



SAIGON SOUTH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Program of Studies
2018 - 2019

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Program of Studies
2018 - 2019

Written Curriculum
Update: August 2018

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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Our Elementary School Vision:

Our innovative educational program is a model for international elementary schools.

This Program of Study helps all members of the SSIS community understand the Elementary School written curriculum. It is used as an initial document for orienting all new elementary faculty members to our curriculum. It is provided to parents to help them understand what their children will be learning throughout elementary school. It is also available for all other members of our school community, including students, staff, administrators, and guests, to have an initial understanding of our elementary curriculum.

The Program of Study is organized into three parts:

Background to the Written Curriculum: This clarifies how the Elementary School, operating within the larger SSIS context, engages students in an innovative, exciting, and challenging educational experience. It describes how the curriculum is organized and the the SSIS Foundational Documents.

Overview of Program of Study: This describes the design of the elementary curriculum, an overview of the academic standards, and co-curricular experiences.

Grade Level Articulation: This describes the integrated units of study that constitute the basic structure of the curriculum for each grade level.

We believe that this Program of Study describes a world-class education that is innovative, engaging, and challenging. In order to deliver this education, we select and train highly qualified and experienced international educators from around the world. Working in partnership with parents, we can maximize every child's elementary education experience.

Respectfully,



Daniel J. Keller, PhD
Elementary Principal

Part 1:

BACKGROUND TO THE WRITTEN CURRICULUM

ORGANIZING OUR CURRICULUM

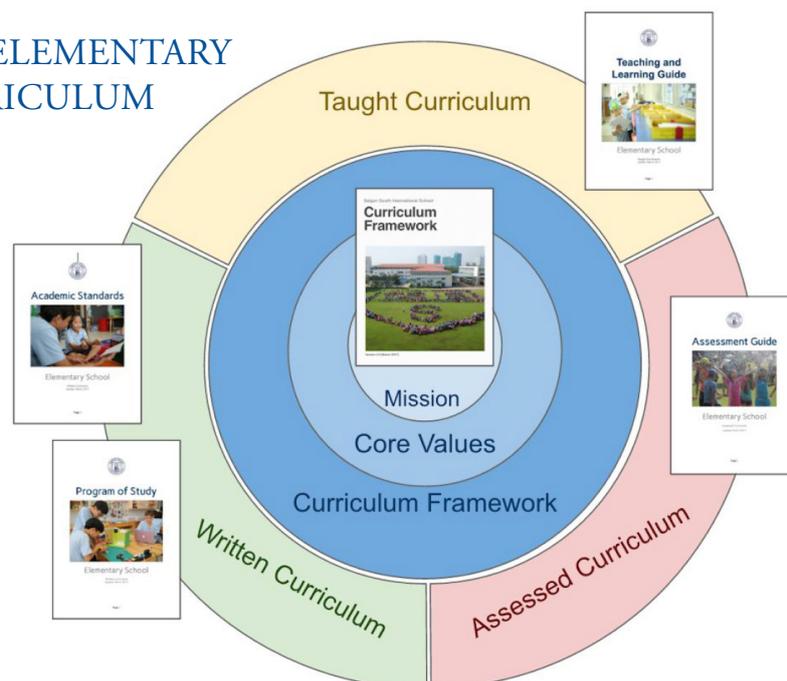
The elementary curriculum is carefully aligned with the foundational documents of Saigon South International School. The SSIS school-wide Foundational Documents guide all work in the school, across all grade levels, all departments, all subjects, and all activities.

The curriculum may be organized in the following way:

1. SSIS Foundational Documents
 - a. SSIS Mission
 - b. SSIS Core Values
 - c. SSIS Curriculum Framework
2. Elementary Curriculum
 - a. Written Curriculum
 - b. Taught Curriculum
 - c. Assessed Curriculum

The SSIS Curriculum Framework defines the terms used in the SSIS Mission and Core Values and takes pedagogical positions and identifies implications for the written, taught and assessed curriculum. Elementary documents have been developed to provide specific guidance about how the written, taught and assessed curriculum will be implemented within the elementary school. The diagram below illustrates these relationships.

THE ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM



SSIS FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

The Program Overview begins with our Foundational Documents, the basis for the educational program for all SSIS students. These foundational documents include the SSIS Mission Statement, Core Values, and Curriculum Framework.

Our school's mission provides all members of our school community with the compelling purpose for the education we provide at Saigon South International School. Our Core Values emphasize those values that we hold most dearly which we aim to instill in every member of our school community. Our Curriculum Framework identifies the key educational concepts found in our Core Values.

MISSION

SSIS is a college preparatory school committed to the intellectual and personal development of each student in preparation for a purposeful life as a global citizen.

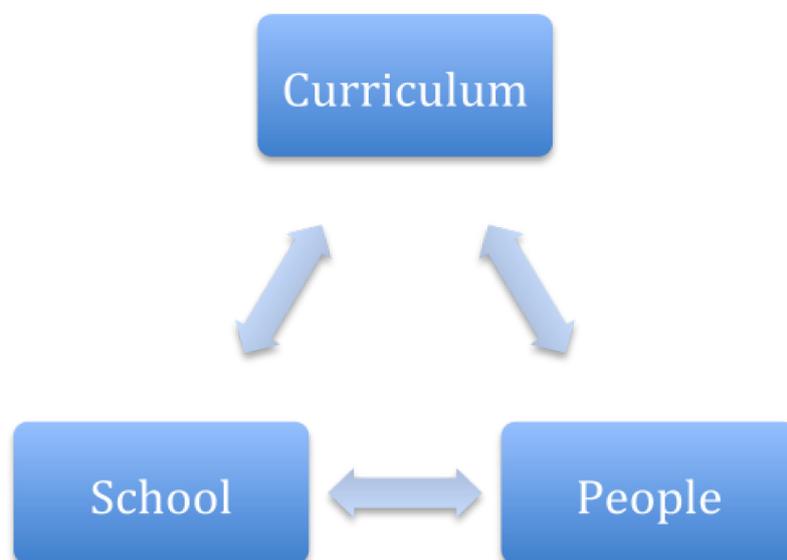
CORE VALUES

SSIS Believes In and Promotes:

	ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE	A challenging academic program, based on American standards, that teaches the student how to think, to learn, to problem solve, and to work individually and in teams while acquiring a foundational knowledge base of the world.
	SENSE OF SELF	A community atmosphere in which each student can gain a sense of who he or she is in the world; to develop self-confidence, strong character, convictions, leadership abilities, grace, courage, the desire to be a life-long learner, and the commitment to achieve excellence in all he or she does.
	BALANCE IN LIFE	An academic program that promotes an appreciation for all of life and seeks to balance the sciences with the humanities; academics with the arts; mental wholeness with physical, social, and spiritual wholeness; and future career with family relationships.
	DEDICATED SERVICE	A view that looks beyond oneself to the assets and needs of the surrounding community and the world and finds fulfillment in unlocking potential in the service of mankind. The model SSIS graduate will demonstrate a caring attitude, be environmentally aware, and persevere for the good of the community.
	RESPECT FOR ALL	A perspective that each individual is a person of worth.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

While a school's mission, vision and other foundational documents are important, they are often not clear enough to specifically address the school's 'position' on various curriculum issues. This is the role of a curriculum framework; a guide to all curriculum work within the school. A successful curriculum helps build connections in three ways: connecting the curriculum, connecting all parts of the school, and connecting the people within a school community.



CONNECTING THE CURRICULUM

If curriculum is considered the entire set of experiences related to school, then schools can consider that the curriculum is delivered in many different ways: formal, informal, hidden, null, etc. While we value structuring the curriculum by grade levels and subject areas, this can sometimes have the unintended effect of dividing, or disintegrating, the curriculum. A curriculum framework looks at various curricular topics and states the school's overall position. It is informed by the school's foundational documents (vision, mission, etc.). It provides detailed positions on a wide range of curricular issues. It guides all curriculum decisions.

CONNECTING THE SCHOOL

If the school is considered the entire set of programs and facilities related to the school, then schools can work connect across grade levels, programs, departments, and all structures we use to organize ourselves. While we value these structures, they sometimes have the unintended effect of dividing the school.

CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY

A curriculum may also be delivered by a variety of people: teachers, teaching assistants, other students, parents, secretaries, principals, etc. While we value clear roles and responsibilities, this clarity sometimes has the unintended effect of dividing the community.

When the curriculum, school, and people are connected, the overall design of learning experiences for students increases alignment and effectiveness.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WRITTEN CURRICULUM

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE	
Key Concept	Written Curriculum (What is learned?)
Academic Standards	We commit to developing a quality curriculum that combines the best characteristics of American, international, and independent schools to maximize student learning.
Challenging Academic Program	We commit to developing a quality curriculum that emphasizes the differentiation, self-directed assignments, and gradual release of responsibility to maximize student learning.
Critical thinking	We commit to critical thinking as the core of our challenging academic program and explicitly integrating it into each unit of study.
Self-management	We commit to developing a quality curriculum that integrates learning experiences that help develop self-management skills.
Collaboration	We commit to developing a quality curriculum that integrate learning experiences that help develop collaboration skills.
Foundational knowledge	We commit to developing a quality curriculum that are based on foundational knowledge.
SENSE OF SELF	
Key Concept	Written Curriculum
Character traits	We commit to developing a quality curriculum that are intentionally designed to develop learner character traits. Grace, Tenacity, Self-concept, Resilience.
Lifelong Learning	We commit to intentionally designing inspiring curriculum in all aspects of school culture and interactions.
Leadership	We commit to developing a quality curriculum that is intentionally designed to develop leadership skills.
Sense of community	We commit to intentionally designing experiences that develop sense of community and a network of care, including quality pastoral care curriculum.
RESPECT FOR ALL	
Key Concept	Written Curriculum
Respect	We commit to quality curriculum that are intentionally designed to develop a safe, positive, nurturing environment to promote a respectful culture.
Diversity	We commit to quality curriculum that is intentionally designed to value diversity.
BALANCE IN LIFE	
Key Concept	Written Curriculum (What is learned?)
Holistic education	We commit to developing a quality curriculum that emphasizes transformative, trans-disciplinary, inquiry-based, community focused, and academically balanced learning experiences.
Wellness	e commit to developing a quality curriculum that supports the balancing of mental, physical, social and spiritual wholeness.
Balanced Obligations	We commit to developing a quality curriculum that supports the balancing of personal and school obligations.

DEDICATED SERVICE

Key Concept	Written Curriculum
Community Service	We commit to developing a quality curriculum that is intentionally designed to encourage and support community service.
Service Learning	We commit to developing a quality curriculum that authentically integrates service-learning experiences in each grade level.
Social and Environmental Responsibility	We commit to developing a quality curriculum that authentically integrates social and environmental responsibility. We commit to developing a quality school-wide social and environmental responsibility action plan.



Part 2: OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM OF STUDY

INTRODUCTION

We must ensure that our written curriculum supports our school's commitment to the intellectual and personal development of each student. Our commitment toward academic excellence within the structure of a challenging standards-referenced system emphasizes not only foundational knowledge and critical thinking, but also self-management and collaboration. Our commitment toward personal development emphasizes that students develop sense of self, respect, balance in life, and a commitment to dedicated service. This commitment to intellectual and personal development ensures that we prepare our students for a purposeful life as a global citizen.

If we aim to promote the intellectual and personal development of every student, then our program of study must include, as well as go beyond, traditional approaches to the written curriculum. Going beyond traditional written curriculum practices means that we must consider questions such as:

- What do we mean by an elementary curriculum?
- What is our approach to an elementary curriculum?
- How should we design our elementary curriculum?
- How are academic standards organized and integrated into Super Units?
- How are co-curricular experiences integrated into the overall curriculum?

ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM

Our elementary curriculum is informed by our approach to elementary education, our curriculum design, our academic subjects, and our co-curricular experiences. Our approach to elementary education establishes principles of learning focused on child development, research-based learning theories, and selected approaches to teaching and learning. Our curricular design focuses on integrated units of study, known as Super Units. These Super Units are trans-disciplinary in nature, are organized into themes, emphasize specific approaches to thinking, implement project-based learning, and utilize Super Unit Walls. Our co-curricular experiences emphasize a strong character education/pastoral care program, as well as additional aspects of the elementary program.



APPROACH TO ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Our approach to elementary education builds on the ideas set forth in our school's foundational documents. Elementary education plays a unique role within a larger school system. The principles of elementary learning inform how we develop our written, taught, and assessed curriculum.

At SSIS, our foundational documents commit us to providing a holistic education and commit to developing a quality curriculum that emphasizes transformative, trans-disciplinary, inquiry-based, community focused, and academically balanced learning experiences. With a focus on wellness, we commit to developing a quality curriculum that supports the balancing of mental, physical, social and spiritual wholeness. Our program supports the balancing of personal and school obligations. With a focus on making our world a better place, we commit to developing a quality curriculum that is intentionally designed to encourage and support community service, authentically integrates service-learning experiences in each grade level, and that models social and environmental responsibility.

The approach of our elementary program builds on the ideas set forth in our school's foundational documents. Elementary education plays a unique role within a larger school system as we introduce students to the process of schooling. We ensure an environment that is safe, secure, inviting and emotionally nurturing. Our caring community is respectful of various cultures and values diversity. We recognize that children enter this world with curiosity, which we protect and nurture. We intentionally educate the whole child - academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. As we nurture each child to their full potential, we develop character traits and skills such as self management, collaboration, and leadership. Ultimately, our goal is create an enriching program that encourages lifelong learning.

Our principles of learning consider our students' stages of development, research-based learning theories, and selected approaches to teaching and learning. Since elementary students go through multiple stages of development, our program intentionally designs age-appropriate learning experiences. Based in the learning theories of Constructivism and Constructionism, our program promotes active learning in a stimulating and multi-sensory environment. We implement approaches to teaching and learning that emphasize project-based learning in a structured-inquiry approach.

Our principles of learning inform how our written curriculum focuses on academic standards, critical thinking, and unit design. Our standards-references system is based on clearly articulated content and performance standards. Critical thinking is at the core of our curriculum as we focus on developing concepts and skills while acquiring foundational knowledge. We utilize the academic standards and critical thinking skills in our backwards design of curricular units, emphasizing enduring understandings and essential questions.

Our principles of learning inform how our taught curriculum is implemented in the school. We emphasize the use of the gradual release of responsibility instructional model for all subjects. Differentiation and self-directed assignments are regular components of our balanced instructional practices.

Our principles of learning inform how our assessed curriculum is implemented. With a focus on a balanced assessment program, we implement formal and informal assessments for formative and summative purposes. We use classroom-based, school-based, and internationally standardized assessment tools and strategies.

ELEMENTARY CURRICULAR DESIGN

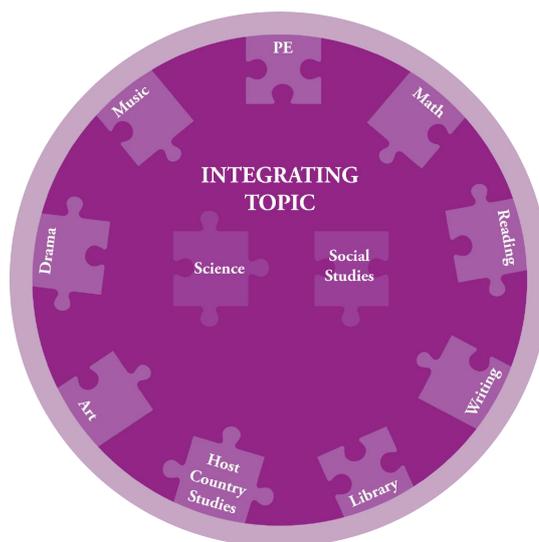
The SSIS Elementary Curricular Design builds upon the work of the Foundational Documents and clarifies how those documents are operationalized within the Elementary School program. The Elementary Curriculum Components include the elementary integrated units of study, subject disciplines, and co-curricular experiences.

The integrated units of study serve as the primary structure for organizing the elementary curriculum in a way that makes the learning rigorous and relevant to students. The subject disciplines provides a structure for organizing our standards of academic excellence. The co-curricular experiences enhance the learning experience for all students.

SUPER UNITS

Integrated units of study, known as “Super Units,” are the primary structure for organizing the elementary curriculum. The purpose of subject integration is to help students see connections between academic subjects. Super Units are organized into four different themes that are academically rigorous and relevant to our world today. Each theme has a specific thinking focus that is explicitly taught. Super Units include specific project requirements that engage students in powerful learning experiences.

Super Units focus on the connections between multiple subjects, known as trans-disciplinary integration. The academic subjects in the elementary curriculum include English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Arts (visual art, drama, music), Vietnamese, Library and Physical Education. Homeroom teachers teach English, Math, Science and Social Studies. For most grades, specialist teachers teach Visual Art, Drama, Music, Vietnamese, Library and Physical Education. The integrating topic of every Super Unit is based in Science and Social Studies content; these subjects are rarely taught as stand-alone subjects. The content for all other subjects is integrated into Super Units as appropriate.



SUPER UNIT UNDERSTANDINGS

Super Units are organized into four different understandings that are academically rigorous and relevant to our world today. These understandings ensure a breadth across the curriculum each year, as well as complexity that can be revisited in greater depth, and from a different perspective, each year. The title for every understanding describes an important understanding and applying that understanding to relevant challenges in the world beyond school.

The four Super Unit understandings are:

- Understanding Ourselves: Achieving my Goals in Life
- Understanding Others: Serving the Needs of Humanity
- Understanding our Environment: Sharing the Resources of our Planet
- Understanding our World: Managing the Complexity of Systems

A description for every understanding emphasizes that the Super Unit will: a) use a structured inquiry approach that helps learners develop a certain understanding, b) challenge learners to apply that understanding and take specific actions, c) empower learners to solve real-world problems. The Super Unit understanding titles are descriptions are found in the table below.

THINKING FOCUS

Each understanding for each Super Unit has a corresponding thinking focus. This approach to thinking ensures that thinking remains at the core of all learning experiences.

The four thinking foci are:

- Reflective thinking
- Service design thinking
- Sustainability thinking
- Systems thinking

These thinking foci are explicitly taught during each Super Unit. Each thinking focus helps students learn specific thinking skills that are a) relevant across multiple academic subjects, b) relevant to the world outside of school, and c) relevant to current issues in the world. Further description of these thinking foci are found in the table below. To learn more about thinking foci, go to [this link](#).

Title of theme:	Understanding Ourselves: Achieving my Goals in Life	Understanding Others: Serving the Needs of Humanity	Understanding our Environment: Sharing the Resources of our Planet	Understanding our World: Managing the Complexity of Systems
Description of theme:	A structured inquiry into helping the learner understand themselves. Learners will establish and achieve personal goals in their life. Learners will be empowered to independently give direction to their life.	A structured inquiry into helping the learner understand other people. Learners will identify a local need of others and plan action. Learners will be empowered to authentically provide service to others.	A structured inquiry into helping the learner understand our natural environment. Learners will share the resources of our planet. Learners will be empowered to improve the environmental sustainability of humans.	A structured inquiry into helping the learner understand the world around them. Learners will manage the complex systems of our world. Learners will be empowered to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the systems in our world.
Approach to thinking:	Reflective thinking helps learners develop higher-order thinking skills by prompting learners to a) relate new knowledge to prior understanding, b) think in both abstract and conceptual terms, c) apply specific strategies in novel tasks, and d) understand their own thinking and learning strategies.	Service design thinking is the process of planning services according to the needs of customers and the competences/capabilities of service providers, so that the service is user-friendly, competitive and relevant to the customers, while being sustainable for the service provider. Service design thinking uses methods and tools derived from different disciplines in order to inform changes to an existing service or creation of new services	Sustainability thinking is the process of considering how our daily choices affect our environment. Sustainable science is the study of sustainable development and environmental science. Sustainability is the endurance of systems and processes. The organizing principle for sustainability is sustainable development, which includes the four interconnected domains: ecology, economics, politics and culture.	Systems thinking is the process of understanding how those things which may be regarded as systems, influence one another within a complete entity, or larger system. In nature, systems thinking examples include ecosystems in which various elements such as air, water, movement, plants, and animals work together to survive or perish. In organizations, systems consist of people, structures, and processes that work together to make an organization “healthy” or “unhealthy”.

UNIT REQUIREMENTS

Super Units include specific requirements that engage students in powerful learning experiences. These requirements are organized into two categories:

- Project-based learning requirements
- Organizational requirements.

The Project-based learning (PBL) requirements include essential project design elements and teaching practices. The table below provides further information about the PBL requirements:

Requirement	Details	Graphic
Essential project design elements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Key knowledge, understanding, & Success Skills 2. Challenging problem or question 3. Sustained inquiry 4. Authenticity 5. Student voice and Choice 6. Reflection 7. Critique and Revision 8. Public Product 	

The organizational requirements include:

- Super Unit descriptors
- Pre-unit communication
- Start of unit sequence
- During unit process
- End of unit components
- Post-unit reflections

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Every grade level has specific academic standards organized into domains (for early learning years) or subjects (for grades 1-5). Each domain or subject is further divided into specific strands. Each strand has specific academic standards. Below is an overview of this general organizational structure for our academic standards. For a complete listing specific academic standards for each grade, please see the document [Academic Standards](#).



EARLY LEARNING YEARS: DOMAINS

The early learning years include the grades of Early Childhood 3, Early Childhood 4, and Kindergarten. The domains provide a structure for organizing our standards of development. The table below provides further detail for each of the learning domains.

Physical Development and Motor Skills	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Health and Well-Being2. Use of Senses3. Motor Skills
Social and Emotional Development	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Developing a Sense of Self2. Self-Regulation3. Developing a sense of self with others
Approaches to Play and Learning	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Initiative and Exploration2. Attentiveness and Persistence3. Play
Communication, Language and Literacy	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Receptive Language2. Expressive Language3. Early Reading4. Early Writing
Cognitive Development and General Knowledge	
<i>Math</i>	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Number and Quantity2. Measurement and Comparison3. Geometry and Spatial Thinking4. Mathematical Reasoning
<i>Science</i>	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Scientific Skills and Methods2. Earth Science3. Living Things4. Physical Science5. Interaction and Environment
<i>Social Studies</i>	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Family2. People and Community3. History and Events
<i>The Arts</i>	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Creative Movement and Dance2. Visual Arts3. Music4. Drama
<i>Critical Thinking</i>	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Thinking Skills2. Problem Solve

Vietnamese	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading 2. Writing 3. Language 4. Culture
Library	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge 2. Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situation and create new knowledge. 3. Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of a community of learners. 4. Pursue personal and aesthetic growth.

GRADES 1-5: ACADEMIC SUBJECTS

The subject disciplines provides a structure for organizing our standards of academic excellence. For each subject, our school has identified content and process strands, written curriculum resources, common instructional strategies, common assessment approaches, and the references for our academic content standards. The table below provides further detail for each academic subject.

English	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading 2. Writing & Presenting 3. Speaking & Listening 4. Language
<i>Written Curriculum</i>	
Standards	SSIS English standards are based on the Common Core State Standards.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General literacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Google Drive Literacy Resources • Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daily Five Resource - Month-by-Month Reader's Workshop Units--Calkins - Phonics Lessons, Fountas & Pinnell • Writing & Presenting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Units of Study, Calkins - Writing Nonfiction, Hoyt - Mechanically Inclined & Everyday Editing, Anderson - Handwriting Without Tears • Speaking & Listening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speaking and Listening Map of Development, First Steps - Speaking and Listening Resource Book, First Steps • Language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Words Their Way - Word Journeys

Mathematics	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Counting and cardinality (EC & K only) 2. Operations and algebraic thinking 3. Number and operations in base ten 4. Number and operations with fractions (grades 3- 5 only) 5. Measurement and Data 6. Geometry
<i>Written Curriculum</i>	
Standards	SSIS Mathematics standards are based on the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics.
Resources	Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathematics Units of Study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Georgia Framework for Mathematics • Conceptual mathematics and rich problem solving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number Talks by Sherry Parrish - About Teaching Mathematics by Marilyn Burns - Teaching Student Centered Mathematics by John Van De Walle • Resources for practice, support, and assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NZ Math Assessments: Gloss and IKAN - Howard County - Engage NY
Science	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Earth sciences 2. Physical sciences 3. Life sciences 4. Engineering and design 5. Health
<i>Written Curriculum</i>	
Standards	SSIS Science standards are based, in part, upon Next Generation Science Standards and Ontario Health Curriculum.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-options Science System (FOSS) kits • Next Generation Science resources • Ophea (on-line Health resource from Ontario Ministry of Education)
Social Studies	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time, Continuity & Change 2. Connections & Conflict 3. People, Places & Environment 4. Culture 5. Society & Identity 6. Governance & Citizenship 7. Production, Distribution & Consumption 8. Science, Technology & Society
<i>Written Curriculum</i>	
Standards	SIS Social Studies standards are based, in part, upon the AERO standards developed by the U.S. State Department's Office of Overseas Schools and the Overseas Schools Advisory Council.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSIS Library • Elementary Book Room

Fine Arts	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visual Arts 2. Music 3. Drama 4. Dance
<i>Written Curriculum</i>	
Standards	SSIS Fine Arts standards are adapted from on the National Core Arts Standards.
Resources	Music-Deleware standards
Physical Education	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Motor skills and movement patterns 2. Movement concepts and tactics 3. Physical activity 4. Physical fitness 5. Personal and social behavior 6. Health, enjoyment and social interaction
<i>Written Curriculum</i>	
Standards	SSIS Physical Education standards are based, in part, on the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) standards.
Resources	Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE).
Vietnamese	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading 2. Writing 3. Language 4. Culture
<i>Written Curriculum</i>	
Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vietnam Ministry of Education • Vietnam Department of Education and Training
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vietnam Ministry of Education • Vietnam Department of Education and Training
Library	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge 2. Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowlege to new situations and create new knowledge. 3. Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as a community of learners. 4. Pursue personal and aesthetic growth
<i>Written Curriculum</i>	
Standards	American Association of School Librarians
Resources	American Association School Librarians

Technology	
Strands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic operations and concepts 2. Social, ethical and human issues 3. Technology productivity tools 4. Technology communication tools 5. Technology research tools 6. Technology problem-solving and decision-making tools
<i>Written Curriculum</i>	
Standards	SSIS Technology standards are based, in part, on International Standards for Technology Education (ISTE).
Resources	Our elementary has a full-time Instructional Coach for Technology, as well as an on-site technician. Our program moves from shared technology in the younger grades, to a 1:1 iPad program in grade 3, to a 1:1 Macbook program in grades 4 and 5.



CO-CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES

PEARL PROGRAM

Asian folklore and mythology tells of the story of The Dragon and the Pearl. In this story, and many others, dragons are often depicted chasing or holding pearls. The pearl has often been associated with character traits such as Spiritual energy, Wisdom, Prosperity, Power, Enlightenment, Safety, Strong relationships, Purity, Generosity, Integrity and Loyalty.

At SSIS, we aim to teach, support, and encourage the development of our students' skills relating to personal, emotional, and relational learning; prioritizing their attainment as the "ultimate treasure" and essential for their future success. PEARL is an acronym for Personal, Emotional, And Relational Learning.

The PEARL program serves as a fully integrated approach for developing strong character, social and emotional skills, leadership, and wellness, within all members of the SSIS community. For our students, the PEARL program intends to contribute to "the intellectual and personal development of each student in preparation for a purposeful life as a global citizen", as stated in our school's mission.

The objectives of the PEARL program are guided by key concepts within our Core Values. As our students develop, we strive to nurture the following qualities:

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE	
Key Concept	Definition
Self- management	The set of attitudes, behaviors, and skills that empower individuals to independently complete tasks and take an active role in monitoring and reinforcing their own behavior and learning.
Collaboration	The set of attitudes, behaviors, and skills that empower individuals to move beyond the limits of one's own personal experience and take an active role in monitoring and reinforcing the group's work to achieve a shared goal.
SENSE OF SELF	
Key Concept	Definition
Character	The mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual (e.g. tenacity, resilience, grace).
Lifelong Learning	The ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons.
Leadership	The ability to lead in three levels: personal, private and public.
Sense of community	A feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a sense of trust that members wish to help meet each other's needs.

RESPECT FOR ALL

Key Concept	Definition
Respect	A positive feeling of admiration or deference for a person or other entity (such as a nation or a religion), and also specific actions and conduct representative of that esteem.
Diversity	Diversity is a concept that encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences.

BALANCE IN LIFE

Key Concept	Definition
Wellness	The state or condition of being in good physical and mental health.
Balanced Obligations	The ability to balance personal and school obligations.

DEDICATED SERVICE

Key Concept	Definition
Community Service	Volunteer work, done for free, intended to be for the common good to benefit a person, group, community, or institution. It may be part of an organized scheme or designed as an ad hoc basis by an individual.

APPROACH TO PEARL IN ELEMENTARY

Our approach to the personal, emotional, and social development of students within the elementary school is based on our school's foundational documents, as well as research-based approaches relating to teaching, learning, and healthy child development.

At SSIS, we believe that, in order to succeed within a challenging academic program and beyond the classroom, our students must be equipped with self-management skills, such as emotional control, flexibility, perseverance, and resilience. We understand that, without these skills, children are less likely to reach their intellectual potential. We recognize that the ability to collaborate; to create and work toward shared goals within groups and teams is a critical component shared by society's most successful entrepreneurs and global citizens. In response, we commit to supporting the development of effective communication, empathy, respect for others, community service, and social problem solving.

The elementary PEARL program seeks to promote a healthy self-concept in all students at SSIS. We intentionally assist students to plan and create goals, while celebrating mistakes as opportunities for learning and viewing failure as a road to growth. Our approach emphasizes frequent opportunities to reflect on progress, balance time and obligations, and organize resources. We believe these are essential components of leadership and lifelong learning. We encourage the pursuit of personal interests and passions within our inquiry-based curriculum and understand that, through a student-centred approach, we are instilling a culture of belonging and a sense of community, where all students' strengths are acknowledged and valued.

While many social and emotional learning programs are implemented using a solely stand-alone teaching model, the scope of skills and practices within the PEARL program require an intentional combination of authentic integration within the elementary curriculum, in addition to explicit, stand-alone teaching. The benefits of utilizing a multi-modal framework of program delivery for our students include more frequent awareness of skills, greater application and transfer of skills in "real world" learning and social environments, greater exposure and retention of concepts, and reinforcement of skill development through the guidance of a community of educators.

Building Character

There is growing awareness and acceptance in educational programs that character development is just as important to students' academic achievement and overall wellness as their intellectual ability. A partnership between scientific researchers and both public and private school educators ensures that we are utilizing best practice approaches with ongoing research and evidence in personal, emotional, and social development.

[Character Lab](#) is a non-profit organization led by world-class scientists and world-class educators with the aims of discovering strategies and practices that build character, translating scientific insights into educational tools, creating next-generation measures for research and self-reflection, and highlighting the importance of character development in EC-12 education. Recent research ([Park et al., 2017](#)) support a model comprising of three factors - strengths of mind (intellectual character), strengths of heart (interpersonal character), and strengths of will (intrapersonal character):

“Across studies, positive peer relations were most consistently predicted by interpersonal character, class participation by intellectual character, and report card grades by intrapersonal character. Collectively, our findings support a tripartite taxonomy of character in the school context.” Park et al. (2017)

Cluster	Character Strength (Character Lab)	Core Value Key Concepts (SSIS)
Strengths of Mind	Curiosity - a strong desire to learn or know something—a search for information for its own sake.	Lifelong Learning
	Zest - also referred to as vitality - an approach to life that is filled with excitement and energy.	Leadership (Public), Collaboration, Wellness
	Self Control - controlling one's own responses so they align with short- and long-term goals.	Self-management, Leadership (Personal), Balanced Obligations
Strengths of Heart	Gratitude - the appreciation for the benefits we receive from others, and the desire to reciprocate.	Respect, Diversity, Sense of Community, Character - Grace, Community Service
	Purpose - being driven by something larger than yourself.	Collaboration, Character - Tenacity, Lifelong Learning, Community Service
	Social/Emotional Intelligence - understanding feelings and using them to inform actions.	Collaboration, Character - Grace, Resilience, Sense of Community, Respect, Leadership (Private)
	Grit - perseverance and passion for long term goals.	Self-management, Character - Tenacity, Resilience
Strengths of Will	Growth Mindset - understanding that intelligence can be developed.	Self-management, Lifelong Learning
	Optimism - being hopeful about future outcomes combined with the agency to shape that future.	Character - Resilience, Lifelong Learning

Character Strength	Examples of learning
Curiosity	Eagerly exploring new things; asking questions that deepen understanding; taking an active interest in learning
Zest	Actively participating by asking questions or listening closely; Showing enthusiasm through smiles or excited comments; Approaching new situations with excitement and energy; Invigorating others around you
Self Control - school and work	Coming to the office or class with everything needed to get to work rather than being unprepared; Remembering and following directions rather than needing to be reminded; Getting to work right away rather than procrastinating; Paying attention rather than getting distracted
Self Control - interpersonal	Remaining calm, even when criticized or otherwise provoked, rather than losing your temper; Allowing others to speak rather than interrupting; Being polite to all, even when stressed or angry
Gratitude	Recognizing what other people do for you; Showing appreciation for opportunities; Expressing appreciation by saying thank you or doing nice things for people
Purpose	Being oriented toward a stated future goal; Being able to articulate an interest and the “why” behind the interest
Social/ Emotional Intelligence	Finding solutions during conflicts with others; Demonstrating respect for the feelings of others; Adapting to different social situations
Grit	Finishing what you begin; Staying committed to your goals; Working hard even after experiencing failure or when you feel like quitting; Sticking with a project or activity for more than a few weeks
Growth Mindset	Taking on new challenges with optimism; Being able to talk about what you learned
Optimism	Believing that effort will improve your future; When bad things happen, thinking about what you could do to avoid similar bad outcomes in the future; Staying motivated, even when things don’t go well



ADDITIONAL ASPECTS OF THE ELEMENTARY CURRICULAR PROGRAM

Below are some additional aspects of the elementary curriculum.

Highlight	Description
Assemblies	We have regular monthly assemblies that bring the elementary school community together for celebrations, performances, and ceremonies.
After School Activities (ASA)	An extensive after-school activities program provides opportunities for students to demonstrate balance in life and participate in a wide range of service activities, clubs, sports, art, and music.
Athletics	The elementary athletics program gives older elementary students opportunities to participate in sports teams that represent our school in competitions with various athletic leagues.
Field trips	Field trips are a valued component of the curriculum and are encouraged to be an important learning experience during each Super Unit.
Guest speakers	Guest speakers are a valued component of the curriculum and are encouraged to be an important learning experience during each Super Unit.
Recess playground	Students have multiple breaks each day where they have opportunities to play outside with friends on age-appropriate equipment.
MakerSpace	Our MakerSpace has tools and supplies for students to tinker, create, and invent. The MakerSpace is open during recess breaks, and is also used as an important part of the formal curriculum. Our school has a full-time Instructional Coach for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and a STEM Assistant to help classrooms effectively utilize the MakerSpace as an important component of the curriculum.



Part 3: GRADE LEVEL ARTICULATION

INTRODUCTION

This section describes information about the written curriculum for each grade. For each grade level, explanations are provided about the Super Units and individual academic subject areas.

Students in every grade level experience four Super Units each year. Information provided includes:

- Super Unit title
- Theme
- Thinking focus
- Driving question
- Enduring understanding
- Essential questions
- Description of project
- Unit highlights

The information provided is based on recent designs of the Super Units. However, Super Units are in a continuous state of refinement and information communicated from classroom teachers should be considered the most current and accurate information for your individual child's education.



EARLY CHILDHOOD

Super Unit #1	A Joyful Life
Theme	Understanding Ourselves: Achieving Our Goals in Life
Thinking Focus	Reflective thinking
Driving Question	How can we relate to others and our environment?
Enduring Understanding	Relationships help us learn.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are relationships? • Who and what do I interact with? • What makes me joyful? • How do I play with other children?
Description of project	Students produce examples of learning (such as art work) that they can share with parents. Teachers document student work as they interacted with the environment
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Parent interviews and student staggered start. Getting to know your teachers and your classroom. • Guest Speakers: Adults visitors who will share what brings them joy. School Psychologist who will share healthy ways to express emotion. • Super Unit Celebration: Teachers will invite parents into 'play' with their children. Students will share their special places, likes, dislikes, interests, and learning environment.
Super Unit #2	Animal Friends
Theme	Understanding Others: Serving the Needs of Humanity
Thinking Focus	Service Design Thinking
Driving Question	How can we help animals?
Enduring Understanding	We help animals by learning about and respecting them.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the basic needs of an animal? (air, water, food, shelter (protection from predators and environment)) • How do animals try to stay safe? (shelter, camouflage, playing dead, trickery, physical features, chemical features, warning signals, evasion) • How should people treat other animals?
Description of project	Displays of how students learned about and respect animals.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Children will visit EC classrooms to learn about a different kind of animal. • Field Trip(s): Pet store and Middle School science class • Guest Speaker(s): Veterinarian and MS students • Super Unit Celebration: Parents will join us in the EC pod/playground/ classrooms after the music concert on Thursday, December 14. We will celebrate with a potluck and have students show an exhibition of their learning.

Super Unit #3	Plant Life
Theme	Understanding our Environment: Sharing the Resources of our Planet
Thinking Focus	Sustainability Thinking
Driving Question	How are plants important?
Enduring Understanding	Plants are all around us and are important for many reasons.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do plants help animals survive? • How do we use plants everyday? • How do we care for plants?
Description of project	Plant a garden and help it grow.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Trip to Tan My Market • Field Trip(s): Tan My Market, neighborhood walk-about, SSIS garden • Guest Speaker: SSIS Gardener, Mr. Sang • Super Unit Celebration: Celebrate our learning with our buddies.
Super Unit #4	Movement
Theme	Understanding our World: Managing the Complexity of Systems
Thinking Focus	Systems Thinking
Driving Question	How can we show our understanding of movement?
Enduring Understanding	Movement happens in different ways.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What moves? • How does movement happen?
Description of project	A showcase of learning - content and showcase structure determined by students.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Picture walk of movement concepts • Field Trip(s): Movement on Campus walks, Fire Station • Guest Speaker(s): Alison Lockwood-Nguyen, Yoga Joy owner/instructor • Super Unit Celebration: Child directed showcase of learning



KINDERGARTEN

Super Unit #1	Community Life
Theme	Understanding Ourselves: Achieving Our Goals in Life
Thinking Focus	Reflective Thinking
Driving Question	How can we thrive in our communities?
Enduring Understanding	People's relationships with others and the environment have an impact on wellbeing.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes a community? • How do I make good choices? • How are relationships made? • How do I nurture relationships? • Why are relationships important?
Description of project	Students will engage in provocations throughout the unit to help them gain a sense of community. Students will create paper and electronic portfolios of their learning journey.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Teachers will invite parents into 'play' with their children. Students will share their special places, likes, dislikes, interests, and learning environment. • Field Trip: Family Medical Centre- understanding our bodies, how we look after ourselves and how we keep safe. Dentist- learning about oral hygiene and healthy foods. • Guest Speakers: Parent Volunteers invited in to share experiences of well-being and being part of a community. • Super Unit Celebration: Students will invite parents in to come and play with them. Students will share their portfolios and celebrate their learning.
Super Unit #2	Serving Others
Theme	Understanding Others: Serving the Needs of Humanity
Thinking Focus	Service Design Thinking
Driving Question	How can we show appreciation for other people's work?
Enduring Understanding	Showing appreciation impacts communities.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is appreciation? • How do we show appreciation? • How do people work in our community? • Why do we serve others?
Description of project	Students design and implement a community service project to show appreciation for other people's work.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: SSIS Job Tour • Field Trip(s): Greenhouse Pizzeria & Saigon Post Office • Guest Speaker(s): SSIS community members • Super Unit Celebration: Video showcase of project as part of Winter Concert

Super Unit #3	Life Cycles
Theme	Understanding our Environment: Sharing the Resources of our Planet
Thinking Focus	Sustainability Thinking
Driving Question	How can we show an understanding of life cycles?
Enduring Understanding	All living things go through life cycles we can observe.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a life cycle? • How do plants and animals change over their lifetime? • How can we use our senses to gather and record information? • Why do plants and animals reproduce?
Description of project	Students will document the life cycle of a plant, insect or animal.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch • Field Trip(s): SSIS Campus Ecological Tour and Plant nursery • Guest Speaker(s): Ecosystems / SSIS gardeners • Super Unit Celebration
Super Unit #4	Change Over Time
Theme	Understanding our World: Managing the Complexity of Systems
Thinking Focus	Systems Thinking
Driving Question	How can we describe change over time?
Enduring Understanding	The Earth has changed over time.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the earth changed over time? • How has life changed over time? • How is evidence used to understand our world? • How can I communicate my understanding?
Description of project	Students create an interactive museum display to demonstrate their understanding of change over time. They serve as museum curators for visitors.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch • Field Trip(s): PMH local areas and Community Bus Tour • Guest Speaker(s): Local members of our community • Super Unit Celebration: Students will tour members of our community around the Change Over Time Museum.



GRADE 1

Super Unit #1	Target Practice
Theme	Understanding Ourselves: Achieving Our Goals in Life
Thinking Focus	Reflective Thinking
Driving Question	How can we make good goals?
Enduring Understanding	Thinking, doing and rethinking help make good goals.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are goals important? • What makes reaching goals challenging? • What makes reaching goals easier? • Why does thinking about my goal (reflection) help me?
Description of project	Share whole class, group and individual goals with grade 8 buddies. Parents invited to attend.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Rock Climbing Wall Experience • Field Trip(s): Vertical Academy Rock Climbing • Guest Speaker(s): • Super Unit Celebration: Students will share their class goal, small group goal and their individual goal they made with their Grade 8 buddies and parents through their online digital portfolio Seesaw.
Super Unit #2	Fun in the Sun
Theme	Understanding Others: Serving the Needs of Humanity
Thinking Focus	Service Design Thinking
Driving Question	How can we help people live with the sun?
Enduring Understanding	Sunlight has positive and negative effects on people.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is sunlight? • What are the effects of sunlight? (positive and negative) • How do we collect information about weather? • How do people live with the sun now?
Description of project	Students will survey to identify a need related to the sun. They will develop ideas to solve the issues. An issue will be chosen to solve. (example: umbrellas to shade students when working on the patio portion of the MakerSpace) Students will create a persuasive writing piece and oral presentation (video) to present their ideas.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Fun in the sun field activity. • Field Trip(s): Investigate sun protection at a local recreational facility. • Guest Speaker(s): PE teachers and students, gardeners, cleaners, security guards, MakerSpace teacher. • Super Unit Celebration: The prototypes that the children will create will be shared in a presentation to school stakeholders.

Super Unit #3	Campus Rangers
Theme	Understanding our Environment: Sharing the Resources of our Planet
Thinking Focus	Sustainability Thinking
Driving Question	How can we help organisms thrive in Little Dragons Park?
Enduring Understanding	Human choices impact organisms.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is an organism? • What is a habitat? • How can humans impact the habitats of organisms?
Description of project	Help organisms thrive in Little Dragon's Park.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Opening of new Grade 1 Park by elementary principal. • Field Trips: Saigon Zoo and Botanical Gardens • Guest Speaker: Landscape Architect • Super Unit Celebrations: Installation of new elements into the park
Super Unit #4	All Systems Go!
Theme	Understanding our World: Managing the Complexity of Systems
Thinking Focus	Systems Thinking
Driving Question	How can we develop a system that serves the community?
Enduring Understanding	Systems are made of parts working together.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a system? • Why do we need systems? • How do the different parts of a system work together? • What makes a system effective?
Description of project	Students will develop a system that meets human needs by organizing human systems and implementing simple machines and robotics. (Student-run quasi-automated restaurant/cafe for parents, end of year celebration?) Make the system effective and efficient. They will look at the people, structures, tools, and processes that work together to make that system effective.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch: "Assembly Gone Wrong" • Field Trip: Vietopia • Guest Speaker: Food Service Workers from the Phu My Hung Community • Super Unit Celebration: Parents will visit the school to participate in the system the students have developed

GRADE 2

Super Unit #1	Building a Better Me
Theme	Understanding Ourselves: Achieving Our Goals in Life
Thinking Focus	Reflective Thinking
Driving Question	How can we make ourselves more powerful?
Enduring Understanding	My body and mind become more powerful through healthy habits.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are healthy habits? (How can we make a healthy learning environment?) • How do we choose and strengthen healthy habits? (Balance in Life and Sense of Self) • How are our bodies and minds connected? • How can I show I am becoming more powerful?
Description of project	Work with a partner and act it out, make a poster or activity to teach a group of people how you have become more powerful by using both your body and mind AND teach them a healthy habit.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: SSIS Champions: Witnessing senior buddy champions in their field of expertise • Field Trips: Observe SSIS Mathletes and Robotics teams in action (September) • Guest Speaker: SSIS Senior Buddies and a local Dentist (late August/ early September) • Super Unit Celebration: Student presentations to Senior Buddies
Super Unit #2	What's the Matter?
Theme	Understanding Others: Serving the Needs of Humanity
Thinking Focus	Service Design Thinking
Driving Question	How can we build our scientific knowledge to help others understand their world?
Enduring Understanding	The scientific method is used to build knowledge.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is matter and how does it change? • How do we observe, measure, and classify matter? • Why do we use the scientific method? • Who should we help understand our world? -- reword for better clarification • How do we create a clear explanation to share with others?
Description of project	Understand MS student needs for how to best learn a science concept (matter) from a video presentation. Create a Bill Nye-like video Newscast for MS students which answers one of the provocation questions with footage of experiments and using new video techniques like greenscreen, common craft and timelapse/slowmotion.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Students will experience scientific provocations and observe how the scientific method is used to answer a question. Students will observe how one can share their scientific knowledge with others. • Field Trip: At the Binh An Water Treatment Plant students will observe the process of removing solids from liquids. • Guest Speakers: Survey MS Science Teacher and Students to find out how they learn science best. • Super Unit Celebration: Teaching MS Science Students about their learning with a live science demonstration and a how-to video explanation.

Super Unit #3	Smart Consumers
Theme	Understanding our Environment: Sharing the Resources of our Planet
Thinking Focus	Sustainability Thinking
Driving Question	How can we use materials responsibly?
Enduring Understanding	Knowing the lifecycle of materials can inform our choices.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the lifecycle of a material? • What impacts the lifecycle of a material? • What impact do consumer choices have?
Description of project	The students will organize and present a “Consumer Cafe” or faire on how to use materials more responsibly.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: The Smart Consumer Challenge • Field Trips: Waste recycling and management facility and Local Grocery Store • Guest Speaker: Irmi Kreuzer of SHOEfabrik--How can business owners in Vietnam minimize waste and contribute to a healthy environment? • Super Unit Celebration: Student presentations at the Smart Consumer Cafe
Super Unit #4	Celebration!
Theme	Understanding our World: Managing the Complexity of Systems
Thinking Focus	Systems Thinking
Driving Question	How can we host a memorable ceremony to celebrate our senior buddy friendships?
Enduring Understanding	Planning events requires connecting many different systems.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes an event a ceremony? • Why are ceremonies memorable? • What makes a system work well?
Description of project	Create a ceremony that celebrates senior buddy friendships. Use knowledge of their friendships, emotional ceremonies, poetry, paper making, light and sound to create a memorable event. The ceremony focuses on our students managing a system of people, structures, and processes so that the ceremony is efficient and effective.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Assembly “When Systems Don’t Work” • Field Trips: Visiting Senior Buddies in the High School building, and investigating light and sound in the SSIS Auditorium • Guest Speakers: Parents • Super Unit Project and Celebration: Second graders plan, prepare, and perform a ceremony for their Senior Buddies to celebrate the seniors’ time at SSIS, and their friendship with second graders.

GRADE 3

Super Unit #1	Teamwork, Dream Work
Theme	Understanding Ourselves: Achieving My Goals in Life.
Thinking Focus	Reflective Thinking
Driving Question	How can we collaborate to succeed?
Enduring Understanding	Effective interactions help teams succeed.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a team? • What are interactions? • What are effective interactions? • What is reflective thinking? • How can I use reflection to help my team?
Description of project	Throughout the unit, students will be building and reflecting on their collaboration skills. They will use all these skills in a final challenge. Students will pick their teams and be given a challenge to work successfully through. They will be observed those skills.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Team challenge; Students choose teammates; Students reflect upon teamwork/success • Field Trips: The A/O practice; Saigon Heat • Guest Speakers: Saigon Heat • Super Unit Celebration: Showcasing their teamwork skills in front of peers; AO show
Super Unit #2	Kaleidoscope
Theme	Understanding Others: Serving the Needs of Humanity
Thinking Focus	Service Design Thinking
Driving Question	How can we better help others by understanding their perspective?
Enduring Understanding	We are better able to help others when we understand their perspectives.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do different perspectives exist? • Why should we try to understand different perspectives? • How can we help others? • What happens when we help each other? (similar to questions in previous grades.)
Description of project	Think of someone (at school or elsewhere in your life) you know who may need some extra help. Use the design cycle to do primary research, investigating and empathising with this person to find out what you could make that would best meet their needs. Follow through on your plans to create something that helps that person.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: In the shoes of someone at SSIS- Our Learners will have the opportunity to shadow members of our school community for one hour. They will learn about the different perspectives around our campus and also authentically experience the roles and responsibilities of the different members of SSIS. • Field Trip: Artinus 3D Museum • Guest Speaker(s): Visually Impaired Community Member, Former US Military Personnel, HS Service Entrepreneur, Vietnamese Refugee to America • Super Unit Celebration: 3rd Grade Kaleidoscope - exhibition style celebration where students share everything they have done in all classes (specialists included) throughout this unit.

Super Unit #3	Nature Tails
Theme	Understanding our Environment: Sharing the Resources of our Planet
Thinking Focus	Sustainability Thinking
Driving Question	How can we communicate about sustaining biodiversity on the SSIS campus?
Enduring Understanding	Field research can help us to understand and communicate about our environment.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is field research and how do we do it? • How can we communicate new learning? • What is biodiversity and why is it important? • What happens when ecosystems change?
Description of project	Learners will create an individual organism sustainability project to showcase at the Sustainability Snapshot. The project will aim to communicate understanding of biodiversity through the lens of one organism. Students will be able to choose the medium to communicate their new learning with the second grade as the primary audience.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch with Guest Speakers: At the field biology workshop, learners will be introduced to the skills and tools that field biologists use by learning from several experts in our community. • Field Trip: We will take a day trip to Can Gio Mangroves to observe flying foxes, large birds, the mangrove forest, and more. Parent volunteers are welcome on this fun and exciting trip! • Night BioBlitz: After assessing the biodiversity of our campus during the daylight hours, learners and their families will be invited to collect data and observe creatures at night together (parent supervision required). • Super Unit Celebration: Learners will share their inquiry project about organisms, biodiversity, and sustainability.
Super Unit #4	Functional Phu My Hung
Theme	Understanding our World: Managing the Complexity of Systems
Thinking Focus	Systems Thinking
Driving Question	How can we improve the systems in our neighborhood?
Enduring Understanding	Systems are developed to meet the needs of people.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a system? • Why do some systems work well? • Why do some systems fail? • What do communities need to thrive?
Description of project	Learners will use their knowledge of effective and efficient systems to develop solutions (prototype or model) to address problems they identify within their community's systems.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Guest speaker, Gayle Tsien, will talk about the importance of systems in a thriving community and teach us about how Phu My Hung was developed amid challenges with the water in this area. • Field Trip(s): Walk, boat and bus tour day to observe neighbourhood systems (tentative), 1-2 neighbourhood walks to solidify project ideas. • Guest Speaker(s): Gayle Tsien, head of security (tentative), fire department representative (tentative) • Super Unit Celebration: We will celebrate the launch of our collaborative website and view each other's projects in our classrooms. Parents will visit classrooms.

GRADE 4

Super Unit #1	Independent Me
Theme	Understanding Ourselves: Achieving Our Goals in Life
Thinking Focus	Reflective Thinking
Driving Question	How can we make positive choices independently?
Enduring Understanding	Positive choices lead to greater independence.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean to be independent? • What are positive and negative choices? • How can I identify and evaluate external influences? • How do I make positive independent decisions?
Description of project	G4 Talks: Students will deliver stage presentations on various topics related to positive choices in their lives.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Students experience live, professional “Ted Talk-Style” performances that will inspire students to inquire into a topic they are interested in and present it to others. • Field Trip(s): Crescent Mall - making good food choices while buying lunch independently; team building activities. • Guest Speaker(s): Health care professionals (doctors, nurses, nutritionist, physical trainer). • Super Unit Celebration: G4 Talks are a “TED Talk-Style” performance in the auditorium, presented in front of a live studio audience. Students will help plan an on campus sleepover to celebrate their learning and independence!
Super Unit #2	The Heart of Exploring
Theme	Understanding Others: Serving the Needs of Humanity
Thinking Focus	Service Design Thinking
Driving Question	How can we help others while exploring our world?
Enduring Understanding	Exploring our world can lead to helping others.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is exploring? • Why do humans explore? • What impact can exploring have on others? • How can helping others be sustained?
Description of project	Students will explore local service organizations, select a service learning project, and implement. Final presentation to a potential audience of interested people that may be able to help sustain the service.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: “Discovery Week”, exploring different facets of music, physical activities, drama, Vietnam and tourism, explorers throughout time, scientific processes and materials • Field Trip(s): Various Charities • Guest Speaker(s): HS Students, Dr. Norkeliunas • Super Unit Celebration: Exploration Stations

Super Unit #3	Viable Vietnam
Theme	Understanding our Environment: Sharing the Resources of our Planet
Thinking Focus	Sustainability Thinking
Driving Question	How can we teach others about sustainability in Vietnam?
Enduring Understanding	The sustainability of culture is connected to the environment.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is sustainability? • What is culture? • How do geographic features affect cultures? • How are sustainability and culture connected? • What makes a documentary effective?
Description of project	Documentary: Create a documentary on an inquiry question generated by the students to demonstrate: "How can we teach others about sustainability in Vietnam?"
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Vietnamese Cultural Fair • Field Trip(s): Water Puppet Show, Ao Dai Museum, Vietnamese Traditional Medicine Museum, Children's Tree Farm, and Food Stall Event (On Campus). • Guest Speaker(s): Jeff Nesmith on photography and videography, Dave Fox on documentary writing • Super Unit Celebration: Grade 4 Film Festival
Super Unit #4	Thinking Outside the Box
Theme	Understanding our World: Managing the Complexity of Systems
Thinking Focus	Systems Thinking
Driving Question	How can we help our world by improving energy systems?
Enduring Understanding	Solving energy problems requires an understanding of systems and innovative thinking.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do humans harness energy? • What is energy? • Where does energy come from? • What is an efficient energy system? • What is innovation?
Description of project	Students will try to help our world by using innovative thinking to solve energy problems that improve energy systems. They will use their knowledge of energy systems and computer programming to develop a working model (diagrams/ schematic of design), and then prototype. Their project needs to describe efficiencies of transfer and transformation of energy.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Energy loss scenario • Field Trip(s): Caravelle Hotel to look at efficient energy use of a large organization • Guest Speaker(s): Khoa Tran, Environmental Manager, Caravelle Hotel • Super Unit Celebration: G4 Energy Faire

GRADE 5

Super Unit #1	Mission Possible
Theme	Understanding Ourselves: Achieving Our Goals in Life
Thinking Focus	Reflective Thinking
Driving Question	How can we pursue excellence through planning and reflection?
Enduring Understanding	The pursuit of excellence is an intentional effort.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I define excellence? • How do I set a meaningful goal? (reasonable is embedded in unpacking) • What are the elements of an effective plan? • What is the value of reflection?
Description of project	Plan and implement a successful learning expedition.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Future Me Day • Field Trip: Buu Long (risk-taking, self-discovery, goal-setting, and team-building) • Guest Speaker(s): Parents and other community members willing to share their passions and expertise • Super Unit Celebration: Students will present their 20 hour Project to their parents during a student-led conference
Super Unit #2	Water Issue
Theme	Understanding Others: Serving the Needs of Humanity
Thinking Focus	Service Design Thinking
Driving Question	How can we help others meet their basic need for clean drinking water?
Enduring Understanding	The safety and accessibility of drinking water are major concerns throughout the world.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we know water is potable? • How do people access potable water? • How do we explain our ideas effectively? • What are current concerns surrounding clean drinking water?
Description of project	<p>Team project: Students will design and build a water filtration system.</p> <p>Individual project: Students will research and write an expository magazine article on an issue/topic related to clean drinking water.</p> <p>Class publishes a special magazine "Water Issue".</p>
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Simulation of a lack of access to clean drinking water • Field Trip(s): Water Filtration Plant, Water Bottling Plant, "A Long Walk to Water" • Guest Speaker(s): High School students will share their IB water project • Super Unit Celebration: Students will have a publishing party for their class magazines

Super Unit #3	Phoenix Forest
Theme	Understanding our Environment: Sharing the Resources of our Planet
Thinking Focus	Sustainability Thinking
Driving Question	How can we help endangered species recover?
Enduring Understanding	Recovering endangered species requires rehabilitation of their ecosystems.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is an ecosystem like a community? • What are the causes of species endangerment? • How are ecosystems rehabilitated? • How do writers communicate the story of choices and their effects?
Description of project	Contribute to a endangered species recovery program by creating a native plant species nursery. The nursery will be located in the SSIS garden. Students will need to analyze how to turn the SSIS garden into a native plant species nursery so that it helps function as an endangered species recovery center.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: January - EAST Primate Recovery Center representatives will share their project and assist students in Planting of a Seedling of an endangered species critical to the survival of the Pygmy Slow Loris. • Field Trip: Grade 5 students will be going to Cat Tien National Park for three nights, and learning how park rangers help sustain and strengthen this ecosystem. • Guest Speakers: Representative from the EAST Primate Recovery Center at Cat Tien, Mr. Binh • Super Unit Celebration: Student work will be integrated into Learning Journeys at the end of the quarter.
Super Unit #4	Galaxy V
Theme	Understanding our World: Managing the Complexity of Systems
Thinking Focus	Systems Thinking
Driving Question	How can we show how parts interact to form a system?
Enduring Understanding	Systems interact on many different scales.
Essential Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are systems? • How do parts of systems interact? • How do interactions affect a system?
Description of project	The final project (iOS app) showcasing an imaginary solar system (which is part of same Galaxy V), with at least one planet containing a humanoid species. Each individual student makes an iOS app that demonstrates knowledge from all relative science and social studies standards. Project might include photos and video of models (simulations and/or real-world) the students have made of their solar system and planet.
Unit highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Super Unit Launch: Students will be introduced dramatically to their project program through an interactive presentation of Universe Sandbox in the Auditorium. • Field Trip(s): TBA • Guest Speaker(s): Possible Skype interview with a retired NASA engineer • Super Unit Celebration: Students will share their published app that highlights their knowledge of space and app development.

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