and he delivered a powerful message to our students, highlighting the significance of 'Rousaku', a core value cherished since Tamagawa's founding. He emphasized the importance of being grateful for the privileged environment we enjoy today, acquiring the essential skills needed for society, and understanding the deep connection between inquiry-based learning and IB education, which goes far beyond the acquisition of knowledge. Furthermore, he spoke on the importance of critical thinking in the modern world, urging students not to accept AI-generated answers blindly, but to think for themselves and develop the ability to utilize AI effectively.

Having attended Tamagawa Academy since kindergarten myself, this annual memorial service in June holds a deeply personal and special meaning for me. It brings back vivid memories of attending the farewell ceremonies for Nobu-sensei and Kuniyoshi-sensei as a young kindergarten student—memories that remain clear and continuous to this day.

Ms. Terasawa.



Grade 6 Rinkangakko Presentation & Homeroom Meeting



Mr. Shimizu: We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the many parents who attended; thanks to your participation, the meeting was held in a warm atmosphere from the start to the end. During the Rinkangakko briefing, we shared details regarding the schedule and belongings, as well as the expenses and precautions regarding social media (SNS) usage among Grade 6 students.

In the Homeroom Parent Meeting, we shared updates on how the students are as a homeroom, current challenges, and upcoming schedules. Parents also had the opportunity to consult with one another about life in the IB program and any topics of mutual interest.

Based on what was discussed, we will give our absolute best to prepare for Rinkangakko while ensuring that everyone follows the established rules.

M.O. (G6): Today, I would like to share my thoughts about the presentation for the Rinkangakko.

At first, when I heard that the class leaders had to present in front of the students' parents to explain the school trip, I felt excited but afraid at the same time. I felt a lot of pressure because my parents and my friends' parents were going to see me, and I wanted to do a good job. So, I decided to try my best to practice. For one week, I talked with my fellow class leader, S, and we both agreed that we were nervous about the big day. Talking with her made me feel like I wasn't alone and that all the pressure wasn't just on me.

The day before the presentation, I practiced by reading my paragraphs in front of my mom. She gave me a lot of great advice, such as speaking slowly, clearly, and staying calm. She also taught me how to read some kanji that I didn't know. That night, I went to sleep early so I could wake up refreshed. Surprisingly, I wasn't that afraid that day, probably because I knew I was supported by my friends and family.

Finally, the day arrived. When I entered the auditorium, F was already practicing. He asked me to join him so we could go through it together. Soon, S, Y, and a JP class leader joined us, and the five of us practiced as a team.

When the actual performance began, I happened to be the very first speaker. All the parents were looking right at me! However, I tried to imagine it was just another practice run, focusing on speaking just like I had with my mom and friends.

After the presentation, we were all exhausted. We played on our computers and played card games for two hours while waiting for the parents' meeting to finish. When my parents finally came out, I was praised by both them and my friends' parents. It was a wonderful experience, and I am very grateful to the teachers who chose us to present!

Extra Note: When I first arrived at school, the main doors were locked. I called my mom, and she brilliantly suggested I try the office door. It was open! My mom really saved the day.



Service as Action and Canada trip briefing

On the 13th of June 2026, the IB Division hosted the IB MYP Service as Action Parents' Workshop. This workshop provided parents with valuable information about IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) service learning.

The session was led by Mr. Linga, with Japanese translation by Ms. Kitamura, and a presentation of a service project by A. At the beginning of the workshop, Mr. Furnival shared the purpose and significance of Service as Action in students' IB educational journey.

Service as Action encourages students to apply the knowledge they acquire in class to real-life situations. This acquired knowledge helps students design activities that make meaningful contributions to their communities. Students undergo a cycle of investigating, planning, taking action, reflecting, and demonstrating. This cycle helps students identify needs within the community. Service experiences may take the form of direct service, indirect service, research, or advocacy.

Service provides opportunities for students to learn about their personal strengths and weaknesses, face new challenges, and collaborate with other students and community members throughout their service experiences. In addition, these service experiences enable students to further develop their IB Learner Profile attributes, as well as embody the IB Mission Statement: "to become inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help create a better and more peaceful world."

Parents play a vital role in supporting their child's service journey in the MYP. We encourage parents to discuss community issues with their child and think of possible service projects that could help address these problems. Parents are also encouraged to celebrate their child's efforts and achievements.

To all parents, thank you for your continued support.

A.I.: This experience helped my confidence grow a lot because I was able to explain my Service as Action successfully in front of a large audience, the grade 6 parents. Before the presentation, I felt very nervous since it was a bigger audience (including online) than I expected. However, I prepared the slides and scripts in detail, spoke clearly, and adjusted the presentation speed by looking at the audience's response, which enabled me to achieve what I planned to explain to them.

I hope to have further opportunities to make a presentation and/or a speech for much larger audiences in order to gain more confidence.



In the afternoon, we held the first Grade 8 Canada Trip parent meeting. Mr. Furnival opened the meeting with a greeting in Japanese. Next, Mr. Maoate provided an overview of the trip, showing photos of the Tamagawa Nanaimo Campus (the venue for the IB Summit) and Aspengrove School, where our students will attend classes and experience homestays. Afterwards, Takahashi-sensei explained the required paperwork, and a JTB representative detailed the travel logistics. Thank you to all parents and guardians for your cooperation in completing and submitting the documents.

We are very excited to go to Canada with the Grade 8 students in October and we hope the students are too!!



Battling both fierce competitors and the heavy winds of a typhoon, Y.H. recently proved that true determination knows no bad weather. Fresh off a new personal best in the hurdles at the Tokyo Metropolitan Championships, she shares her journey of practicing in the rain, overcoming mid-race obstacles, and her ambitious sights set on the All-Japan Championships.

What event did you take part in?

The tournament I took part in was called "全日本中学校通信陸上競技東京都大会" All-Japan Junior High School Track and Field Tokyo Metropolitan Championships in English. I was able to participate in this because I was 6th place in the regional tournament before.

How did you prepare for the event?

I participated in my club activities every day as possible, but when there were no clubs, I went to a field close to my home to practice hurdles.

Because the event was on the day of the typhoon and was very rainy, I had to prepare many things and also had to practice running in the wind and rain.

How did you feel about getting a personal best?

I was happy that I was able to update a personal best even though the tournament conditions were not good. However, I bumped my leg slightly on the 8 hurdle (8 out of 10) which made me slow down. There is another tournament next month called "第65回東京都中学校総合体育大会陸上競技大会 兼 第79回東京都中学校陸上競技選手権大会" which is the 65th Tokyo Metropolitan Junior High School Comprehensive Sports Festival Track and Field Meet and the 79th Tokyo Metropolitan Junior High School Track and Field Championships. This will be a similar tournament as the one I participated on June 28th, so I would like to update my personal best again, and run under 16 seconds.



What advice do you want to give to someone who wants to start the hurdles?

Don't be scared to run while jumping over hurdles. The thing that is important is to have your own rhythm while running and maintain the speed until the end.

What dreams do you have for the hurdles?

I would like to go to "全日本中学校 陸上競技選手権大会" All-Japan Junior High School Track and Field Championships which is a really big tournament. To achieve this, I have to run under 14.5 seconds. So, I will focus on running in 15 seconds during this year!



International Trade Challenge 2026

Over spring break, Soai-sensei shared details about the International Trade Challenge (ITC) which were passed along to a few of our top researchers, including E.I.: she jumped at the chance, teamed up with a friend from another school, and joined the prestigious competition.

After competing in the intense Japan Final last Sunday, the results are officially in—and they are spectacular:

E walked away with second place in the entire country!



The journey to the finals was no small feat. Out of 108 schools participating nationwide, only the top 8 elite teams were selected to present at the National Final. Partnering with a talented teammate from H High School, E delivered a masterful business presentation that wowed the panel of judges and secured a podium finish.

The Winning Idea: Revolutionizing Vietnam's Warehouses.

This year's challenge tasked students with a complex real-world problem: designing a market entry strategy for drones in Vietnam's e-commerce sector.

Next Stop: Singapore!

By placing in the top three, the team has officially qualified to represent Japan at the International ITC Finals in Singapore, taking place from August 16th to August 20th! In recognition of their incredible achievement, FedEx will be fully covering all of their travel expenses for the global competition.

"I wanted to share this result and express my sincere gratitude for the school's continued support," E shared. "I will continue preparing hard for the international competition in Singapore!"

The entire school community is immensely proud of this phenomenal display of research, grit, and innovation. Please join us in congratulating our global-bound finalist and wishing them the absolute best of luck as they take on the world this August!

E's team didn't just scratch the surface; they dug deep into international policy and market pain points. Through rigorous research, they discovered a brand-new 2024 Vietnamese law requiring warehouses to conduct strict safety checks to prevent hazards.

Connecting the dots, they designed a brilliant Drone-as-a-Service (DaaS) business model. Their proposal utilized warehouse drones to automatically detect fire hazards, score risk levels on a digital dashboard, and instantly generate the required legal compliance reports. To make their business ironclad, they even pitched a partnership with insurance companies to help lower insurance payouts. From complex financial projections and market sizing to marketing strategies and timelines, the pitch was a masterclass in entrepreneurship.



Where did you grow up?

Kerala, India (Southern part of India)

What inspired you to become a teacher?

I was inspired to become a teacher because my dad was a professor of Chemistry and my mom was a primary school teacher.

What subject do you teach and why do you love it?

Economics, and I love this subject as it gives me a rigorous understanding of how the world works. TOK - I am so into it, as it makes me think about different perspectives on many dimensions of life.

What advice do you have for students on how to do well in your subject?

Look around you, and you will find Economics in everything that you do. Apply those to the theories that you learn in class. Real-world examples are the best friend of a student who scores well in Economics.

What's the best thing about working at Tamagawa?

Awesome community - Brilliant, helpful and caring: The school operates under a philosophy that emphasises holistic development, focusing on "Truth, Kindness, Beauty, Sacredness, Health, and Wealth" (Zenjin).

What's your favourite thing about our students?

Tamagawa students are active, free thinkers. I am impressed by their warmth and mutual trust.

What's your favourite school event?

I love the International Day and the Pegasus Festival the most.

What made you want to teach in Japan?

Japan is unique, with rich cultural immersion and a distinctive lifestyle.

What do you like most about Japan?

The diverse culinary experience and the picturesque natural beauty of Japan

What is the biggest difference between Japan and your home country?

Japan has a strong civic sense, and public safety, punctuality, and responsibility are high. However, there is a work-life switch-off in India.

Which IB Learner Profile trait do you value most, and why?

Inquirer. By observing the world, you will learn to be a part of the ever-evolving knowledge.

How do you encourage a global mindset in your classroom?

Economics is a beautiful subject that has unlimited scope for lifelong learning. Hence, we discuss daily news and the world with an open mind, eliciting student discussion.

What other countries have you lived in? Please tell us about an experience you had there.

I have taught in the Maldives, India, China, and Japan. In the Maldives, I worked with A-level students at a school that operated on a shift system due to limited space. Malé, the tiny capital covering just 8.3 square kilometres, felt like a small world—surrounded by shimmering beaches and soft white sands, I often taught with the sea before me, watching ships drift by. Later, I moved to Hiroshima to teach IB programs—a peaceful, beautiful place. I loved weekends by the Ota River and wandering along Hiroshima’s historic Hondori Street. Then, I spent eight years in Shanghai as an IBDP Coordinator and Economics teacher, exploring Chinese cuisine and travelling between cities. Afterwards, I went to India, but when the pandemic hit, I was put under a COVID lockdown. At that point, I began teaching online with Tamagawa K12 IB for a while before moving to Tokyo.

Tell us a surprising fact about yourself.

At the age of 15, I miraculously escaped from a train accident - in which the train fell into a river.

What’s your favourite food?

Idlis and Sambar (A breakfast in Kerala)

What’s your favourite place in Japan?

Hiroshima

What’s your favourite movie?

English Vinglish

What’s your favourite book?

"There's No Free Lunch: 250 Economic Truths"

What’s your favourite music artist or band?

Michael Jackson

What’s your favourite school memory?

The moment I stepped into the Fuji class of 2022 in September, after teaching them online for almost a year, and the warm hugs I received.

What’s your favourite part of the school day?

Singing the Sora Takaku Nojiha Harukeshi in the Homeroom

What’s your favourite life lesson?

Never stop learning.

What’s your favourite way to learn something new?

Observe... Think... Read...

