



IICS OPEN BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date and Time: September 19th, 2019, 6:00pm-7:30pm @ Kennedy Lodge, Bosphorus University

1. Opening by Ms. Ataman (AA)

- Ms. Ataman (AA) called the meeting to order and introduced the Board members.
- Also AA encouraged the parents to consider being a part of the Board.
- AA mentioned the parent survey, which was conducted last spring, and the results have been shared with the whole community.
- The Board and the Leadership Team have looked at the top concerns of the results and the survey will continue to be sent out every Spring to have an ongoing benchmark for the school.

2. Parent Survey Results by Nathan Walker (NW)

- NW welcomed parents and introduced the Leadership Team.
- NW mentioned some of the concerns and challenges that came out of the Open Board Meeting last year. One of the biggest concerns expressed by parents was the number of school days.
- **Calendar:**
 - The official School calendar is approved by the Board of Directors. The School year consists of approximately 180 days of classroom instruction, plus up to 15 days of in-service training, orientation days, etc.
 - 2020-2021 School Calendar: 183 School Days and 181 Instructional Days
- **Parent Survey:**
 - 133 parents responded
 - Questions asked covered the following areas:
 - Academics
 - Personal Development
 - Health & Well-being
 - Communication
 - Operations
 - Facilities
 - Community
 - Leadership
 - IICS Mission
- NW mentioned that responses, including comments, were given to parents without editing or eliminating any of the responses.
- NW presented 6 top concerns such as:
 - Hiring & Retaining Teachers (NW)
 - Student Behavior & Bullying (JG & RG)
 - Food Service (NW)
 - Relocation (FF)
 - Health & Safety (NW)
 - Strategic Plan (NW)

3. Survey Results:

- **Hiring & Retaining Teachers**
 - **Hiring**
 - Identify the “best fit” candidates through personal referrals or recruiting agencies.
 - A thorough vetting process via confidential references & background checks.

- Ensure a highly competitive compensation package.
- School reputation, geographical location, political stability, perceived safety, building relationships, etc.
- **Retaining**
 - Identify the highest performing teachers.
 - Provide a positive, collaborative and enjoyable working environment.
 - Ensure a highly competitive compensation package, including incentives to remain.
 - A school community that is true to its mission, core values and has a plan!
- **2019-2020**
 - For this school year we hired 13 new, full-time teachers/staff representing 7 nationalities
 - 600+ applicants
- **2020-2021**
 - New Secondary School Principal
 - Secondary Principal Search Committee
 - 80+ applicants
 - 13 short-listed
 - 6 semi-finalists
 - 2-3 finalists who will visit IICS in mid-October.
 - Secondary students, parents, staff, board will have the opportunity to meet, interview and provide feedback to assist in the selection process.

Q: Could you please explain what you are looking for in the “best fit teacher”?

A: Regardless of the school, you want to be able to find someone, first and foremost who has child safety as a priority, have a passion to live outside their host country, a sense of flexibility, coach sports, sponsor activities, be part of the community.

- **Student Behaviour and Bullying by John Gates (JG) & Rob Grantham (RG)**

- JG explained the expectations, students rights and responsibilities
- Secondary Leadership Team, Head of Departments and teachers spent a lot of time creating the IICS Secondary Departmental Handbook which explains; grading, how grading is done, expectations and consequences.
- Bullying Prevention Handbook is also available for parents and students to explain what the bullying is and how to try to prevent it.
- JG also presented IICS Secondary School: Who to Know to help parents to know key contact people.
- Ms. Hazlett explained that the Bullying Prevention Handbook came about in 2017. The Leadership Team and teachers discussed the feedback from Student Climate Survey with students and listened to their thoughts, built a committee and searched many international resources to create this handbook.
- Ms. Hazlett also explained what the spectrum of bullying is in Primary School
- RG mentioned that the school has a process to deal with issues and problems when/if they arrive. Primary School also has the PSPE (Personal Social and Physical Education) curriculum from the IB which guides our teaching of these kinds of conflict resolutions skills in the classroom program
- Outside the classroom, like on the bus or class trips, we have a very structured and formal relationship with Mitur.
- Digital citizenship program: we address online bullying and have very high expectations from students on how to treat each other digitally.

Q: I was sitting around the dinner table with my 9th grader and he said there are a lot of new rules this year particularly 10m. away from the classroom. How would you address this rule?

A: Because last year the biggest concern was Secondary students were floating around the building without their teachers knowing where they were. For their security and safety we need to know where they are.

Q: If a student gets bullied, what do you ask them to do?

A: RG - We ask them to tell either their homeroom teacher, counselor or principal immediately so we can handle and solve it. JG – Ms. Hashmi and I are around the building all the time so if we build a relationship, they are much more likely to come talk to us. Ms. Grahame (Gr 5 Teacher) – We have a very strong cultural of morning meetings, students come with problems or feelings as groups or individually.

4. Food Service

- Our goal is to provide healthy options to our students. Last year two surveys have been sent out to students. The majority were pleased but there were concerns such as “not enough food”.
- NW met with an independent nutritionist to get an idea about organic food, school nutrition and how to identify potential catering services.
- NW also visited the Ipek Hanim Ciftligi farm in Izmir and requested a proposal from them.
- Contract with Sardunya will finish at the end of this school year.
- NW will invite additional catering services to submit proposals.

Q: Is there a reason why we can't bring our own lunch?

A: Different schools have different practices, offer options to bring own lunch or purchase from the school. Offering food is in Turkish culture. An other option would be that school can provide food and students pay. It is to be discussed at the Board meeting

Q: Do you follow up the menu if the students eat or not? Quality of the food?

A: Mr. Ferhangil (FF): Sardunya themselves follow up on a daily basis. Hisar food is prepared at Marmara Campus and sent to Hisar. Primary Vice Principal meets regularly with the food manager to go through the menu and which food has been eaten. FF also recommended parents to refer to school if they have any concerns

Q: Are there any other companies that you are searching for next year? For example Ipek Hanim'in Ciftligi is providing organic products. I've noticed that the brand Sardunya has low key grocery market products. Could you please make sure they have quality brands if they can't provide organic food?

A: We do have several providers that we would like to invite, evaluate their products and choose the best for the school.

Q: Are the students aware of what good food/nutrition is?

A: In Primary assemblies, it's explained that the balance plate, colour palate is. Serving dessert at lunch is also reduced.

Q: Is it possible to separate Hisar and Marmara kitchen?

A: It is something that we need to look at.

5. Campus Relocation

- FF explained that himself and the Board have been trying to relocate the Marmara Campus for the last six years. Since Istanbul is an extremely overpriced real estate city, it is very challenging to relocate the campus
- He also informed the parents that we have managed to find somewhere which serves all the needs we have at an affordable level. It is in Kemerburgaz, 80,000 m² which is owned by the Ministry of Finance
- Status of the property: Waiting for the approval from the Ministry of Finance to be able to take transfer of the property. We might have a clear picture by the end of the year
- Target at the moment is to move for 2021-22 school year
- When the agreement is in place, getting the paperwork and construction approval from the Eyup Municipality may take 5-10 months as well as construction another 10 months.

Q: Why does the Ministry of Finance lease the land to school?

A: This specific land is educational zone and they can't build anything else on it. So they have to find a university or somebody like us.

Q: Are there any other parties interested in this land or is it just IICS?

A: At the moment, there was a university but because of current economical and political situation they decided to pull out.

Q: Is this land big enough to build one campus?

A: Yes it is, it will be able to cover the whole school.

Q: Is financing secure?

A: It is not secure but we've discussed with certain banks and they are happy to provide financing subject to certain criterias so we need to be able to finalize this deal first and take it as a package. We also have collateral that we can use for financing which is Marmara property. Banks are comfortable with that set up.

Q: What's the plan for Marmara Campus?

A: As long as we are renting the new property, we will not dispose of Marmara as a back up. It is in educational zone and very valuable.

6. Finance Report by Oussama Najjar (ON)

- ON introduced the Finance Committee and Consulting Members
- ON also presented the main tasks of the Finance Committee
 - Govern IICS financials, processes and procedures
 - Oversee the budget process
 - Propose the budget for IICS Board approval
 - Internal 'audit' admin operations
- **Other tasks**
 - Active search for new FC members
 - Meetings with concerned parents
 - Financial modelling for the Relocation Project
 - Mid year 'ledger by ledger' review
- ON explained that collection of tuition might change. The Finance Committee will look into giving discounts for siblings, but it all depends on finance status of the school
- ON presented the student/teacher ratio, cash positions, expense distribution. He also explained that we are a non-profit school and we should ideally put aside 5% of our yearly revenue year after year as a reserve
- FF explained that the critical number can go down as much as it can because we have a teacher student ratio, the majority of the school cost is basically the salaries. The only issues with the school operation, it takes one year to be able to react to any contracts and obligations. We would lose money for a year but adjustment is done fairly quickly after that. It's been monitored and followed very clearly. We always try to maintain a healthy student teacher ratio
- ON also presented 2019-20 budget based on 525 students and revised budget based on 500 students
- It is requested that Mr. Kruyswijk to give details about "depreciation"

Q: Does the school ever receive donations from Alumni?

A: NW explained that IICS created a new department this year called "Marketing and Development" to develop a relationship with Alumni and focus to reach a thousand Alumni around the world and work on fundraising.

FF added that IICS is an only international school in Istanbul and we have a very big expat community which is around only 3 to 4 years. So we do not have strong bonding and that's the biggest challenge for the marketing department facing.

- March 28 is the International Festival and it will be the first Alumni event

Q: Is there any marketing plan for this year and who decides that?

A: MS. Gabriela Bernal is responsible for the Marketing department and there is a plan.

Q: How many students can Marmara & Hisar accommodate?

A: It is 550 for Marmara and 100 for Hisar. The new school will have a capacity of 750-800 students

Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.