

Gill St. Bernard school receives a visit from Singapore math leader

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Internationally recognized leader in Singapore math Yeap Ban Har, Ph.D., instructs kindergarten through sixth grade students during open lessons at Gill St. Bernard's School.

Internationally recognized leader in Singapore math Yeap Ban Har, Ph.D., offered on-site professional development training to Gill St. Bernard's teachers, kindergarten through grade six, on April 16.

Ban Har—currently the director of curriculum and professional development at Singapore's Pathlight School as well as the principal of Marshall Cavendish Institute—first established a connection with Gill in the spring of 2012 when Lower School Director Peggy Campbell-Rush visited more than a dozen classes throughout Indonesia and Singapore. Through the experience, Campbell-Rush was able to ensure that Gill St. Bernard's math curriculum accurately portrays those programs offered in schools where the hands-on approach to learning initially began in 1992. "My visit reassured me that we are on the same page and in the same sequence with Singapore," said Campbell-Rush, who shared her experience with math teachers across Gill St. Bernard's School. "It was so validating to see that GSB is doing everything right."

The premise behind Singapore math—a three-step procedure including concrete, pictorial and abstract learning—stems from psychologist and author Jerome S. Bruner, whose 1961 novel *The Process of Education* suggests that knowing is a process, not a product. It is Dr. Ban Har's belief that the main method for training teachers in Singapore math instruction is through open lessons. "Learning in action shows teachers, firsthand, the approach of using concrete materials and lesson structure in mathematics," Ban Har said.

Gill St. Bernard's Singapore math program was introduced nine years ago, beginning with a pilot program in now retired faculty member Debora Miller's second grade class. Due to its success, Gill St. Bernard's Singapore math curriculum has quickly expanded since 2005 to include Lower and Middle School classrooms. "For us in Singapore, this is the only way of teaching mathematics, grades one through 12," said Dr. Ban Har. "The improvement in students' test scores is quite startling."