

Message from the Head of School...



A warm welcome back to school from all of us at The Awty International School, Houston. If you are new to the city or to our school, may I offer you an extra special welcome to our friendly international community here at Awty.

Over the summer the campus has been very busy with many new faculty members and students arriving from all over the world. A full list of all our new colleagues is included later in this edition of the *eCommuniqué*. When we bade fond farewells at the end of term in June, our school enrollment was at our maximum of 1,180 students. As we begin this year, we have been able to maintain enrollment numbers to our maximum capacity. Many grades are wait-listed and others are closed completely for 2007-2008. Indeed we have already received a considerable number of applications for entry to the school in August 2008! This represents a great vote of confidence in the quality of education on offer at Awty. On your behalf I pay tribute to my professional colleagues in the classroom who continue to provide the key to the success of the school and of our students.

In the same vein, I also want to pass on excellent news about our IB and Bac results this summer. Very clearly this is one of our best performances as a school, since Awty first asked its students to sit the examinations of the International Baccalaureate in 1987 and mirrored almost exactly our performance in 2006. Of our 59 full IB Diploma candidates, 56 passed; the highest individual score by an Awty student being 41 points. Twenty-two students attained the coveted Bilingual Diploma; the average pass mark was 33 points. For a school which requires all our Grade 12 international section students to take the full diploma, this was a very pleasing achievement and I congratulate all students, colleagues (and parents!) who had a part to play in this remarkable success.

As far as the French Baccalaureat is concerned, our students were awarded a total of 5 Mentions Assez Bien, 4 Mentions Bien. All 12 Terminale students passed (100% pass rate for the past six years) and all students in the 9th Grade Brevet passed their examination successfully. Again, I offer my admiration and congratulations to all colleagues and students concerned. The Proviseur has further details on our performance in the Bac in his section. A full list of the university destinations of the Class of 2007 is included in this edition of the *eCommuniqué*. Well done to all concerned.

On a related matter, The Awty International School will host an International University Fair here at school on Sunday, September 23, 2007, at which more than 50 universities from the United States and Europe will be represented. This is the first time the school has organized such an event and we are excited about this joint collaboration with the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the Texas IB Schools Organization (TIBS). For more details, see our website or contact Mrs. Day, Director of College Counseling.

The campus itself is looking primed and ready for the new school year. Mr. Davis and the maintenance personnel have done a magnificent job once again over the summer vacation. Remember that during the school day from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., parents will need to display their Awty car tags, in order gain entrance. Visitors should check in with our security staff at the

gate. When picking up MS/US students at 2:50 p.m. from the main car park, please try not to arrive before 2:30 p.m. **When parking on campus, if all of the visitor spaces are taken, parents should then park next door at the Edward's Cinema complex. Please do not park in the reserved spaces—these are assigned to staff and faculty.** Parents may be interested to know that we have increased our security staff over summer to four full-time officers and have installed a further three closed circuit cameras around campus for added assurance. With the new telephone system, we have also installed the capability of campus-wide paging, for use during weather alerts or other situations.

All parents should have received a copy of our 2007-2012 Strategic Plan, which is also available on our website. The board, faculty, staff and I are very pleased with the outcome of last year's collaboration within the entire community which has produced this road map for the next five-year period at Awty. The Strategic Planning Committee of the board will be reporting back to parents in the first half of the school year regarding progress made on the implementation of the plan.



As I write, we are working to complete the northern fence along Awty School Lane, by the current soccer pitch. This should be finished by early September. The work on our new stadium, albeit somewhat affected by the rain in July, is progressing well, as you will see if you have a look at the site from North Post Oak Lane. You can follow the construction on our website, under Athletics, where a photo montage is updated at regular intervals. Completion expected after Christmas.

2007-2008 is also the year in which we undertake our Self Study for our accreditation by the Council of International Schools (CIS) and by the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS). This process began with the surveys sent to parents in May 2007 and ends in October 2008 with our Team Visit. In the meantime, the hard work of relooking at, examining and assessing our performance in all areas of school operation must be completed.

As many of you will know, we said goodbye for the final time to two long-time and well-loved Awty teachers who sadly passed away due to illness during the month of June. Mr. J. Fred Duckett and Mrs. Claudia Lopez. The memorial services for J. Fred and Claudia were full of fond and happy memories of both colleagues and were attended by many former and current Awty students, friends, family and faculty. This was a measure of the regard in which they were held by those they taught and worked with over many years at the school. As a school, we shall not forget the contributions made by J. Fred and Claudia to their students as individuals and to the school and the community it continues to serve.

And so, as 2007-2008 begins, the faculty, staff and I are delighted to be back at school. We are all looking forward to working with our students and parents in the Awty community and are ready for the challenges and triumphs of the new school year.

Welcome back everyone.

Dr David Watson
Head of School