

A CELEBRATION OF EDUCATION

The annual event hosted by Education Post brought together parents, educators and experts, reports **Chris Davis**



The International Schools Festival, held on September 24 at the Renaissance Harbourview Hotel, featured over 70 exhibitors and 2,500 parents.



The event featured the launch of Education Post International Schools Guide 2017/18.

Eager to discover all they could about education options for their children, around 3,500 families attended the second Hong Kong International Schools Festival on September 24. Co-organised by Education Post and Top Schools Hong Kong, the event included over 70 exhibitors, along with presentations and panel discussions featuring respected experts in the field.

Parents had the opportunity to talk to teachers, principals and senior representatives; and to learn more about the different kindergarten, primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. "As Hong Kong's premier event of its kind, the high number of parents was no surprise," said a representative from Think International Kindergarten, one of the many

exhibitors taking part. "They all have a genuine interest in ensuring their children receive a quality education."

Ruth Benny, a former teacher and founder of Top Schools Hong Kong, said the event was a unique opportunity to hear experts discuss current educational issues, as well as answer important questions specific to Hong Kong. "Parents get a good sense of whether they are aligned philosophically with a school by hearing the principals speak," she said. "This was an exceptional opportunity to get up close and personal with principals and admissions staff."

Angela Reilly, assistant director for institutional advancement at Hong Kong Academy, described the event as "a great opportunity to meet a huge number

of prospective parents at once." She added that most questions tended to focus on the admissions process, the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma, pathways to graduation, and options regarding funding and fees.

"We were able to provide a wealth of information to reassure parents and students and answer their various questions," said Jane Archibald, director of admissions and marketing at Nord Anglia International School Hong Kong. "Typically, parents wanted to know about the philosophy of our school, what sets it apart from other institutions, and what the school is going to do to ensure their child's future success."

For Nick Strong and Elizabeth Williams, universi-



From left: Ruth Benny, Ian Clayton, John Jalsevac, Warren Needham and Anne Sawyer



Alex Gibbo of Agenda Consulting summarizes "The International School Survey 2016".



Parents were given opportunities to communicate ideas with principals and admissions experts.

ty guidance counsellors at Yew Chung International School, the priority was to offer valuable advice on the steps needed to progress to universities in different countries, and how to prepare effectively for the admissions process. They noted that schools should provide students with assistance in creating a personal profile which covers interests, strengths, accomplishments, and career aspirations.

The day began with a breakfast meeting in which principals and school executives were given the opportunity to mingle, and were also presented with key findings from "The International School Survey 2016" conducted by Agenda Consulting and MMG Education. There was also a panel discussion on "curriculum

choice", in which experts discussed the differences between the various educational systems offered in Hong Kong, such as US and UK-based curricula, and programmes offered by the IB. The discussion also touched on the challenges children encounter when switching from a local to international school, and what it takes to thrive in the respective systems.

Commenting on the success of the Festival, Razlan Manjaji, business director, education, SCMP Publishers, was delighted with the festival's success. "The event has grown significantly from 40 booths in 2015 to over 70 this year," noted Manjaji. Indeed, the Hong Kong International Schools Festival appears on track to becoming one of the city's hallmark events for years to come. ■