

The International School of Macao Parents' Association (TISPA)  
General Meeting  
Tuesday, 13th February 2018, 1:30pm  
TIS – Conference Room  
Agenda

**Present**

Howard Stribbell	Mary-Anne Jasinski	Chris Coates	Abby Barrett
Ana Samsoodin	Nick Chignall	Nicole Hammer	Sarah Luvisutto
Laura Clarke	Liz Chiu		

***Apologies:*** Amanda Kait, Connie Johnson

**Minutes of last meeting (16th January)**

Distributed on-line. No corrections noted. Accepted as correct.

**Welcome**

**Head of Schools' Report (Howard Stribbell)**

- In continuation from the last meeting the Board has approved a 7% tuition increase.
- From our last meeting the Kindergarten Fee Equalization Plan. We had a meeting with DSEJ for their input and also parents feedback as well back to the Board. As a result we have lowered our exceptions. We are going to keep kindergarten tuition fees lower than G1-G3. However higher than it is right now. Now we will have equal steps from kindergarten, G1-G3, G4-G6. The difference between kindergarten and Division One will be lower by \$10,000.00 MOP is the goal to have the difference between the two. That means it will be a lower increase each year. Next year is the biggest increase that we are anticipating at 12% which we have reduced from the 15%. Then the next two years a around 9% and 10% depending on how overall tuition increase is. The DSEJ was ok with that. Their key thing is that we communicate it and concerns about our existing families. New families they are not as concerned as obviously they are joining the school and will know what the cost will be ahead of time. This was shared with the Open House on Saturday. We will share at the Kindergarten Information Evening and another date in April to share with our TIS families for them to understand the impact on them.
- Staff recruiting, this is ongoing and getting better and better. Mr. Stribbell just came back from Canada where Dave (former Principal of the Secondary School) and Neil Johnson (Co-Founder) went to the Queens Overseas Recruiting Fair. Mr. Stribbell went to Edmonton with Dave as they had a Job Fair there. Overall pretty good. The biggest purpose of the Edmonton trip was to connect with all the Government people we needed to connect with. Mark Lockwood the incoming Head of School was there and we were able to introduce Mark to Alberta Education, to the University of Alberta, different partnerships that we have in Alberta. Mr Lockwood already knows Alberta very, very well as he is a Deputy Superintendent in a big school division. However not really the International side which is a whole different department.

- Staff recruiting is set for Secondary. For Elementary we are almost set. Only a few positions left.
- Mr Coates advised that he has been in regular contact with his replacement who is in Singapore. They are communicating regularly to make sure that the transition goes as smoothly as possible.
- Special Events. The Open House was held this past weekend and was very successful. If you had friends who attended any feedback would be helpful as it was done differently this year. Good attendance numbers with almost 300 people. Because we are opening up new classrooms we are expecting more applications this year than any other year.
- The biggest issue in the community is the PK application process. All of our application processes are tied to DSEJ. We cannot accept applications until March 1st and there is an online system they need to fill in. Or they can do it through TIS. Then we have 4 weeks to go through all the applications and to make our first round of offers. Which should be for about 80% - 90% of our positions we have available. We try to keep some back. DSEJ would prefer us to fill all of them. But it is not the way our school works right now. Ms Jasinski and her team will be working almost every weekend screening 400 kids for the 90 positions in PK
- Our list of VIPs we get are greater than the number of vacancies we have. Our list of siblings take up more than 50% of those positions. Siblings are given some extra consideration. We do want families to stay together but it is not a guarantee. Everyone has to get to that certain level to get in. Admissions is a challenging aspect with Companies, Board Members, Government Officials, existing families. It is a long process but a good process. If you hear in the Community the key thing is for families to follow the process. We are adding a class into PK and increasing our enrolment and JK as well to try and accomodate that need.
- The current DSEJ process is for families to get more of a fair chance. It use to be we only accept 100 applications. So if you are lined up and get your application in then those are the ones that get interviewed. Now it is a computerised system and you can choose up to six schools and the schools must interview.
- Ms Jasinski advised that the DSEJ determine the interview dates as not to conflict with other school interview dates. On Saturday 17th March we have just under 300 3 year olds to be interviewed.
- Mr. Stribbell explained they have a very good interview system. They work in different centres. Different people observe them so it is not any one persons decision. They all set a standard.
- Ms Jasinski further explained that they use a rubrics that we are using and scoring on kids while observing and watching them. Things like communication. Do they communicate only with the person they are with or do they communicate with others in the room that they don't know. Do they appear to only answer in single words or do they appear to speak in sentences. It does not matter what language they are speaking. Do they cling to the person they are with or do they run around and try other things. The criteria is they have to be toilet trained.
- Ms Jasinski added we could go to half day PK program and double the number of PK students. However what are we going to do at the end of PK? You have already been at the school for a year and now only half can come back. You cant keep doubling up.

- Mr Stribbell advised the important news to send out to parents is that we don't accept just the best and the brightest. We just want well adjusted kids that have families where parents are involved but not over protective. Given them a broad range of activities. It is hard because kindergarten is suppose to be the place to learn socialisation. Learn how to share. Learn how to be friends and you almost have to do some of that before you get into school now. It is harder now as parents for families as our kids don't go play on the playground by themselves. We set up a date and go do something with another family. Or just with their immediate family of grandparents for the first two years or so. They don't get the exposure. It is a big challenge but Mr Stribbell is very please with our team and how they handle it. Beyond that and after kindergarten we do have admission tests and student have to reach a certain level and if they achieve that certain level then they can be considered for enrolment. But not everyone who passes the admission test will get admitted. That is really important that people know that. Does not mean that you failed the admission test. You may have been eligible however there wasn't a seat available for you. Need to pass the admission test, pass that level, then there is a variety of factors as to whether or not you get a seat.
- Mr Stribbell is very excited for the Walkathon tomorrow. Parents maybe disappointed as there has been a change and parents won't be on the track with the kids. It will be exciting to see the older kids with the younger kids and to see them all as a house. This is our first real official whole school houses event.
- Mr Coates explained that this will happen one time a year. With schedules it is hard to get everybody together so this is the one time.
- The 15th Anniversary will be held on the March 24th with Community Day.
- Mr Chignall advised this Community Day will be a food festival. Similar to the Macau one. Cultural food festival style with games and activities as well.
- Mr Stribbell advised we will have short ceremony in the middle there to celebrate the 15th anniversary for parents and students. Then we will have a special ceremony on March 26th at 4pm in the Black Box. That will be by invitation. There will be government people, Board and TISPA invited. We will get the kids involved as we want it to be about the kids.
- Mr Stribbell clarified on TISPA's role. TISPA is not expected to inform parents on the schools behalf. To Mr Stribbell it is a joint thing and we all try and give as many communication channels as possible. TISPA's role is for us to bring initiatives to TISPA to get their feedback on things and ideas from TISPA. As you are the ones most involved. Obviously you would have more of an idea what is happening at the school. You do not have to speak on behalf of all parents and you do not need to speak to all parents.
- Mr Stribbell excused himself from the meeting and looks forward to seeing everyone at the Walkathon tomorrow.

**Principal's Reports****Elementary (Mary-Anne Jasinski)**

- Division One Assembly which is normally in the morning is a 2pm tomorrow to accommodate the Walkathon.
- March 2nd and 3rd large ACAMIS Conference at TIS. There will be 400 - 500 delegates. Really exciting to have this here. It is nice to show case TIS and we have a lot of our own teachers presenting. It is a chance for us to highlight the knowledge and the skills that our teachers bring on a more international level.
- March 6th current Club sessions end.
- We are close to being done with hiring. Three contracts are being sent out today. The very first time since Ms. Jasinski has been here for 6 years, more than once in this round salary has come up multiple times. Ms Jasinski is hearing more and more frequently that for teachers salary is a big part of their decision. Comparing our salary packages to other schools.
- March 9th Ms. Jasinski is going to send home the letters asking parents to indicate whether their child will be returning next year or not. Also if they have younger siblings who will be able to register. Parents are here on contracts and sometimes they find out later that they aren't going to be here. This doesn't cause a penalty. It is to give Ms. Jasinski a base line to have for interviewing how many seats will be available for each grade. There will be a turn around of one week to get that information back.
- Teachers are supporting the Kindergarten and Elementary programs we are calling MACE. Which is Moral and Civic Education. We have combined the Alberta Education and Macau Moral and Civic program. Healthy lifestyle, friendships, positive relationships, citizenship within your school community and in your own community. Ongoing work with Elementary children as they learn the social behaviours.
- Open House over 200 elementary and kindergarten attended.

**Secondary (Chris Coates)**

- Recruiting is very close to being completed.
- Students have registered for their courses next year. Mr Coates is working with the academic councillors on a timetable for next year.
- Right now assigning classes to specific teachers. Ahead of schedule.
- Report cards sent home on Friday 9th February. Another set of report cards going out on April 20th.
- Parent Teachers Conference in May.
- Introducing an online booking system for Parent Teachers Conferences. Mr Coates will think will be a big improvement. Where parents will have to go on line and if they want to see a specific teacher they will be able to access their schedule and book a time with that teacher.
- Last year introduced the Student Welfare Tracker. We have a team that includes our two Vice Principals, our Social and Academic Councillors, our Head of Student Services and they meet every 2 weeks. Teachers have the opportunity to put names forward to the Student Welfare Committee. For example a student who maybe struggling academically or social and emotional. They bring that name forward to the Committee. The Committee will investigate the situation and get more information to come up with a plan of action. It

- is a proactive approach to academic and social emotional concerns. Before the teachers would meet every few month. Now it is every two weeks so we can identify kids and react to the situation and come up with a plan to deal with students before it is too late.
- Open House we had 30 - 40 parents in the Black Box for the presentation.
- Last year we introduce a confidential reference from the previous school.
- Experience Week some students on March 10th, 11th and 12th. There are pre experience meetings coming up parents in the evenings. The different trip leader have been holding these events. Parents have been coming to ask questions and to learn more. There are pre meetings with staff and students.
- Trip Leaders working with International SOS on preventive things and how to avoid problems on trips. What to do if a problem occurs.
- March 29th and 30th having post experience week assemblies. Will come together to reflect and celebrate the whole experience. Kids are going to produce videos from their trips and show that to get the closure. Reiterate the value of those experience week trips.

### **Kindergarten (Nick Chignall)**

- Art pieces Ms. Campbell has been working on the first piece is actually up. The story board and documentation is being canvased and printed. This will go up beside to explain how that story unfolded. One more piece to be put up this week. Then a few more. Currently sourcing the bamboo to hang the pieces.
- Mr Chignall just came back from ECE Conference from ACAMIS. There was a heavy focus on dual language learners in their early childhood context and how to support them as language learners in an international school. Mr Chignall got a lot of great information from LEDA which ran the keynotes and they do a lot with dual languages back in the States in the International sphere. They broke it down how can leaders support, teachers and families support them. Mr Chignall and Ms Jasinski have spoken about how they can get that communicated to parents about how long language development works at ECE as you always get the questions why is my child not speaking english yet? Mr Chignall is working on how we can get that across. How long it takes and what that looks like. How we can support them at home. In their home language and in english. Looking at that information and how best to share it with the community is the next step.
- Ms Jasinski explained that this makes her really happy. When she first started shifting TIS to dual language model for young learners it was a very radical thing to do here. Teachers were not familiar with it and parents were not familiar with it. Ms Jasinski feels that TIS is a school in the forefront in terms of language development for young children. We are modelling the most current ways of working with young children and now the rest of Asia is starting to catch up. It is really exciting we have an opportunity to talk with other professionals about other schools who can support that and help us to do that. It is something that takes a long time to shift teacher practice. We are asking them to do something that they never learned to do as students. They didn't live in that model and they weren't taught as teachers how to teach that way. It takes awhile to get everyone moving in the same direction. The kids benefit.

**Treasurer's Report (Abby Barrett)**

**January Pop-corn:** \$3430.00 (\$2581.70 profit)

**February Pop-corn:** \$4530.00 (\$3863.70 profit)

**Events Report****Events since last meeting:**

- **Dress Down Day - February 7**
- **Open House - February 10**

**Upcoming events:**

- **Walkathon - February 14**
- **Open House Day - February 18**
- **ACAMIS Conference - March 2**
- **Community Day - March 24**
- **Other upcoming Events**

**General Business**

- Ms Hammer asked if in the past if there were parent Class Room Reps for each class ? Ms Hammer asked if we are looking to get those back for the next school year?
- Ms Jaskinski advised yes, it is possible.
- Nicole advised we could approach these parents and get more parents involved in TISPA. Nicole explained they are thinking of getting a form and on the first school day or just before when parents are filling in forms we can add one of those and parents can add if they want to be a Class Room Rep.
- Ms Jasinski suggested for the form to decide what you need and what you want for that role. Teachers can be having those conversations as well.
- Ms Hammer advised that we need to know what the teacher needs to as the role can be helpful for the teacher as well.

- Ms Jasinski advised we can have conversations with teachers in the next few weeks around that and what they would perceive the role would look like. Ms Hammer could do the same and bring that information together. In Ms Jasinski experience it works the best in younger grades. It is a parent role that connects parents and teachers.
- General feedback from parents was that the Zones Workshop was well received and attended.
- Ms Hammer read a comment to come and support your kid in their house team. However we still have kids in different houses. Ms Hammer asked if the school is thinking of moving the siblings into one house?
- Mr Coates responded that they did talk about it in the planning. What do we do? There was debate back and forth. At one of Mr Coates previous schools they did try and put the kids from the same families in the same houses. Mr Coates sees the pros and cons of both sides. We are in the introductory year of the house system. Ultimately the committee made a decision that we wouldn't just automatically put siblings into the same house. We want to go through our first year of the house system and then reflect on it afterwards. Get feedback from everyone involved and try to improve it. That certainly will be one of the questions on the questionnaire.

**Confirm date for next meeting** Next General Meeting date confirmed for Tuesday, March 13th at 1:30 pm in the Conference Room.