

Portland family

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*5th grade Int'l School student
Sydney Bright with a friend at the
Wolong Giant Panda Preserve*

School News

Portland 5th Graders Pass Chinese Government Fluency Test

Eleven English-speaking children passed a Chinese government proficiency test normally administered to adults. The test (called "HSK" for its Chinese initials) serves as a requirement to enter university in China as an undergraduate student, and is used by employers in China for positions requiring basic competence in Chinese. The HSK test is likened to the Test of English as a Foreign Language in the United States.

"We are very impressed with these results," said Zhang Jie, Director of the China Language Office in Beijing. "The kids have done a great job."

"The children use the same textbooks as their peers in China," said Yafei Liu, Lead Chinese teacher and 10-year veteran of the program at The International School. "I'm extremely proud of my kids, though not surprised."

The children are 10- and 11-year-old native English speakers who have been attending The International School's Chinese immersion program since preschool, according to Bruce Bayliss, Head of School. They study an American curriculum with all of their subjects – math, science, social studies, etc - taught in Chinese by native Chinese speakers. As part of their 5th grade curriculum, the children spent two weeks in China in October attending a Chinese boarding school and visiting important Chinese sites.

"These results show that a complete immersion program started at a young age can really prepare children for exchanges in other languages and cultures," said Bayliss.

For more information on the International School visit www.intlschool.org.