



## Living in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Principal Yoji Hatano

It is the time of the season when the mornings and evenings are still biting cold but the temperature rises and it feels like spring has arrived. This is also the final month of the school year.

The students graduating this March were first welcomed to this school at the entrance ceremony in April, 2013, when there were 65 students enrolled. There were two classes in grade 1. At that time, I was the vice principal at another elementary school in Minato City, and I remember how surprised I was to see that the number of children, who I thought were so small then, was more than the number of grade 1 students at my own school. When they entered grade 5, they were split into three classes. And now, the day has drawn closer for those 84 six graders and their friends to leave the nest as the last graduating class of the Heisei Era.

From my time with the grade 6 students, one episode in particular comes to mind. Every morning, the class leaders of each class will come to my office and report the day's attendance. When they come, I often ask them about their goal for that day, or their thoughts after some major event, or sometimes I will ask them a math or Japanese question, and they would answer. Among them, one grade 6 boy said his goal for that day was to produce a good work of calligraphy since he thought he was pretty good at it. The girl who had come with him even said he was very talented, and so I mentioned that he could consider a career as a calligrapher. He responded that he thought the job would no longer be available in the future so he was thinking about something different. Regardless of whether or not that job would be around in the future, I was surprised that this grade 6 student thought so far ahead. I realized that now, as artificial intelligence progresses and jobs we thought only humans could do are being replaced by machines and robots, our educational practices must instill onto our students talents and skills that cannot be replaced by artificial intelligence.

On March 4<sup>th</sup> (Mon), grades 1 to 5 will show their gratitude to grade 6 in a farewell assembly. At that time, the grade 6 students will debut their original song, "Message." Then, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> (Fri), grade 5, acting as representatives of the student body, will attend the graduation ceremony, where the splendid figure of the graduating class will be emblazoned in their memory.

Lastly, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude for everyone's support and cooperation over the past year.

## March

Date	Day	Event	After-school
1	F	Safety lesson, Emer. Evac. (smoke tent)	3 – 6
2	Sa	School family play, Japanese culture	X
3	Su		X
4	M	G6 Farewell Assembly, PT conference: pr. 5 (lower grades) pr. 6 (upper grades)	X
5	Tu	Farewell Lunch	3 – 6
6	W	<i>Arigato no Kai</i> (G6)	X
7	Th	Student assembly, Neighborhood cleaning (G2, 5)	4 – 6
8	F		3 – 6
9	Sa		
10	Su		
11	M	Club activities	X
12	Tu		3 – 6
13	W		X
14	Th	Music festival	4 – 6
15	F		3 – 6
16	Sa		
17	Su		
18	M		4 – 6
19	Tu		3 – 6
20	W	Graduation rehearsal (G5, 6), School lunch ends, Cleaning	X
21	Th	Vernal Equinox	
22	F	Graduation Ceremony	X
23	Sa		
24	Su		
25	M	Completion Ceremony	X
26	Tu	Spring holiday begins 春季休業日開始	
27	W		
28	Th	※ There will be an unannounced emergency evacuation drill this month.	
29	F		
30	Sa		
31	Su		

### March Goals

Educational Counselor Kazuhiro Kawai

### Let's Wrap Up the Year

It is already the time to wrap up the school year. Surely you can look back on the year and many different memories.

Are your desks and seats clean? Let's clean everything so we can welcome the new school year with a refreshed feeling.

**Graduation**  
**Grade 6 Class 1 Kenji Kurihara**  
**Grade 6 Class 2 Yuto Nihei**  
**Grade 6 Class 3 Erika Kobayashi**

"Cooperation," grade 6's class goal, is defined as "combining forces towards a common goal." That goal was set with the hope that the students, rich in individuality, could work autonomously for the sake of their grade, the lower grades, and their school.

In April, the students thought about their image of a "school leader." As they imagined the figure of a leader as someone who can unite people, help those in trouble, and calmly discuss ideas, they began the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. During their numerous events, club and committee activities, and school family activities, they considered seriously what to do improve themselves, discussed about it repeatedly, and changed their behavior. Through repeated successes and failures they steadily strengthened themselves. It seems that they have truly felt the meaning of "cooperation."

Little time remains until graduation. The children are growing up every day. We hope they will treasure the remaining days here.

**From Grade 1 to Grade 2**  
**Grade 1 Class 1 Naoko Murakami**  
**Grade 1 Class 2 Yuimi Mega**

The 1<sup>st</sup> graders had visitors from the kindergarten the other day. They thought about what they could do to make a warm welcome for the soon-to-be 1<sup>st</sup> graders. One child who wanted to read a book to them wanted to choose an easy book and read slowly to them, so she chose a picture book and practiced reading it aloud. On the day of the event, two children helped hold the book open read nicely while watching the kindergarteners. A child who wanted to play *sugoroku* (a traditional Japanese board game) wanted to make the words in the game easier to make it more fun and was able to play along with the kindergarteners. During lunch, they showed the kindergarteners where to put their dishes and how to hold their chopsticks and showed excellent manners. After the visit, they remembered how they were a year ago and how they had grown up by finishing their meals and practicing their English lines for the assembly.

There are many caring children who are very considerate to each other at Higashimachi. We hope they will grow up to be 2<sup>nd</sup> graders with big hearts who help each other and overcome challenges.

**Our Special Activities**

**Misa Nojima**

In special activities, we strive to teach practical skills and foster independence through class activities (class jobs and duties, class meetings, class assemblies, adaptation instruction, career education), student council activities (committees, student assembly, interaction via integrated activities), club activities, and school events.

Club activities let children grades 4 and over to group together based common interests regardless of age or grade.

Committee activities are necessary jobs done by 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders to improve their school lives. They meet around once a month and conduct meetings based on a procedure. All students look forward to it.

The quintessential integrated activities are those done with their school families. Family activities changed after the number of students passed 100 people and turned into a major activity with a higher demand for leadership from the 6<sup>th</sup> graders. This year's 6<sup>th</sup> graders have been carefully plan activities for the lower grades to enjoy.

With the sudden increase in student numbers, it has become necessary to think about space for the activities and how they are done; however, the children will experience independence and self-reliance.

**ESC (English Support Course)**

**ESC Instructor Miyoko Furukawa**

By the end of March it will be 7 years since the International Studies Program started in 2012. In the English Support Course (ESC), English-speaking students study math and language arts in separate rooms, using English. During language arts and math time, students follow Japan's curriculum and use translated textbooks. Since math is taught worldwide, it is not too difficult to study in English. There are many students who study Japanese for the first time and are reading and writing hiragana. Students can quickly pick up hiragana, but it is necessary to increase their vocabulary. At the same time, they learn how to greet and communicate with their teachers and friends. Since kanji have different combinations with different meanings and words might mean something different depending on the listener, Japanese can be difficult; however, the students are eager to learn and try their best. There are even students in the program who can translate for their parents at the hospital or while shopping. The goal of the International Studies Program is to offer an opportunity for students to learn from each other and improve each other, so we teach the students to use Japanese so that both Japanese students and foreign students can interact with each other. The students in the ESC will be glad to talk with Japanese students, so the Japanese students' cooperation is important in order for them to improve quickly. I have heard that some Japanese students do not speak out because they do not understand English, but I would like for them to not be so hesitant. ESC students say that Higashimachi is fun even if they cannot speak Japanese. I believe that those children who enjoy their time at Higashimachi ES and return to their home country with pleasant memories will be a bridge to Japan and unite the world in peace.