



The First International Class Students are Graduating

Principal Yoji Hatano

The mornings and evenings still bite with cold, but the warmth of the sun feels as if spring is coming. With this we welcome the final month of the academic year.

The sixth graders graduating this month entered our school in April 2012 as the first students of the International Class. In 1st grade there were 40 students in one class, but when they advanced to 2nd grade they were the first grade in a long time to be split into two classes. It was quite a surprise in 4th grade when Penny Warner, the author of the "Code Breaker's Club" book series, spoke to these first students of the program with hardly any translation needed. As 6th graders, they are looking forward to the day when they can leave Higashimachi Elementary School.

When talking about this year's 6th graders, I noticed that the words "this grade" are often used; as in, "This grade has a lot of cheerful kids," or "Even the boys and girls get along in this grade." Even though they were split into 2 classes in 2nd grade, they remained keenly aware of themselves as a class. As members of the International Class, these students had opened up a new door for Higashimachi, but they certainly inherited the mindsight that "we are all family" from their upper class members, during a time when this school was so small.

For the past three years, the 6th grade classes have written original songs reflecting on graduation. This year's 6th graders wrote a song called "Rainbow." One verse has the following lyrics.

"Words, attitudes, clothes, likes –
Each of these, and the dreams we hold,
Are wonderful because they're not the same

...

The light you hold, the light I hold,
Everyone take a different color, can't leave anyone out,
So we are the rainbow over tomorrow"

[unofficial translation]

This song conveys the 6th graders' solidarity in remembering their time in the International Class and the friends they made along the way.

The Grade 6 Farewell Assembly will be held on March 2nd. Grades 1 to 5 will show their thanks to the 6th graders by singing songs and giving speeches. For the 6th graders, this will be their final appearance in front of the student body. At that time, they will debut their song "Rainbow." Afterwards, the graduation ceremony will be on the 22nd (Thu). Grade 5 will attend as representatives of the student body. They will engrave in their hearts the splendid image of the 6th graders, the students who obtained solidarity as the first students of the International Class, and inherit the legacy of Higashimachi Elementary School.

Lastly, thank you all for your cooperation and understanding over the past year.

March

| Day | Date | Event | After-school |
|-----|------|--|--------------|
| 1 | Th | Safety lesson, Club Presentations (Ensemble) during morning recess | 4 - 6 |
| 2 | F | G6 Farewell Assembly, P-T Conference (G4,5,6) | X |
| 3 | Sa | Japanese Culture | X |
| 4 | Su | | |
| 5 | M | Club | 4 - 6 |
| 6 | Tu | P-T Conference (G1, 2, 3) | X |
| 7 | W | Emerg. evac. drill, Thank You Ceremony (G6) | X |
| 8 | Th | Student assembly, Area cleaning (G2, 5) | 4 - 6 |
| 9 | F | | 2 - 6 |
| 10 | Sa | | |
| 11 | Su | | |
| 12 | M | | 4 - 6 |
| 13 | Tu | Library Volunteer Story Time (G1, 2) | 3 - 6 |
| 14 | W | | X |
| 15 | Th | Music assembly | 4 - 6 |
| 16 | F | | 2 - 6 |
| 17 | Sa | | |
| 18 | Su | | |
| 19 | M | | 4 - 6 |
| 20 | Tu | Graduation rehearsal, School lunch ends, Cleaning | X |
| 21 | W | Spring Equinox | |
| 22 | Th | Graduation | X |
| 23 | F | Closing Ceremony | X |
| 24 | Sa | | |
| 25 | Su | | |
| 26 | M | Spring Vacation Begins | |
| 27 | Tu | | |
| 28 | W | | |
| 29 | Th | | |
| 30 | F | | |
| 31 | Sa | ※In March there will be an unannounced emergency evacuation. | |

March's Goals

Educational Counselor Hiroki Mine

Let's wrap up the school year.

Yoshida Shoin once penned a statement that said: if one is to write one letter a night, then one will write 360 letters in a year; but if one is lazy for one hour a night, then by the age of 100 they will have lost 3,600 hours.

Even doing something small can turn into a major skill if continued over a period of time; but, if we procrastinate even something minor, then we could lose something major. Yoshida Shoin taught his pupils the importance of daily continuation. It is probably because he valued time and self-evaluation. We too must look back over the year and set new goals about what skills we want to improve.