

September/October 
Update Volksschule
Smart City 



Newsletter from your
Leadership

Smart City Update

Your dose of what's happening at VSC

September/October
2023

Shining A Spotlight On...

Transdisciplinary Theme: Who we are

Our students began learning our first transdisciplinary theme: Who we are. This transdisciplinary theme is an inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities, and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human.

The first grade class is focusing on building a strong team, family, and group. They are learning what it means to define a group, to build a team, to understand each other, to identify key emotions for individuals and how to recognise emotions from each other. They are learning about their culture and how to build tolerance for others and appreciation for new ideas. They interviewed each other as well as grown-ups in their lives to learn about others' experiences!



PYP 1 Hasanović class interviewing each other to find similarities and differences in each other.

The second grade is focusing on building communities. They have identified key essential agreements for making a community function. The students selected their essential agreements for their classroom so that they can all share the responsibility of making their classroom a safe, growing place for everyone who enters.



PYP 2 Kofler working on connecting physical traits to our Who we are Transdisciplinary Theme

Our third grade classes are learning about making healthy choices. Whether its a positive mental choice, a positive physical choice, or a positive social choice, healthy choices help create a safer, more welcoming atmosphere. Using positive words and focusing on wise decision-making aids in creating an environment where all can do their best. The students have been learning about nutrition and how what we eat can affect our entire well-being. They are focusing on responsibility and being caring. The teachers are designing situations for the students to charge themselves with good decision-making.



Part of the Who we Are unit involves learning about our local community. PYP 3 Popovski had their trip through Stadt Graz where they visited the Rathaus.

The fourth grade has been focusing on children's rights in Europe. They had the opportunity to write down their ideas of what a right is; who has rights; and how can we make sure the rights are being honored. PYP 4 Edler's class had a field trip to our Graz Mayor's office- Elke Kahr. There they had planned to interview her and ask her about children's rights in Graz and make suggestions for things that can be done to make Graz better for children. Unfortunately, she did not have time to speak with them, but they were able to submit their posters they had made about children's rights. Some examples were: Larger classrooms, more playgrounds in the city center, and healthy lunches for all children.



PYP 4 Edler at the Mayor Kahr's Office

Reflections from Mrs. Hafellner & the IB process



It has been wonderful to see the educational growth this year with an Inquiry-based mindset. I see a major change in the children. They are not afraid to ask questions. They are given time and space to ask questions. They are taking more charge of their learning. Through this change, the students are making wiser choices in their relationships with other students and are able to connect the words from the Learner Profile Attributes to their actions. Giving a name to what they are doing allows students to connect their emotions to their experiences and in the future make a more thought-out choice.

In music class, I have given rhythms to our class rules and expectations. This way I can notice a situation when a student is perhaps not doing their best and ask them to connect to the "C" rule: Come and give your best effort! Through this, the students reflect, think, and make their own adjustments to succeed.

Our current status in our IB journey: We are in our second year of our Candidacy. This means that we are all learning! The teachers have taken part in an IB-backed training and received weekly instruction and information on teaching through Inquiry and what it means to teach in an IB school. We welcomed 11 new teachers this year who are learning the IB ways. This means that while your children are learning a new way to learn, the teachers are also learning a new way to teach! The journey is fun as the outcome is truly beneficial for all. Inquiry allows children to learn deeper and to connect their learnings to everyday life matters. This year in the spring, we will receive a visit from our IB consultant, Sarah Ford. Sarah

is a long-time member of the PYP community and is a 1st grade teacher at the Danube International School in Vienna. I will update the community about her visit as we get closer to it!

Please visit our website often for updates on our IB journey www.vs-smartcity.at

New Updates to our School

School Teacher Assignments

Starting next school year, all students will receive a new teacher in the 3rd grade. Our teachers are now in an *unterstufe*, *oberstufe* position. Students will have the same teacher for 1st and 2nd grade and then in the 3rd grade receive a new teacher. Your children will be a part of a "Moving up Day" in the school to get to know their new teacher. *Note: the school may also mix up all classes as needed based on academic needs of the students and what's best for the school.*

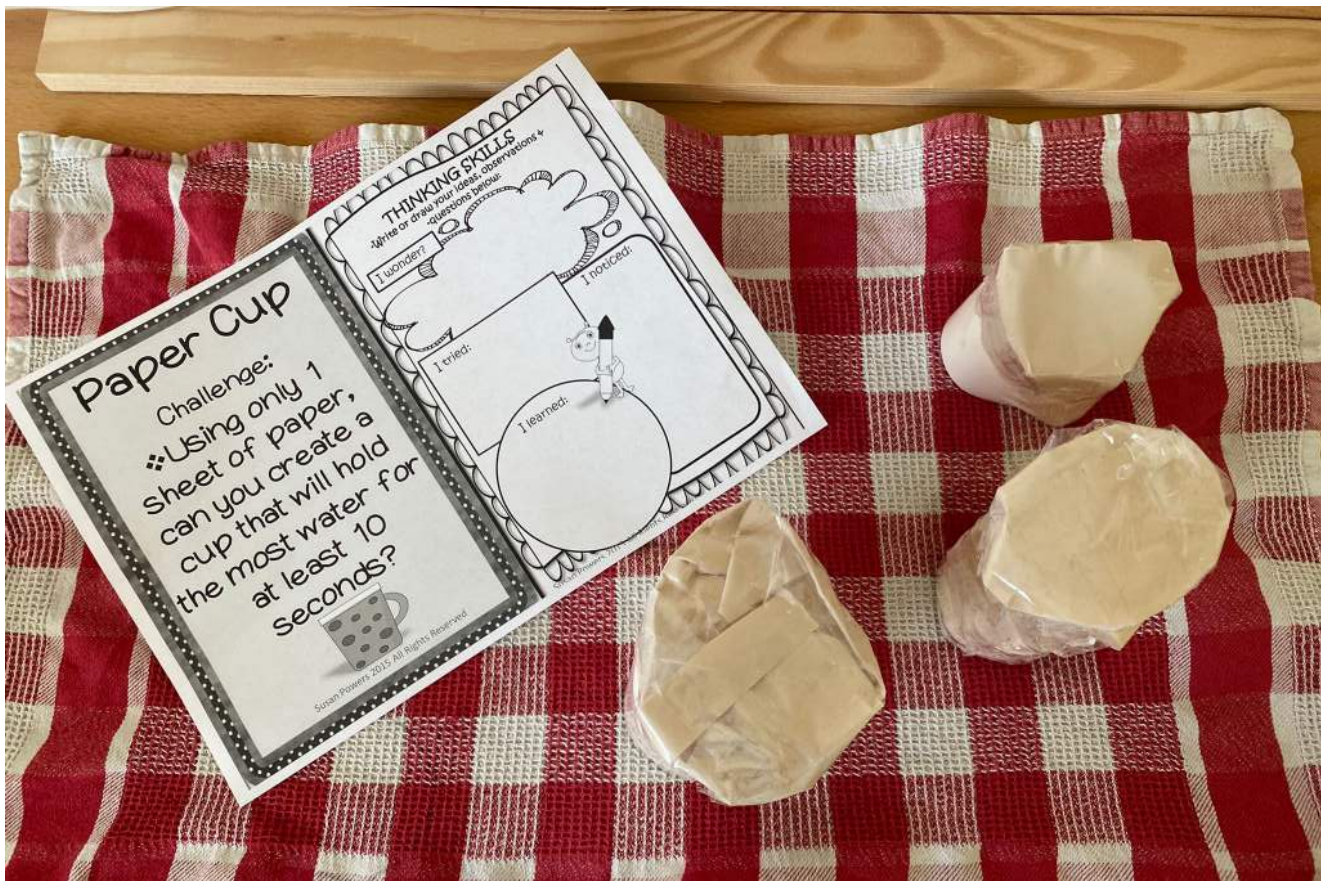
New English-language Class

Next year we are excited to announce that we will finally be able to start a new class where English is the language of instruction. This will be a family class consisting of levels from 1st-4th grade. Spaces will be limited to accommodate all year levels. This class will be a full-day class also known as *Verschränkt*. The students will have class from 7:45-15:00 every day with lunch during the day and then afternoon care is available after 3pm. Students will receive German-language instruction much like the other classes receive English-language instruction. Since English is the main language of instruction, the MIKA-D test will not take place for these students. They will learn the Austrian curriculum mixed in with the International curriculum (also known as the Scopes and Sequences) in English. There will be no educational holes for this class and students will still be prepared for other Austrian Schools. The only difference is that English is the main teaching language.

Who is this class for?

This class is designed for students who do not need German language as the focus for their academic lives. This is for students who are temporarily in Graz and need the English language to bring their knowledge and experience to a different IB or international school elsewhere. This class is for those who have English as a native language and prefer to have English instruction over German instruction.

Spaces are limited. Admission to this class will require an interview. Interviews will be held on January 11th and 12th in the school. Spaces will be decided on by the school based on need and availability. If you'd like your child to switch into the English-speaking class, please send an email to Mrs. Hafellner by December 1st: Jacquelyn.hafellner@vs-leopoldinum.edu.graz.at.

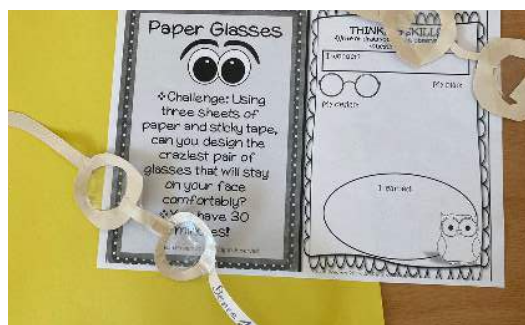


Student Teachers from the USA

From March 13-May 3rd, we will have 2 student teachers from Westminster Choir College coming to do their student teaching experience with Mrs. Hafellner. They are connected to Ryder University through a partnership program with the University of Graz. During the time they are with the students they will be fully insured and able to work with our students. I will have all 14 classes for music at this time! This means that all students at VSC will have music with Mrs. Hafellner and our 2 guest teachers. They are trained in choral education and will also be honing their teaching skills during choir time.

New STEM/MINT Club:

Beginning on November 13th, our new STEM/MINT club will be taught by Frau Frick. Frau Frick comes to us from Munich. She holds a Bachelors and Masters degree in Biology as well as a Bachelors in Science and German education. She will be conducting the club in English and will also be integrating Coding into the STEM projects. We are so excited to have Frau Frick on our staff!



Action in VSC

Erntedachfest-Harvest Thanksgiving Festival

Three schools - one Harvest Thanksgiving Festival

Focusing on the motto "Sharing makes you happy" 150 pupils from VS Leopoldinum, VS Algersdorf and VS Schulschwestern met with their parents in the Vinzenzkirche to celebrate Harvest Thanksgiving together. During this celebration we were able to hand over 150 filled harvest bags to the VinziBus. In the evening our snack bags were distributed to poor people in Graz. A nice togetherness of the different schools was noticeable at the following Reception in the parish hall of St. Vinzenz. A heartfelt thank you also goes to many Muslim students who strongly supported our Thanksgiving project.



Großen Helfen Kleinen Project

Religion project: "Big Ones Help the Little Ones"

At a welcome party for the 1st grades, each newcomer to school was assigned a helper child from the third grade. The helper children accompany our school beginners through this school year. The children were proudly welcomed through a tunnel of blessings. The older classmates acted out the story "The Bridge". With a friendship song, the children of the 1st grade thanked their helpers. School is much more fun together.



Students of PYP 1 Waldeck-Tschirko, PYP 3 Koinegg-Maier, PYP 4 Stanzenberger, PYP 1 Bachler

What's Happening with the VSC Choir?

Last year in April, our choir was fortunate enough to participate in the Landesjungendsingen competition in Bruck an der Mur. We received a rating of "Good success." It was the first time the school was represented at the Landesjungendsingen and we now are a "Meistersinger" school.



This year the VSC choir had their first performance on Friday the 20th of October. They welcomed our guests for the Tag der offenen Tür. They performed 2 pieces that they had performed last year: *Siyahamba* and *Unsere Schule die ist Smart*.

Please keep the following Concert performance dates in your schedule:

- Wednesday, December 20th at 18h in the school Aula
- Friday, April 19th at 17h at Helmut-List-Halle

Message from the Direktorin Frau Schulte-Andrianakis



I am very proud of our children, colleagues and parents who are successfully following our path to an IB school with a lot of commitment and a common vision.

We are on the home stretch and I am looking forward to what is to come!