THE DOMINICAN STARS

The Official Newsletter of Dominican International School Kaohsiung

YEAR I, ISSUE 1
1ST SEMESTER, SY 2025-26

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE:
DISK ACHIEVES FULL WASC ACCREDITATION

The Dominican International School Kaohsiung (DISK) has reached a significant milestone in its journey toward educational excellence. On July 2, 2025, the school proudly received full accreditation from the Accrediting Commission for Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ACS WASC), covering all grade levels from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12. This achievement reflects the school's dedication to high-quality education and commitment to continuous improvement.

Our focus on multicultural understanding, global citizenship, and ongoing growth ensures that every student receives a well rounded, forward thinking education. Through this approach, students develop not only academically but also personally, becoming responsible and compassionate individuals who are prepared to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

WASC accreditation supports this mission by validating the strength and coherence of our programs, curriculum, and student support systems, providing a safe, welcoming learning environment grounded in Catholic identity and guided by our D'OP STARS core values: Spiritual, Truthful, Active, Responsible, and Studious.

Our faculty and staff actively participate in ongoing professional development, exploring new instructional approaches and best practices to support student learning better.

With our CIS membership and WASC accreditation, DISK demonstrates a clear commitment to maintaining high standards and continuous progress. This recognition inspires the entire school team to keep our programs dynamic, effective, and aligned with our long term goals.



WASC Visiting Committee members join the DISK family—including the Leadership Team, Steering Committee, teachers, students, and Volunteer Involved Parents (VIPs)—for a commemorative photo.
Committee Members (3rd Row): Chairperson **Stephanie Hanamura** *(6th from left)*, **René MacQuillin** *(5th from left)*, and **Anthony Paul Calado** *(7th from left)*.
DISK Administration (3rd Row): Commission on Education Chairperson **Sr. Esperanza Seguban, OP** *(7th from right)*; Principal **Sr. Eva Gamotin, OP** *(6th from right)*; Vice-Principal **Sr. Socorro Teofilo, OP** *(3rd from left)*; Treasurer **Sr. Evelyn Quidoles, OP** *(4th from left)*; and Volunteer Involved Parents (VIP) President **Ms. Sunny Liu** *(4th from right)*.

What's inside?

International Student Exchange ..... p. 2
University Fair ..... p. 2
WASC Visiting Committee ..... p. 3
Character Development ..... p. 4
Student Voices ..... p. 5
Christmas Concert ..... p. 8

Fully Accredited by WASC
ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS

Follow us:
No. 107, Chung Hua 1st Road, Gushan District, Kaohsiung City, 804, Taiwan, ROC
+886 (07) 552-3989
www.disk.kh.edu.tw

INSPIRING FUTURE LEADERS:
University Fair and Global Insights

by: Mr. Francis Ray Subong, RGC

Our first University Fair on September 11, 2025, marked a milestone in guiding students toward their higher education goals. With lively presentations and one on one conversations with representatives from twelve U.S. universities, including Centre College, Penn State University, Colby College, The Ohio State University, Allegheny College, Columbia College Chicago, Loyola University Maryland, Marshall University, The New School, University of New Hampshire, and Drexel University. Students explored diverse academic programs, scholarship options, and admission requirements.

Families also benefited from an informative session on college preparation, equipping them with practical strategies for navigating the application process. The event was made possible through the support of WREN Tours, university admission officers, our counseling team, faculty, staff, and the enthusiasm of our students.

Throughout the semester, students engaged with international admission officers from institutions such as Nagoya University of Commerce and Business (Japan), Rutgers University, Indiana University Bloomington, Stevens Institute of Technology, Foothill + De Anza Community College (USA), University of British Columbia (Canada), and Imperial College London (UK). These sessions provided valuable insights into global university pathways, scholarship opportunities, and tailored advice for making informed decisions.





STUDENT VOICE: International Exchange Program

by: Hunter Wang (Grade 9)





My one and a half month journey in New Zealand was one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. It was my first time traveling and studying alone, and I discovered so much about myself along the way. I attended St Andrew's College, a school with a deep sense of history and tradition. Wearing a uniform with over a century of heritage made me feel like I was truly part of something special.

The school environment pushed me out of my comfort zone in the best possible ways. I tried activities I never imagined I would do, such as hiking, camping, track, and even ziplining. Each experience challenged me, but they also made me more confident and adventurous

The students at St Andrew's were incredibly kind, athletic, and full of energy. They encouraged me, included me, and helped me feel like I belonged. These friendships became a big part of why my time in New Zealand was so unforgettable. The classes at St Andrew's also taught me a lot. I appreciated how the school focused on a balanced, hands on education. Courses like engineering, food technology, and woodwork allowed me to learn practical skills I had never tried before. It made me realize that learning can be much more than textbooks; it can be creative, challenging, and fun.

WASC VISITING COMMITTEE:
DISK'S COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

by: Dr. Joan Sandoval

The DISK proudly sent Dr. Sandoval to serve on the WASC Visiting Committee for Hsinchu International Academy in Taiwan and Atherton International School in Korea. This experience not only deepened Dr. Sandoval's understanding of high quality, student centered education but also demonstrated DISK's leadership in advancing global accreditation standards.

Both schools showcased strong leadership, innovative teaching, and a dedication to global citizenship values that are central to DISK's mission. Their integration of technology, experiential learning, and focus on continuous professional development and data driven decision making offer valuable lessons for our school. Cultivating a culture of faculty growth and leveraging assessment data can further enhance our instructional quality and student success.







BANGKOK, THAILAND

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION:
EARCOS 2025 Conference

by: Ms. Jeana Liu & Ms. Joanne Lee

Sr. Eva Gamotin, OP, Ms. Jeana Liu, and Ms. Joanne Lee recently attended the 55th Annual EARCOS Leadership Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, under the theme "Future-Visible. "At the conference, they connected with leaders from international schools around the world and participated in workshops and seminars focused on instructional support, student progress monitoring, and leadership system enhancements. Returning with fresh perspectives and practical strategies from keynote speakers and peer educators, they are energized to implement innovative ideas at DISK. Their insights will help strengthen our programs, improve daily operations, and address the unique challenges we face, supporting the ongoing growth of our school community.

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor & Coordinator: Ms. Dania Scarlett Aragon

Faculty Contributors: Fr. Prudencio Garcia, OP, Dr. Joan Sandoval, Mr. Francis Ray Subong, Mr. Aidan Labadie, Sr. Mariana Baretto, OP, Ms. Rubie Carnice, Ms. Ana Diaz, Mr. Jeffry Lin, Ms. Jeana Liu, Ms. Joanne Lee, Ms. Brittany Wang, Ms. Grace Lin

Student Contributors: Hunter Wang, Ian Goh, Veronica Cheng

Layout: Mr. Jimlen Saint Santos, Mr. Francis Ray Subong
Photos: Dr. Alphonse Xavier

"We finished on time because of everyone's cooperation and understanding. Without teamwork, we wouldn't have made it... I learned the value of cooperation and what it means to be a good member of a community." – Veronica, G11

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND PERSONAL GROWTH

by: Fr. Prudencio Garcia, OP

Guided by a rich tradition of faith and service, students are supported in developing strong character, compassion, forgiveness, gratitude, and a commitment to helping others. Rooted in timeless values, the community fosters intellectual growth, integrity, and social responsibility, setting a standard that distinguishes this educational experience from others.

Graduates are not only academically prepared for global success but also equipped to lead with compassion and integrity. Spiritual activities are woven into daily school life

- **Daily Prayer:** Each day begins with prayer, where students come together as a community to reflect, give thanks, and seek guidance. This daily spiritual practice helps students center themselves before embarking on their academic and personal journeys.

- **Masses and Liturgical Celebrations:** Throughout the year, students participate in school wide masses, celebrating key moments in the church calendar, such as Christmas, Easter, and the Feast of St. Dominic. These celebrations offer students a chance to reflect on their faith, express gratitude for the blessings they have received.

- **Spiritual Retreats:** The Dominican Sisters and Fathers organize spiritual retreats for students, offering them an opportunity for introspection, prayer, and growth. These retreats allow students to step away from their everyday routines, connect with their spirituality, and strengthen their relationship with God and others. Through these





experiences, students gain a deeper understanding of their purpose and their role in the world.

- **Campus Ministry:** A Unique Foundation for Character and Faith: The School distinguishes itself among international schools with its God centered education, deeply rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ. While many schools focus primarily on academics, DISK intentionally integrates spiritual formation at every level from Christian Living courses in elementary and middle school to Religious Studies in high school. Our students develop as collaborative, knowledgeable communicators, guided by universal and Christian values such as love, trust, and respect. They are encouraged to be responsible stewards of the environment and to deepen their awareness of the world. The school's approach invites students from all backgrounds to deepen their personal relationship with God, draw inspiration from Jesus' example of love and service, and cultivate strong ethical decision making skills.

- **Role Models of Service and Compassion:** Students are encouraged to participate in service projects throughout the year, where they can help those less fortunate and engage in acts of kindness. Whether it's visiting orphanages, assisting in local community centers, or participating in environmental clean up efforts, our students learn firsthand the value of serving others and making a positive impact in the world.

BULLYING PREVENTION AND CHILD PROTECTION: Building a Community of Care

by: Sr. Mariana Baretto, OP

We believe every child deserves to feel safe, valued, and respected. Our annual Bullying Prevention and Child Protection Awareness Week, themed "Take the Lead, Be a Hero," was a vibrant reminder of the positive impact each of us can have in fostering kindness, empathy, and respect. We proactively build a culture where students and staff stand up for one another and take pride in making our community a safe and supportive space. Our teachers and staff are trained to recognize and respond to bullying, ensuring every child's well-being is prioritized. Through interactive workshops and open discussions, students are empowered to be heroes in their own right speaking up, seeking help, and supporting their peers. We encourage parents and the wider community to join us in this mission, fostering a collaborative environment where everyone plays a part in protecting and uplifting our children. Together, we are shaping a school culture where care, trust, and respect are not just values, but lived experiences for every student.



INTERNATIONAL DAY- OCTOBER 31ST, 2025

by: Ian Goh (Grade 8)

On International Day, it was a beautiful and unique day at school. The purpose of this event was to deepen our understanding of different cultures from around the world and to learn how to adapt to them. I proudly wore traditional Malay clothing to represent my heritage. Throughout the day, I witnessed many examples of kindness and cooperation. Students volunteered to help a teacher decorate the stage with various national flags, and I also noticed teachers and students working together to prepare the cultural booths. Many students participated with enthusiasm, demonstrating responsibility while still enjoying the experience.









COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY FAIR & VISITS

by: Veronica Cheng (Grade 11)

Over the past few months, our school hosted its own College and University Fair, giving students a valuable opportunity to explore their futures. Universities from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Asia participated, sharing insights on everything from admission requirements to campus life. As a junior in high school, I especially appreciated speaking directly with admission officers, who provided practical advice on application strategies, personal essays, and standardized test expectations. These conversations helped me gain a clearer understanding of my goals and interests, and what I want to pursue in the future. I believe the fair also encouraged underclassmen to start thinking about their futures as early as middle school. In addition to the main event, some representatives hosted Q&A sessions, allowing us to discuss portfolios, extracurricular involvement, and financial aid. We learned about various research programs, internship pathways, and study-abroad options, with opportunities for students exploring engineering, arts, business, or liberal arts programs. Students left the fair more informed and motivated. The college fair is not only essential for our future but also an exciting experience.





"We separated the tasks to make the angel's wings faster. I learned the importance of teamwork." – Ludvik Lin, G9

Cultural Exchange at Jiuzhennan Hanbing Pastry Factory

by: Mr. Aidan Labadie

Our recent trip to Jiuzhennan Hanbing Pastry Factory in Kaohsiung offered middle and high school students a hands on link between cultural history and pastry making. Traveling together by bus fostered cross grade community. A guided museum tour showcased historical artifacts and traditional techniques, sparking thoughtful student questions. Activity stations balanced demos with participation, experimenting with magic sand, molds, and a pineapple cake workshop where students crafted take home pastries. Lunch and free time boosted morale, while a final stamping activity created personalized souvenir cards. This smooth, educational outing blended academics with collaboration and joy.



BOOK FAIR AND LITERATURE DAY: A Thanksgiving Triumph

by: Ms. Ana Diaz

November 28th marked a memorable fusion of Book Fair, Literature Day, and Thanksgiving on the last Thursday of the month, filled with engaging activities and delightful surprises.

The day began with a Thanksgiving Mass, expressing gratitude for blessings received and those to come. Students showcased handmade costumes of their chosen literary characters, presenting them to classmates and homeroom teachers. Caves Bookstore's Book Fair followed, offering an inspiring array of books. The pinnacle was a generous outdoor picnic lunch, hosted by VIP parents for students and staff.



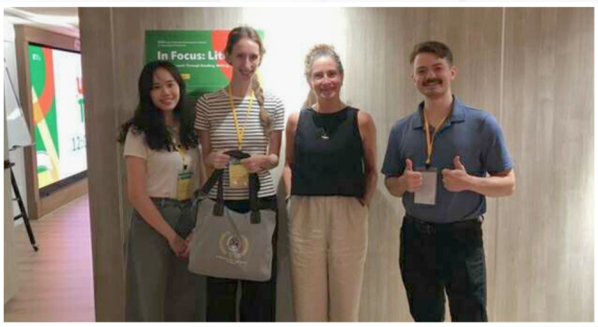




CAVES PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

by: Ms. Britany Mae Wang

We had the chance to attend the CAVES literacy workshop entitled In Focus: Literacy Shaping Growth through Reading, Writing, and PBL last November 16, 2025, at Taichung City. The event covered the topics of early literacy for kids learning to read, ways to improve writing skills, and project based learning. It felt so good to be in a room full of other educators who are just as passionate about teaching kids and genuinely want to give their students the best possible learning experience. I've already started using what I learned, and it's been awesome watching my students make real progress.



"It feels good working together." – Leonardo, G9

GROWING TOGETHER: DISK's Professional Development Journey

by: Ms. Grace Lin

Supporting the continuous growth of our educators is a cornerstone of our school culture. Our Professional Development Day on November 28, 2025, highlighted this commitment, bringing staff together to strengthen Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), curriculum innovation, and collaborative practice.

Teachers engaged in meaningful discussions about our schoolwide action plan, exploring how SEL connects with our long term vision. Ms. Johnson's workshop on the Second Step program equipped staff with practical, hands on strategies, sparking enthusiasm and curiosity across departments.

In the afternoon, PLC groups deepened collaboration, setting norms and choosing topics to enhance instruction. New teachers participated in ATLAS navigation training, ensuring consistency and excellence in curriculum documentation. Their feedback and ideas have already shaped our upcoming January 5–6 PD sessions.

The commitment to continuous learning empowers our educators to thrive, ensuring that every student benefits from inspired, up to date teaching. Through these initiatives, we reaffirm our promise to provide a dynamic, supportive environment where professional growth is not just encouraged, it's celebrated.





NATIVITY BLESSING

by: Ms. Rubie Carnice

On December 2, 2025, DISK's annual Nativity Scene display and blessing ceremony brought our community together, led by Fr. Prudencio Garcia, OP.

This year, we wove it into an experiential lesson for our PLC-PD, blending SEL, Art, Religious Studies, and community values. Middle and high school students crafted angel wings as props, turning the event into a hands on culmination. For the first time, the after school blessing included their active participation, reading prayers, and witnessing the display they built.







"No challenges encountered. Everything went smoothly because each one had a role to finish the project." – Timothy, G9

Mr. Duncan's Journey at Dominican

by: Mr. Duncan Koontz

This past quarter, Dominican International School Kaohsiung had the pleasure of hosting a practicum teacher from Moreland University. After a season of immersive learning and collaboration, he shares a heartfelt message of appreciation, particularly highlighting his time with the Grade 7:

"I have had the distinct privilege of serving as a practicum teacher at DISK this past quarter, an experience that has been nothing short of transformative. I extend my deepest gratitude to the administration, teachers, and support staff for their unwavering kindness and encouragement; you made this school feel like a home.

To my Grade 7 students: thank you for your energy, curiosity, and willingness to learn you have made every lesson memorable. Finally, I must offer a special thank you to my mentor, Mr. Campbell.

Under his expert guidance, I have gained invaluable pedagogical insights and practical skills that have not only strengthened my teaching practice but also solidified my confidence to lead a classroom of my own."



A World of Joy Celebrating the First Christmas, Global Tradition and Shared Talents

by: Ms. Dania Scarlett Aragon

It has been an absolute joy to witness our Christmas Concert come to life this year. Seeing teachers, students, and parents support one another through rehearsals created a collaborative spirit that is the heartbeat of DISK. On December 18, that hard work paid off as our students took to the stage at the Novitiate Convent, showcasing incredible talent in song, dance, and drama.

From the spiritual depth of From the Stable to the STARS to the vibrant energy of the international dances, the students performed with confidence and grace. The night was more than just a show; it was a celebration of our Catholic ethos and community unity, capped off by a festive dinner and a visit from Santa. Nights like these filled with shared smiles and pure talent remind me exactly why I love teaching here.







ENROLLMENT ON-GOING

PRE-K TO GRADE 12

SY 2026-27

"We struggled with materials and time, but we became resourceful. It reminded me that Christmas is about giving our time and effort." – Dominic, G9

We are an SAT Center

CollegeBoard SAT

SAT Center Code: 96968

AP CollegeBoard

CEEB Code: 694840

Follow us:

We are a CIS Member School

Fully Accredited by WASC ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS