

# The Founding of HKIS - A Rich Partnership

As HKIS celebrates over 50 years of educating and serving in Hong Kong, we remember the important role the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) plays in our history and ongoing identity. To respond to the mission needs in the 1950s and 60s, the LCMS was active in establishing a system of schools in Hong Kong. Then, as Church of All Nations sought a permanent location for its newly-formed worshipping community, a partnership in education seemed natural. The LCMS involvement in the early 1960s was instrumental in securing the support of the Hong Kong Education Department for a private, English-language, American school on Hong Kong Island.

In February 1965, the Hong Kong Education Department approved a grant of 43,000 square feet of land in Repulse Bay at no cost and an interest free loan of US\$300,000. The LCMS matched this land grant with a grant of US\$250,000 and a loan of US\$300,000. The LCMS also provided a headmaster and the initial core of teachers (indeed, a portion of the Headmaster's salary which was paid directly by LCMS until 1997). Meanwhile, the American business community in Hong Kong organized itself to raise an additional US\$150,000. This support paved the way for building our first building in Repulse Bay.

## Operation and Management of HKIS

While the LCMS founded our school, operations and financial accountability of HKIS have been entrusted to the Board of Managers of the HKIS Association Limited through an Operating Agreement. The Board is self-perpetuating and appoints members to two-year terms, subject to the approval of the Hong Kong Education Department. The Board is responsible for providing a program of an American-style education, grounded in the Christian faith, for our unique international setting. In accordance with the

operating agreement with the LCMS, a majority of the Board members are members of an LCMS congregation such as Church of All Nations. The Head of School is called by the LCMS Board for International Mission in consultation with the HKIS Board of Managers. The relationship between the LCMS and the HKIS Board of Managers is also facilitated through the LCMS Chief Mission Officer.

The LCMS has always encouraged the expansion of HKIS - from one building in Repulse Bay to four divisions on two campuses with 2,700 students and 500 faculty and staff today. While the first building at Repulse Bay was supported by both an LCMS grant and loan, all subsequent developments have been self-financed by the school, mainly through the sale of debentures and by assessing corporations and families with a per-student capital levy. Operationally, the school is financially independent, with almost all of its operating costs being met by tuition fees, supplemented by fundraising.

HKIS recruits professional educators worldwide, and we have been blessed to include faculty trained and qualified through the extensive, worldwide Lutheran school network.

## Respecting Diversity

The over 50 years of educating students from around the world are testament to the fact that the HKIS school model is suited to Hong Kong, where so many peoples, cultures and religions come together. Acknowledging this diversity, HKIS has taught the Christian faith, which includes a deep respect for the diverse spiritual lives of all members of the community.

## Blessings Extended

Church of All Nations (CAN), with its chapel and congregation on the Repulse Bay campus, continues as an independent congregation of the LCMS and welcomes all in Christian worship and fellowship. CAN and HKIS enjoy a rich partnership in serving

the entire community.

The community of education at HKIS has extended beyond Hong Kong. Arising from the HKIS model, the LCMS has developed two sister schools, Concordia International School Shanghai and Concordia International School Hanoi. Dedicated to service and global understanding, HKIS will continue to extend the blessings bestowed at its founding throughout the region.