

BUSAN FOREIGN SCHOOL

SHARK TALES

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COMMUNITY
CULTURE FAIR 2025

SHARK TALES BUSAN FOREIGN SCHOOL MAGAZINE, SPRING 2025

Team

PUBLISHED BY:

Busan Foreign School Marketing &
Communications Department

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Holly Teal

DESIGN & PHOTOGRAPHY: Goeun Choi

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contributed to this issue.

Address

45, Daecheon-ro 67 beon-gil,
Haeundae-gu, 48084 Busan,
South Korea

부산광역시 해운대구 대천로 67번길
45 | 우편번호 48084

www.busanforeignschool.org

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COVER: Community Culture Fair 2025

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from the EC/ES PRINCIPAL

DEAR BFS COMMUNITY,

Spring is a time for growth and development, and in the Spring semester at BFS we've had the opportunity to affirm effective practices and reflect on continuous improvement. Throughout this semester, we have enacted our school vision and mission in many ways.

Vision: At Busan Foreign School, we strive to empower students to excel academically, thrive socially, and become compassionate global citizens and leaders.

Academically, we are achieving our school purpose with the vast majority of Elementary students (Grades 2-5) meeting or exceeding US norms on NWEA MAP in Mathematics and Reading. Socially, we are pleased to have nearly all Elementary students meeting or exceeding expectations for our SHARK behavioral expectations in and out of the classroom. We are excited to implement the new Wayfinder socio-emotional learning curriculum for our Counseling lessons with Ms. Singley to support students as they develop compassion.

Mission: Our Mission is to empower learners to grow socially, emotionally, and academically in a supportive community with an inclusive environment that nurtures individual growth and fosters a sense of belonging. We aspire to shape empathetic and open-minded global citizens who think critically and have the skills to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

We are meeting our missions by intentionally focusing

on building an inclusive environment in which all students feel a sense of belonging through our continued emphasis on our SHARK values and the implementation of restorative discipline practices. In addition, we are enacting our mission by providing rich opportunities for students to engage in extra-curricular activities that nurture their individual growth such as the KIMEA Choral Festival, Anchored4Life Leadership Club, and Math Olympiad Team. We foster belonging and celebrate diversity through our inclusive Community Culture Fair, and throughout the year our School Librarian, Ms. Platt, facilitates engaging initiatives including Black History Month, We Love Reading Month, Women's History Month, and Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month celebrations to support students' growth as empathetic and open-minded global citizens.

Our vision is clear, and each day we are engaged in meaningful work to fulfill our mission. In partnership with loving parents, our Early Childhood and Elementary Sharks are growing in the supportive learning environments nurtured by our dedicated teachers. Together with our entire community of students, parents, teachers, operations staff, and governance team we will continue to Embrace Diversity and Strive for Excellence. As we wrap up the 2024-25 school year, I am proud of our growth, and I'm excited for the future.

Ms. Lauren Harvey

from the **MS/HS PRINCIPAL**



DEAR BFS COMMUNITY,

As we draw to the end of the AP testing season, our High School takes a collective deep breath. Many of the students in grades 10-12 have sat for extended periods as they seek to demonstrate their learning in a diverse range of subjects that BFS is privileged to offer.

The aspect of our school mission that has been at the forefront of my mind this year is related to how we “aspire to shape empathetic and open-minded global citizens who think critically and have the skills to thrive in a rapidly changing world”. Schools around the globe are grappling with what it means to teach students during the rise of something as powerful as artificial intelligence. How do we propose to develop the skills necessary for students to think critically in a time when such things as deep fakes are possible and very hard to detect?

Thinking critically is more important than ever as we are faced with an unprecedented challenge. Never before have we had to question whether what we are seeing is real or if it is the product of a prompt to an AI running on a server that consumes vast amounts of energy. And yet, this is the challenge educators face. We can teach students to think critically, and to do that, we must develop fundamental skills, to read sources, to analyze videos, to study historical documents and archival footage, and to help students develop the ability to communicate effectively through face-to-face conversations. We build their skills to solve math problems and think logically, and we create space for them to slow down and process what is happening in a rapidly

changing world, we must either preserve what makes us inherently human or we must redefine what it means to be human.

I am grateful for the majority of BFS students who seek to be empathetic and open-minded global citizens. I saw it in the high school students who planned and executed an inclusive Hackathon event. I see it in the middle school students who volunteer to clean up their neighborhood, and I’ve seen it in the efforts of the community service club to foster connections with and between parents. Working in a school, with young people who hope for and visualize a better world, fills me with hope for the future, even in a rapidly changing world.

Mr. Carl Brenneman

BFS

Class of 2025



By Glenn Saunders

Though small in number, your impact has been anything but. From planning and leading hackathon events that brought the community together to outstanding athletic achievements and earning impressive college acceptances to prestigious universities around the world, your journey has been nothing short of extraordinary.

You've shown us that leadership isn't about size, but about courage, collaboration, and a commitment to growth. Each of you leaves behind a legacy of excellence, creativity, and determination that will continue to inspire future classes.

**Congratulations, Class of 2025! The world is waiting
—and you're more than ready.**



2025

Future plans of our Valedictorian and Salutatorian.



LAUREN LEE

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

I will be attending Columbia University this fall, where I plan to major in Sociology and continue pursuing my passion for dance. I'm excited to see what New York has in store and look forward to exploring new interests as I continue to grow and discover new aspects of myself. As I embark on this new chapter, I hope to make meaningful memories and contribute positively to the vibrant life of New York City and beyond.

MIRU EUM

RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN

I'm planning to attend the Rhode Island School of Design, where I'll study fine arts—most likely drawing, though I'm still exploring. I want to dive deeper into the world of art and eventually build a career in creative fields like graphic design, film, or fashion. Whatever path I take, I know art will always be a meaningful part of my life.



Class of 2025 University Acceptances

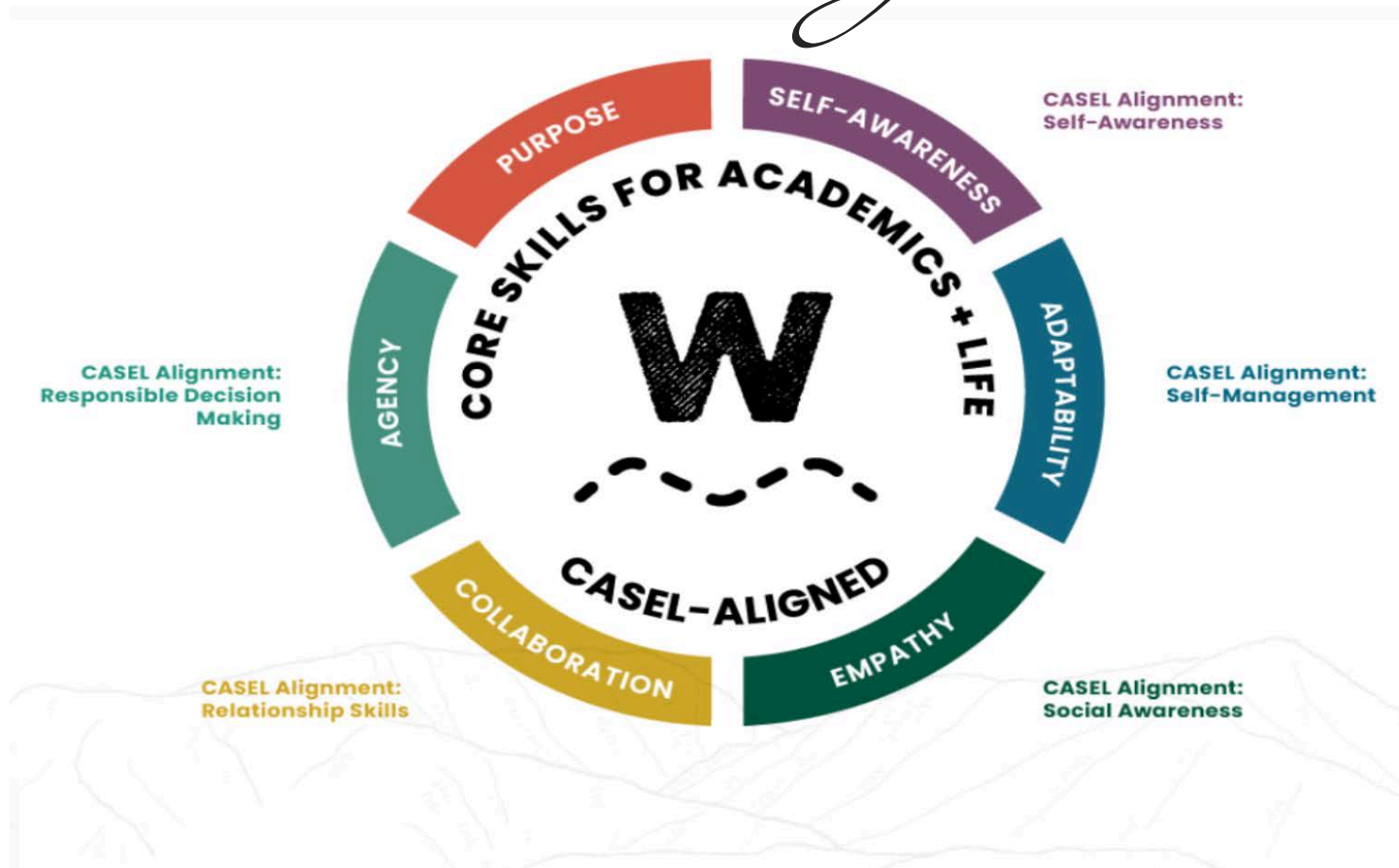
3 Top 20 US Universities
18 Top 50 US Universities
11 Top 20 Public Universities
4 Russell Group Schools (UK)
5 Ivy League Acceptances in 2 Years
**Over \$ 2.2 Million in merit-based
 scholarships awarded!**

- Babson College
- Boston University
- Calvin University
- Case Western University
- Columbia University
- Clark University
- Drexel University
- Embry-Riddle University
- Emory University
- Georgia State University
- Fordham University
- Georgia Tech
- George Washington University
- Indiana University *
- Iowa State University *
- London School of Economics (LSE)
- Loyola University, Chicago
- Loyola University, Maryland
- Michigan State University *
- Northeastern University *
- Ohio State University
- Pace University *
- Penn State University *
- Purdue University
- Rhode Island School of Design (RISD)
- Rice University
- Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) *
- Rutgers University *
- Southern Connecticut State University
- Stony Brook University (NY)
- University of Exeter, UK
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, Irvine *
- University of California, SD
- University of California, Santa Barbara*
- University of Delaware
- University of Colorado, Boulder
- University of Kansas
- University of New Mexico
- University of Minnesota *
- University of Oregon *
- University of Rochester
- University of San Francisco
- University of Sheffield, UK
- University of Southern California (USC) *
- University of Toronto, CA
- University of Utah, KR
- University of Washington *
- University Wisconsin, Madison
- Warwick University, UK
- Washington State University
- Washington University, St. Louis

* Multiple Acceptances



SUPPORTING STUDENTS’ SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL *growth*



By Sofi Singley

At Busan Foreign School, nurturing students goes far beyond academics. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is a cornerstone of our commitment to developing well-rounded, resilient individuals. Over the past two years, it has been a true privilege to support students in their emotional and personal growth and to witness firsthand their courage, curiosity, and compassion.

As part of our evolving approach to student well-being, this year marks a significant milestone: the transition to a new SEL curriculum, Wayfinder. This internationally recognized program is designed to meet the diverse and dynamic needs of students today—and it’s already making a meaningful difference in classrooms across campus.

A New Chapter: Wayfinder at BFS

Replacing our former Second Step program, Wayfinder consolidates various SEL strands into one comprehensive, culturally responsive framework. It supports everything from emotional intelligence and self-awareness to identity development and inclusive practices.

Working in close collaboration with our advisory teachers, Student Council, and parents, we've been laying the foundation for a smooth transition. Feedback remains a critical part of the process, and ongoing insights from students and teachers will shape how we tailor the program for our unique school community.

Strengthening Our Advisory Experience

In high school, where students often face complex academic and personal challenges, connection and support matter more than ever. That's why our advisory program plays a vital role in creating a sense of belonging and purpose.

Monthly SEL-focused lessons aim to foster resilience, empathy, and confidence, equipping students with the tools they need to navigate life's ups and downs. Advisory offers a space to reflect, share, and grow together.

Expanding Initiatives for Holistic Support

Beyond curriculum, our counseling program continues to expand in ways that directly benefit students and families. Recent initiatives include:

- **Identity curriculum implementation** is soon to be fully integrated into Wayfinder.
- **Parent workshops** focused on mental health, equipping families with practical tools to support their children.
- **Restorative practices** are embedded in our updated discipline policy, including restorative circles that build community and deepen understanding.
- **Small group sessions and individual student support** to address unique needs.
- **Collaborations with external partners** such as NCIS (digital safety), local yoga and mindfulness instructors, and mental health providers to offer a more holistic approach.

MONTHLY SEL- FOCUSED LESSONS AIM TO FOSTER RESILIENCE, EMPATHY, AND CONFIDENCE.

From Mindfulness Day to Military Family awareness initiatives, every effort aims to cultivate a safe, inclusive, and empowered school culture.

Looking Ahead

As we continue this journey, our goal remains clear: to support students in becoming thoughtful, grounded, and emotionally intelligent individuals. With your partnership and trust, we're building a community where every student feels seen, heard, and valued.





students host first-ever **SCRAPYARD HACKATHON**

By Dr. Dylan Barnes

Over 50 high school students from across Korea gathered at Busan Foreign School for its first-ever **BFS Scrapyard Hackathon**—a coding competition where the goal wasn't practicality, but absurd creativity. Hosted by the BFS Computer Science Honor Society and supported by Hack Club, the event welcomed students of all skill levels to build delightfully ridiculous projects and compete for "stupid prizes."

A hackathon, also known as a codefest, is an event where programmers and tech enthusiasts collaborate to develop or improve software or hardware projects. However, unlike traditional hackathons focused on practical solutions, Scrapyard Hackathon encouraged students to build projects for their sheer cleverness, uselessness, and absurdity—essentially, projects destined for the "scrapyard."

This event was the vision of **BFS High School's Computer Science Honor Society** students, who were inspired to host a hackathon after attending one earlier in the year. With the support of Hack Club, a global nonprofit organization with a "for students, by students" philosophy, BFS successfully organized a branch event of Scrapyard, a hackathon that embraces the wildest and wackiest ideas in coding.

Initially, the team set a goal of 80 participants. As planning progressed, the expectations became more modest, with hopes of reaching at least 30 students. In the end, the event exceeded expectations, drawing over 50 participants and yielding 18 completed projects!

Beyond the numbers, the atmosphere of the event was electric. Laughter and excitement filled the air as students exchanged ideas, tested their creations, and marveled at each other's projects.

Friendships were formed, skills were sharpened, and everyone walked away with a unique experience to remember.

Innovative Projects & Awards

The hackathon concluded with a peer vote to determine the top three projects and special awards chosen by the event organizers, the BFS Computer Science Honor Society students, and faculty.

Awards

- **Reverse Kirby** - A version of Kirby that spits everything out.
- **Wake Up** - An alarm clock you have to wake up for.
- **Conch of a Conch** - A decision-making app that passes the buck.

Honorable Mentions

- **Funniest Award:** Search Engine for Noobs - A search engine powered only by emojis.
- **Jankiest Award (1):** Snack ATM - A snack ATM that gives random results.
- **Jankiest Award (2):** Under the Sea Vending Machine - A moving vending machine that takes your money and eats your food.
- **Organizer's Pick:** Due Later - Google Classroom Senioritis Edition - Due Later—the ultimate distraction tool for seniors.

To see all projects, scan the QR code below!



Also visit: <https://scrapyard.hackclub.com/busan/>

BEYOND THE CODE, THE EVENT WAS ABOUT COMMUNITY, LAUGHTER, AND INNOVATION. THANKS TO THE VISION OF OUR STUDENT ORGANIZERS AND SUPPORT FROM HACK CLUB, BFS HOPES TO MAKE THIS QUIRKY AND INSPIRING EVENT AN ANNUAL TRADITION.

Keep coding - and keep it weird!



BFS COMMUNITY

culture fair

By Holly Teal

On Saturday, April 12, 2025, Busan Foreign School (BFS) celebrated our community by hosting our second annual Community Culture Fair. With perfect spring weather and an incredible turnout of almost 500 people, this event was a reminder of what makes BFS so special—our people.

Designed to celebrate the rich cultural diversity within our school community, the Culture Fair featured nine colorful country booths, each showcasing food, crafts, and traditions from around the world. From Indian samosas to Mexican esquites to American Sloppy Joes, families enjoyed a flavorful journey across continents without ever leaving campus.

Student clubs brought their energy and creativity to the event by organizing a game zone. They worked hard to prepare face painting, button-making, dalgona, basketball, and more for families and children of all ages to enjoy!

A true highlight of the day was the Pride of Nations Parade, where students proudly waved their home country flags and marched in traditional dress. The parade was not only adorable but also a powerful display of unity and global pride, a heartwarming moment



that reminded us of the unique international spirit of BFS.

Throughout the afternoon, the stage was alive with incredible performances:

- A mesmerizing Chinese opera mask-changing dance
- Our dynamic Palette Dance Club
- A charming set by the Elementary Choir
- And upbeat tunes from the Middle/High School Band



A MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE THAT REFLECTED OUR SCHOOL'S AIM TO CREATE A WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT WHERE EVERY CULTURE IS CELEBRATED

With over 20 nationalities at BFS, we are thankful for our diverse community and the 9 countries represented at this lively cultural event for our school community & partners.

The day wrapped up with raffle prizes and plenty of smiles, as families mingled, reconnected, and made new friends.

The BFS Community Culture Fair wasn't just an event—it was a meaningful experience that reflected our school's aim to create a welcoming, inclusive environment where every culture is celebrated, and every voice matters. It served as a powerful reminder of our shared values and an open invitation for new families to join the BFS story.

Thank you to our amazing PTSO, parent volunteers, student leaders, performers, and staff for making this event such a success. We can't wait for next year!

A special thank you to...

- All booth hosts representing **Japan, India, Germany, USA, South Korea, Russia, China, Philippines, & Mexico!**
- **BFS Student Council** for hosting fun and engaging games for all ages!
- **BFS Operations & all staff members** for all their hard work.
- Our outstanding **PTSO** group for always being involved!



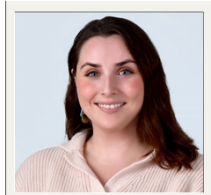
MS STUCO *humans of* BFS



By Middle School Student Council

Since 2017, the Humans of BFS project has offered a unique glimpse into the lives and voices that make up our school community. Currently facilitated by the **Middle School Student Council (MS STUCO)** and inspired by Humans of New York, this initiative showcases short, thoughtful interviews with students, teachers, and staff. Now, with some exciting updates and fresh energy for 2025, MS STUCO is proud to share the latest edition, highlighting powerful perspectives, unexpected insights, and the connections that bring our community to life.

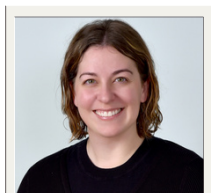
WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT ATTENDING OR WORKING AT BFS?



MS. COTTIER

"I love the people I work with, my students and the overall community. It is nice to have a small school where you know almost everyone. I enjoy being able to work with my students and get to know the students as they grow and move up grade levels."

- Ms. Cottier, MS ELA & MS History Teacher

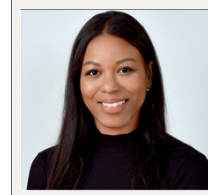


MS. HARRIS

"I enjoy teaching the same students each year and watching them learn and grow. There are students in Advanced Band that I taught first notes to only three years ago! I also enjoy knowing students across many grade levels. I often get hellos from elementary students in the hallway!"

- Ms. Harris, Band Director

WHAT ROLE HAS BFS PLAYED IN YOUR CAREER/GROWTH?

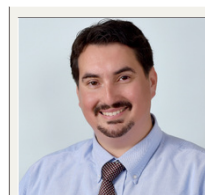


MS. SINGLEY

"BFS has played a significant role in both my professional and personal growth. As a school counselor, I've been given the opportunity to work closely with a diverse student body and supportive staff, which has strengthened my skills and deepened my passion for this work. At the same time, being part of such a close-knit international community has taught me the value of flexibility, cultural awareness, and authentic connection. I've grown not just as an educator, but as a person and provided greater confidence, clarity, and gratitude for everything I've learned here."

- Ms. Singley, Social-Emotional Counselor

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT LIVING IN BUSAN?



MS. H

"I love how close we are to the beach, cafes, restaurants, and NATURE! Can't get enough of the nature."

- Mr. H, 5th Grade Teacher

WHO HAS HELPED YOU THRIVE AT BFS? WHAT DID THEY DO?

"People who've helped me thrive in BFS are my peers and teachers. Ever since I came here, I've felt welcomed by both groups, always seeing them cheerful and friendly, especially Bobby and Mr. Brenneman. Me and Bobby have been close since when we first met in 3rd grade, we've been very close, and usually we meet up on the weekends and call online, playing games together. How could I forget Mrs. Nelson, a teacher very welcoming from the start and I couldn't wait to have Mrs. Nelson as my 5th grade teacher. Mr. Brenneman as well when he used to be vice principal --- he was always sweet, and I just remember he'd always have a smile on his face when he met me, and that only changed when I got in trouble in Middle School. I also thought he was a great volleyball coach, and helped me improve as a player. Also, with Mrs. Nelson, during the online classes that we had a couple of times, I talked to her about reading the book series Harry Potter and how I had just started. She then invited Mrs. Pochon to the call, and I enjoyed talking to them both about this awesome book. All of these have helped me grow as a person at BFS and taught me many of my life lessons."

- Owen, Grade 8 Student



"There are a lot of teachers and friends that have helped me through my childhood and teenager journey. First off, Ms. Cleary, my second-grade teacher, helped me through difficulties during elementary. She is a very kindhearted person. Our former librarian, Ms. Gleb, was a great teacher who encouraged me to read more and pick books that fit me. In fourth grade, I had trouble learning things through reading and writing, but when I took Ms. So's ELL class, everything changed. She has a very good sense of humor too. Ms. Nelson made me feel like she was one of my family members. She is super kindhearted and an angel. My science teacher right now, Ms. Tempest, is great, chill, funny, kind-hearted, and I love taking science. My math teachers have also been great. I also have many friends at BFS who fall in the same category of being kind-hearted and feeling like a 'brother'. To list a few, Bobby, Marquis, Elijah, Sky, David, Eli, Ian, Neel, and much more. "

- Yuanqiang Wang, Grade 8

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES BFS'S COMMUNITY SO SPECIAL?



"BFS is a small school with a tight community. As the only middle school Science teacher, I appreciate that I teach all the middle school students over their entire middle school journey. It gives me a unique perspective on how they evolve over that time -- from tiny sixth graders filled with amazing questions to eighth graders too big for my classroom chairs that have the skills to investigate those questions -- and gives me many opportunities to build relationships with these bright young humans. As these students transition into high school, I continue to see them and their impacts around the school, and if I'm lucky they'll end up in my high school Science class, too. Being able to maintain these connections as students pass through my classroom and beyond makes the school community feel warmer and brighter."

- Ms. Tempest, MS Science Teacher & MS STUCO Advisor

"I feel that the BFS community is special because the teachers are supportive and the students care about each other. I also love that the community is diverse and inclusive to people different backgrounds. This creates a unique environment where we can learn from each other in different ways"

- Gemma, Grade 7

IS THERE A SPECIFIC MEMORY FROM YOUR TIME AT BFS THAT IS MEMORABLE & HAS BEEN SPECIAL TO YOU?

"In 5th grade, I joined the basketball team for the first time. I'm not the best athlete, but I tried anyway. And I actually had a lot of fun and my team won 1st place. This was special to me because it reminds me that the things that I think I will fail at, can become the things that give me joy. Even if I'm not the best."

- Hannah, Grade 6



" I have lots of friends who changed my life at BFS. They always include everyone and always try their best to have fun and cheer everyone up at any time. They also always try their best to help each other with both schoolwork and homework. At break times, we always have a really great time playing sports like soccer, basketball, and volleyball. Even after school, we would often meet up and continue playing sports and do homework together. To sum everything up, the memories of my friends are one of the most memorable memories I have at BFS."

- Jay, Grade 8

“
**WHAT MESSAGE DO YOU
HAVE FOR THE BFS
COMMUNITY?**

“1. Assume kindness in others.
2. Be kind to yourself. 3. Don't lose
your whimsy, even when the world
tries to shake it out of you!”

- **Mr. Harris, Band Director**

“Collaboration, honesty, empathy,
and hard work. Those values will
never fail you.”

- **Mr. Hernandez, 5th Grade Teacher**

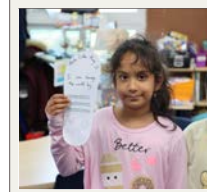
“ Follow that little voice inside—the
one that sparks curiosity, excitement,
and even a little fear. It's often
leading you toward growth. Even if
others don't understand your path,
don't let outside opinions or self-
doubt hold you back. Some of the
most meaningful experiences begin
with a leap of faith. Trust yourself, stay
open, and don't be afraid to try
something new—you never know
where it might lead.”

- **Ms. Singley, Social-Emotional
Counselor**

”

little humans
of **BFS**

“
**WHAT WAS YOUR
FAVORITE MEMORY
AT BFS?**



AURIYA, G1

“My favorite memory has to be
Halloween. There was always so much
going on—parents handing out
candies and going around the school
to trick-or-treating, getting a lot of
candy. Lollipops were my favorite and
it was always such a fun time!”

- **Auriya, Grade 1**



RANIA, G1

“My favorite memories at BFS are
hanging out with my friends, meeting
other people in the school, and how
the teachers make learning fun. It
makes me happy and the cafeteria is
a great place to chill. The food is
really good, which makes lunch one of
the best parts of my day.”

- **Rania Koirala, Grade 1**

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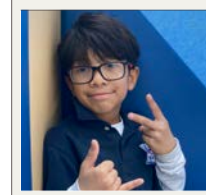
WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU'VE LEARNED THIS YEAR THAT'S MADE YOU REALLY PROUD?



"This year, I'm really proud of learning all the new things in my class. For example, during reading class, I learned how to summarize a story with bullet points. I can apply this to my writing skills and it's also good for my writing in the future."

- Jisika, Grade 4

WHERE'S YOUR FAVORITE PLACE AT BFS?

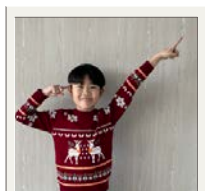


BRANDON, G2

"I like recess and I like playing soccer and basketball. I also like communicating with others, like talking to my friends. I also like taking breaks and resting. In the cafeteria, you could get delicious foods like chicken. There you can also talk with friends about family, friends and games. In Ms. Underwood's class, I like studying social studies and math. We learn about the government, heroes and learn new things."

- Brandon, Grade 2

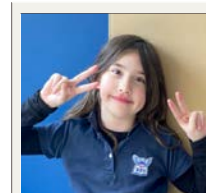
WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT BUSAN?



ZHENG, G3

"What I like about Busan is that there are a lot of places to play and have fun. There are also lots of mountains around. Sometimes it even snows! It makes me really happy to be in Busan."

- Zheng Xi, Grade 3



EMMA, G2

"I like the choir room. I like to play instruments. I like how Mr. Henzi always gives us a good welcome. I also like to play instruments and move rather than just sing. Another place I like is the gym because I can play dodgeball just like Lana does."

- Emma, Grade 2

“
IF SOMEONE NEW CAME TO YOUR CLASS, WHAT WOULD BE THE FIRST THING YOU WOULD TELL THEM ABOUT BFS?



“I believe BFS is a very fun school with hardworking students. I really like how everyone is a hardworking student and after school, there are clubs you can attend. Many people attend after school clubs and I see them working hard there too.”

- Rithika, Grade 5



“In our school, the uniform design is unique which makes it cooler. I'm glad that our school is a clean environment and we can learn new things we haven't learned before. Our school lunch is also very good, I'm glad we have good and clean food we can eat every single day in school.”

- Hina, Grade 5



THANK YOU TO OUR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL & MS. KYLA TEMPEST!



SCHOOL *happenings*



SEMESTER 2 EVENTS

LUNAR NEW YEAR, MODEL UN, PURPLE UP & MORE!

By Holly Teal & Goeun Choi

At our American international school in the heart of vibrant Busan, South Korea, we proudly celebrate a rich tapestry of cultural traditions. From meaningful Korean holidays to classic American festivities and globally recognized events, our community comes together through shared experiences that highlight our diversity. These celebrations offer students, families, and staff valuable opportunities to connect, learn, and grow—fostering mutual respect and a deeper appreciation for cultures around the world. Take a look at the special moments that make our school community so unique and unforgettable.



SPIRIT WEEK

A fun week filled with pajamas, tourist wear, wordy attire, theme characters and school spirit!



MLK DAY

Students celebrated in lessons across campus, but Grade 1 had a craft using his inspiring and powerful words!



LUNAR NEW YEAR

BFS embraced the spirit of wisdom, transformation and elegance that comes with the year of the snake!



100TH DAY OF SCHOOL

We made it to the 100th day of school and Kindergarten celebrated with fun activities including these cute hats.



SCHOOL COUNSELORS WK

Thank you Mr. Saunders & Ms. Singley for being outstanding counselors that support students' social-emotional and college prep needs!



KIMEA MS CHOIR

Way to go SHARKS—with students from 12 schools in Korea, this was a great opportunity to collaborate and make music together!



ES SHARK ASSEMBLIES

Each school year, ES grades take turns hosting an assembly to show the ways they exemplify our SHARK values.



MODEL UN

BFS students delivered powerful speeches and crafted strategic policies. They grew as diplomats, negotiators, and global thinkers. We are incredibly proud of their achievements!



EC/ES SCIENCE LEARNING FAIR

From plants, animals, and weather to forces of motion and states of matter, our youngest Sharks shared their learning at the Early Childhood & Lower ES!



HS STUDENT OF THE QUARTER

Shoutout to Skylar F., Dana K., & Aiden Y. for earning Student of the Quarter 3 Awards! These students exemplify our SHARK values.



SPRING SCAVENGER HUNT

Our PTSO and US military volunteers outdid themselves spreading joy with a hopping good time for our EC & ES students!



EARTH DAY

From MS StuCo Trashketball to Kindergarten and Grade 4 Reading Buddies, our students showed love for planet Earth!



PURPLE UP DAY

Faculty and students proudly wore purple for unity and respect as we celebrated the strength and sacrifices of our US military families.



PROM

With this year's theme as 'The Roaring 20s,' high school students brought their glam for a night of fun games and swanky moves!



AEO COLLEGE FAIR

Students in Grades 9–11 explored university options and connected with admissions reps during an on-campus college fair.



FACULTY APPRECIATION

Organized by Sunshine Committee, the Faculty Appreciation week included breakfast, coffee/tea, snacks and lovely notes with support from PTSO.



ES SPRING CONCERT

Our Island Explorers made waves sharing songs of the sea. It was a tropical adventure showing off the talents of our young performers and amazing Mr. Henzi!



MSHS SPRING CONCERT

Students showcased their musical talents in a well-attended spring concert featuring a variety of performances led by Ms. Harris!



a tribute to COACH GALLES

ALMOST A DECADE OF VICTORIES & TEAMWORK AT BFS

By Holly Teal

As another season wraps up, Busan Foreign School bids farewell to graduating athletes, departing students, and one of the most influential figures in our athletics program—Coach Pat Galles.

Since arriving in 2016 with his wife, Maiko, and daughters, Angie, Sophie, and Olivia, Coach Galles has been more than just a coach. He's been a visionary, a mentor, and the heart behind the SHARKS' athletic success for nearly

a decade. His leadership has not only shaped the culture of our teams but also redefined what BFS Athletics could be.

Under his direction, BFS teams earned **over 70 championships**. His coaching record at BFS was **219-41**, with **28 tournament championships** and **9 second-place finishes**. His coaching legacy shines brightest in **girls' basketball**, where his teams have amassed a remarkable **123-29 overall record**, including **16 championships and four runner-up finishes since 2016**.

It's no exaggeration to say he's coached just about everything, always bringing deep

knowledge, strategy, and heart to every practice and game. **But Coach Galles' influence extends far beyond the scoreboard.**


He launched initiatives that transformed the athletic program at BFS. One of the most impactful changes was shifting elementary sports practices into the school day instead of after school, a move that boosted participation and freed up gym and field time for all levels. He also helped BFS join the KISAC conference, hosted major invitational tournaments, and founded the now-beloved Battle of Busan rivalry games.

He has a legendary story of a basketball play

that was so effective, after being run, a player from the opposing team's crowd yelled, "Ohhh not again!" in frustrated awe. That story says everything: Coach Galles builds teams that make an impact, that demand respect, that play the game right.


As Coach Galles prepares for his next chapter, we celebrate not just his record of success but the legacy he leaves behind—a program that is stronger, more inclusive, and more spirited than ever before.

Thank you, Coach Galles. For the wins. For the lessons. And for showing us all what it means to lead with passion and purpose.

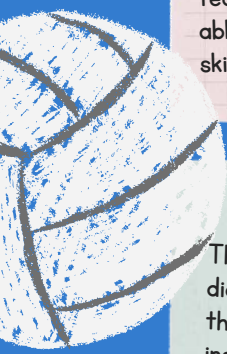


I appreciate Mr. Galles pushing me to my limits and not letting myself get into my head. I think he is the best coach in the sense that he knows when to step in for advice and when to let athletes figure the problem out themselves. This has made me grow so much from a young middle school varsity athlete to team captain where I've been able to reflect his leadership skills onto my own team.

My favorite moment with Mr. Galles was every morning my Junior year he let me help him with his morning class. Teaching me what it means to be a PE teacher and bonding with me over sports




Thank you for representing BFS and supporting our community, we won't forget you Mr. Galles.




Thank you for everything you did for us. You were more than just a coach, you have inspired us to be the best we can. And not only taught us sports techniques but also taught us important lessons.

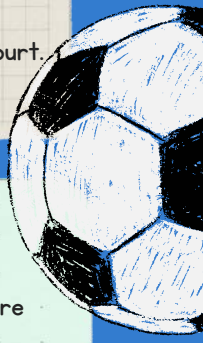
Mr. Galles, thank you for being my P.E teacher here in BFS. Thanks to you, I was able to make a lot of great memories and enjoy doing sports and other healthy exercises. Your confidence and kindness helped me become more confident and motivated to challenge myself in sports and other activities. Thank you for always telling me funny jokes and stories. You are the best P.E. teacher I've ever had in my life!



As an athlete, Mr. Galles had wisdom like no one else. From each sport to each position in each sport, there was no area where he didn't have anything to teach. He also taught me how to carry yourself through the good and bad times in sports. His competitiveness spread throughout the teams and his leadership led to many victories, on and off the court.



He taught me responsibility and humility, like when he was scolding us for not wanting to play with certain players because we thought they weren't good enough, and he taught us that a part of our responsibility as an athlete was to help lift them up instead of avoiding them.



Thank you for all those years of coaching, managing, and small talks about sports. It saddens me in thought that you won't be there when I visit Busan, but someday I hope our roads would cross! I hope you the very best in the next chapters of your life.



Semester 2 STATS & SUMMARIES



HS BASKETBALL

Girls: The Varsity Sharks finished 17–1 this season, clinching KISAC, JIT, and SKAIS championships. Over the last three years, they've captured all 8 tournament titles with a combined record of 43–2.

Top scorers this season:

- Angie – 752 points (17 ppg)
- Sophie – 427 points (10 ppg)
- Maria – 254 points (6 ppg)

Boys: The team's greatest achievement this season was their growth in unity and trust. While early games were marked by hesitation and a lack of cohesion, the Sharks evolved into a supportive, bonded team. Their growth & teamwork made for a rewarding finish to the season!

MS BASKETBALL

Girls: An incredible 10–1 season! KISAC & Battle of Busan Champions. After a narrow overtime loss in the SKAIS Finals, the team finished strong. Led by MVPs Michelle and Ahin, the Sharks showed grit, teamwork, and sportsmanship all season.

Boys: Back-to-back Battle of Busan Champions! The team grew into a tight-knit, unselfish squad with strong performances at KISAC and SKAIS. Every player made meaningful contributions, setting up a bright future for MS basketball.

HS SOCCER

Girls: SKAIS and Battle of Busan Champions, and KISAC Runners-up! Despite injuries and a young roster, the team played with heart and determination.

Boys: A young squad that made big strides throughout the season.

Key players:

- Justin – 9 goals (Captain)
- Egor – All-Tournament Defender
- Mir – Rising Goalie

MS FUTSAL

Girls: A season of growth and resilience, finishing 4th at KISAC. Led by MVP Michelle U., with standout defense from Liz R. and Emma M.

Boys: SKAIS Runners-up with 17 goals scored!

- MVP: George
- Most Improved: Yooan
- Defensive MVP: Neel
- Best Teammate: Robin

ES BASKETBALL

Boys B (Grade 4) – 1st place at SKAIS!

Girls A & B – 2nd place finishes.

It was a season of skill-building, sportsmanship, and strong Shark spirit.

ES VOLLEYBALL

Boys A and Girls B teams took 3rd place at SKAIS.

A season full of teamwork, growth, and Shark pride!

ES/MS/HS BADMINTON

At the year-end badminton tournament, our Sharks played a 13-hour marathon of matches with just two weeks of preparation!

Elementary School Mixed Doubles

- 3rd – William & Anthony
- 4th – Agatha & Artyom

Middle School

- Girls Doubles – 2nd: Woorim C. & Michelle U.
- Girls Singles – 3rd: Woorim C.

High School Girls Doubles

- 2nd – Shirley H. & Arang H.
- 4th – Tanvi K. & Angie G.

*Congratulations to our
SHARKS!*





Meet Semester 2

COACHES



Pat Galles
**AD/MS Girls
Basketball**



Coach Tolbert
MS Girls Basketball



Coach Gates
ES/MS Boys Basketball



Coach Barnes
MS Boys Basketball



Coach Harvey
ES Girls Basketball



Coach Saunders
HS Boys Futsal



Coach Van Genderen
HS Boys Futsal



Coach Bishop
HS Girls Futsal



Coach Simnett
HS Girls Futsal



Coach Moon
HS Boys Futsal



Coach Kavanaugh
ES Volleyball



Coach Pehl
ES/MS Volleyball



Coach Kim
MS Volleyball



Coach Kuo
Badminton (all)

Fourth graders GREEK WAX MUSEUM

By Courtney Pehl & Chandani Persaud

In the third quarter, the fourth-grade class at BFS embarked on an exciting journey to explore the rich history of ancient Greece through a cross-curricular unit. This unit, tied to the American Education Reaches Out (AERO) standards, focused on AERO Standard 4: Cultural Developments and Interactions Among Society. Students delved into the cultural history and traditions of Greek civilization, learning how these elements have shaped modern-day language, values, and beliefs.

The unit provided an opportunity for students to expand their vocabulary by studying common Greek roots and understanding their impact on contemporary language. They also explored Greek allusions, recognizing how these historical stories continue to influence today's culture.

This interdisciplinary project combined elements of history, art, and communication, allowing students to explore ancient Greece from multiple perspectives. They studied Greek history and culture, creating connections to art by designing and crafting their own ancient Greek-inspired artifacts.



Additionally, they honed their public speaking skills by presenting their projects, integrating both historical knowledge and creative expression.

This approach provided a holistic learning experience, supporting BFS's mission to develop well-rounded, critical thinkers who are prepared for a dynamic world.



Purple Up Spotlight

BFS—A NDSP OPTION

for MILITARY FAMILIES

By Abigail Gross

For U.S. military families stationed in Busan, South Korea, one of the key considerations when relocating is access to quality education for their children. Unlike some larger overseas military installations, Busan does not have a Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) school. However, families need not worry; the Non-DoD Schools Program (NDSP) provides access to excellent educational alternatives, such as Busan Foreign School (BFS).

Understanding the NDSP Program

The Non-DoD Schools Program (NDSP) is designed to support military families assigned to locations where a DODEA school is unavailable. Managed by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA), NDSP covers tuition and related educational costs for eligible children to attend private, international, or local schools that meet the program's standards.

In Busan, BFS is one such school approved under the NDSP, offering a seamless transition for military families and ensuring students receive a quality education comparable to U.S. standards.



Why Choose Busan Foreign School?

Busan Foreign School, located in Haeundae-gu, is an established institution with over 25 years of history providing education to the international community. As an accredited college-preparatory school, BFS adheres to high educational standards while embracing cultural diversity.

1. U.S.-Based Curriculum

BFS follows an American curriculum, making it a natural fit for military families transitioning from the U.S. or other DODEA schools. The curriculum includes core subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies and a wide range of elective and enrichment programs to foster a well-rounded education.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses: BFS offers a variety of AP courses for high school students, providing opportunities to earn college credits.

STEM Emphasis: Programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) are integrated across grade levels, preparing students for future academic success.

2. Accreditation and Quality

Busan Foreign School is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), ensuring the curriculum meets rigorous international and U.S. standards. This accreditation provides peace of mind for parents that their children are receiving a recognized and transferable education.

3. Small Class Sizes and Individualized Attention

One of BFS's key strengths is its commitment to maintaining small class sizes. This allows teachers to provide personalized attention and cater to individual learning styles, helping each child thrive academically and socially.

4. Diverse and Inclusive Community

BFS serves a multicultural student body representing over 20 nationalities, creating a globally inclusive environment. This exposure enriches students' educational experience and fosters cross-cultural understanding—an invaluable asset for military children growing up in an international setting.

5. Extracurricular Opportunities

Beyond academics, BFS offers robust extracurricular activities to help students develop their interests and talents. There is something for everyone, from sports teams and arts programs to student leadership opportunities and community service projects.

- **Athletics:** BFS competes in various sports leagues, including basketball, soccer, and volleyball.
- **Clubs and Organizations:** Students can join clubs such as Chess, Eco, Model United Nations, robotics, debate, and the National Honor Society.
- **Arts and Culture:** Drama productions, visual arts, and music programs allow students to explore creative outlets.

Support for Military Families

Adjusting to life in a new country can be challenging, especially regarding schooling. Busan Foreign School, in collaboration with NDSP, works to ease this transition by offering the following support:

- **Seamless Enrollment:** BFS has experience working with military families and understands the requirements of NDSP. Admissions staff are available to guide parents through the enrollment process.



- **Language Support:** For students needing additional English language support, BFS provides English Language Learning (ELL) services to help them succeed.
- **Counseling Services:** Academic and social-emotional counseling are available to ensure students feel supported inside and outside the classroom.

Additionally, the BFS Parent-Teacher Support Organization (PTSO) and broader school community actively engage with new families, helping them feel welcome and connected.

Practical Considerations for Families

If you are considering Busan Foreign School for your child, here are a few practical details to keep in mind:

Location: BFS is conveniently located in Haeundae, one of Busan's most family-friendly areas with easy access to public transportation, housing options, and recreational facilities.

School Year: The academic calendar follows a U.S. schedule, running from August to June, with breaks aligned to major holidays.

Tuition: While BFS is a tuition-based school, eligible military families enrolled through NDSP can have the costs covered as part of the program. Parents should coordinate with their NDSP liaison officer to ensure all documentation is in place.

Conclusion

While Busan does not have a DODEA school, Busan Foreign School is an exceptional educational option for U.S. military families. Through its American-based curriculum, small class sizes, diverse community, and commitment to academic excellence, BFS ensures that military children receive a top-quality education in a supportive environment.

For families navigating an overseas assignment in Busan, BFS offers the familiarity of a U.S.-based education combined with the rich cultural experience of living abroad. By utilizing the NDSP

program, military parents can rest assured that their children's educational needs will be met during their time in South Korea.

For more information, parents are encouraged to contact Busan Foreign School directly or consult with their NDSP liaison officer to begin the enrollment process.



BFS *going* PHONE-FREE *in* 2025-2026

FACING ANXIETY IN A FULLY CONNECTED WORD

By Carl Brenneman

Why did Australia move to restrict social media use until age 16? Why has Brazil moved to ban all smartphones and watches from its public schools? In part, because governments and schools around the world are responding to the provocative book, *The Anxious Generation*, by Jonathan Haidt.

The teacher leadership team at BFS read this book during the 2024-25 academic year. By mid-December, they had grown more and more convinced that early exposure to social media and overuse of screen time all contribute to an epidemic of mental illness in young people.

Mr. Haidt lays out a compelling case illustrating that the mental health of youth declined precipitously starting in 2010 until it fell off a cliff at the start of the global pandemic. For educators, these statistics and the associated studies he cites confirm the anecdotal evidence they have seen during this time. He lays out the harm done to male and female adolescents, which is distinct by gender, but shares similar traits. Both genders feel a greater sense of social isolation, increased levels of anxiety, and a greater tendency towards addictive behavior.



Additionally, he points out that as childhood has become more screen-based, children have become much more risk-averse, and that has stunted their ability to solve problems in the real world. They have fewer opportunities to resolve problems on their own and miss out on key developmental stages.

Starting in August 2025, BFS will move towards being a phone-free school between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. For most of the school, things won't change. High School, Middle School, and Elementary students will store their smartphones and watches in their lockers. Parents can contact their children through the office in the event of an emergency. While there may be a period of adjustment, BFS is

confident that moving in this direction is the right thing to do to help prevent attention fragmentation, improve face-to-face communication, and reduce addictive behaviors.

While BFS cannot meaningfully influence the decisions of tech companies who create and market addictive apps, and it cannot effectively lobby governments to enact strict age limits for accessing social media, it can influence how much time students spend on their devices at school.

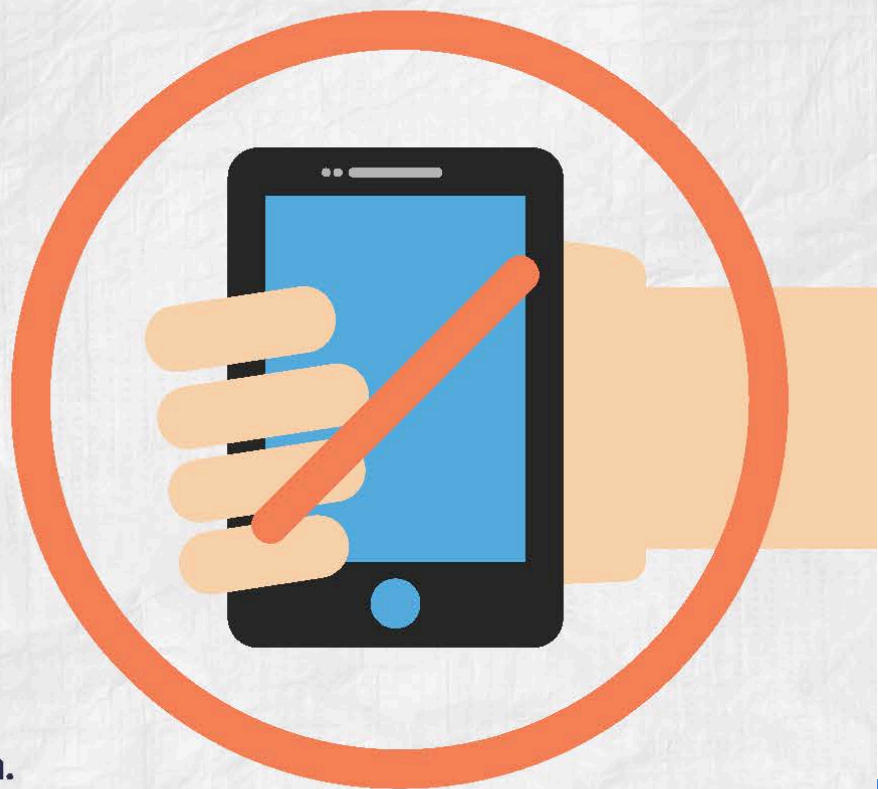
Mr. Haidt's book provided research-based arguments and proposed ways to ameliorate the harmful effects of social media use and smartphone technology. The collective efforts of schools and parents can create a healthier environment for students to learn and grow.

BFS IS TAKING ACTION TO CREATE A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FREE FROM THE DISTRACTIONS AND HARMS OF SMARTPHONES.



PHONE FREE SCHOOL

Starting August of 2025 **BFS will be phone free from 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**



Thanks to the authors!

Mr. Carl Brenneman, Middle & High School Principal
Mrs. Lauren Harvey, Early Childhood & Elementary Principal
Mr. Glenn Saunders, Director of Admissions & College Counseling
Mr. Patrick Galles, Athletic Director
Ms. Holly Teal, Director of Marketing & Communications
Ms. Goeun Choi, Marketing & Communications Manager
Ms. Courtney Pehl, Grade 4 Teacher
Ms. Sofi Singley, School Counselor
Ms. Chandani Persaud, Grade 4 Teacher
Dr. Dylan Barnes, MSHS Computer Science Teacher
Mr. Jeff Kuo, MSHS Math Teacher
Mr. Michael Van Genderen, MSHS Math Teacher
Mr. Chris Brock, HS Social Studies & Language Teacher
Mr. Steven Simnett, HS Science Teacher
Ms. Kyla Tempest & MS STUCO
Mrs. Abigail Gross, Parent Ambassador & PTSO Lead

For more information about our school & how to apply, please contact:



Mr. Glenn Saunders
gsaunders@bfs.or.kr
(For English)



Dr. Jiyoung Lee
jylee@bfs.or.kr
(For Korean)

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!

Would you like to see something else in the magazine?

Got a fun idea for it?

Want to submit an article?

Email: bfs_communicationse@bfs.or.kr

BUSAN FOREIGN SCHOOL

45, Daecheon-ro 67 beon-gil, Haeundae-gu, 48084 Busan, South Korea

부산광역시 해운대구 대천로 67번길 45 | 우편번호 48084

Tel +82(0)51 747 7199 | Fax +82(0)51 747 9196

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