

**Vientiane International School  
Annual General Meeting September 16, 2015**

The meeting was called to order at 18:00.

28 people were in attendance, including Board members

**1) Introduction by Meagen Baldwin, Chair, Board of Trustees.**

- a) The main purpose for the meeting is the election of a new board. Sufficient votes have already been lodged to meet quorum. There are 6 Board positions open, with 7 candidates.
- b) Pre-voting has taken place and the ballot remains open for another 5 minutes. Ballot counting will take place during director's presentation.
- c) Acknowledgement of departing Board members and the work they have done over the years: Bobby Allen, Kay Buddharaksa, Frazer Hendersen.
- d) Public acknowledgement of Greg Smith, former director, for his work over the years in getting the school to its current position.
- e) Welcome of the new director, Jane McGee.
- f) Voting closed.
- g) Introduction of candidates: Meagen Baldwin, Bill Pennington, Sandra Seastedt, Dinesh Sellamuttu, Seng Thammavong, Michael Victor (absent tonight), Rachel Zachrisson. Thanks for their willingness to stand for election

**2) Director's report**

- a) Thanks and praise for number in attendance
- b) Acknowledgement of the importance of parent involvement in education and school
- c) Review and highlights of the annual report:

**i) Sustainability**

- (1) 27 graduating students
- (2) Enrolment pattern--more than one student, on the average, joining the school each week. Transitory nature of our school.
- (3) Sustained IBDP results: consistent, along with the highlight of the high number of bilingual diplomas. Use of this data is for programmatic improvement
- (4) ISA result comparison: some dips and valleys. Most of these discrepancies are statistically insignificant but where they are not, there will be further discussion. Standardized tests are one piece of data among many other assessments of each child.

**ii) Finances:** Thanks to Bryndis Chapman and her team with this work and thanks to the Board for their commitment to funding the school. Last year income came in slightly higher than expected. 11% over prior year. Slight deficit last year mainly due to software expenses and facility safety and maintenance.

**iii) Development**

- (1) **Program Improvement:** relationship between facilities and offering best programs to students (science labs upgraded, flexible space in secondary, kitchen in primary)

**(2) Strategic Plan:** Mother Tongue and languages--New building for Mother Tongue, a win-win; Counseling in secondary--renovation to secondary office space.

**iv) Strategic Plan Update**

- (1) Diverse and Language Rich/Strong Language programs--increase in professional development, secondary work to determine language offerings (feasibility study)
- (2) Needs and Talents--special education needs alignment. Looking at children on both ends of the spectrum. Creation of handbook, work with faculty on data-driven pedagogy.
- (3) A Community of Learners-- one campus, maximum 580 students.
- (4) Enriched Curricular Choices-- many of these items already implemented, now working on sustainability.
  - (a) Already an increase in counseling staff, working on communication about diploma outlines.
  - (b) Commitment to feasibility study in relation to design technology.
- (5) Comprehensive Co-Curricular Activities--trial online sign-up in primary. Acknowledgement of current 95% student enrolment in CCP.

**3) Question and Answer Session**

Q1: Small clarification on 20/20 Vision: is there a reason for differences in numbers of potential maximum students (ie 550 or 580 students)?

A. The number has gone back and forth but after a review of the current space our maximum is 580.

Q2: We are limited by space. We are in a unique situation as the only internationally accredited school in Vientiane, and we are reaching our maximum capacity. Are we discussing our size and role in relation to a possible growing expat population?

A. We frequently discuss this on the board. There are a number of factors that come into the discussion including physical space, space in English support program, and the difficult-to-predict context in which we operate.

Q3: Isn't the question 2 form versus 3 form (a 2 section school or a 3 section school)?

A. The school needs to assess the sustainability of a program over time. It can be difficult to assess future demand for programs and for enrollment.

Q4: There are some discrepancies and inconsistencies in CCP offerings eg the balance between arts and sports offerings, fee-paying vs. free activities, etc.

A. There may be and these need to be discussed with and reviewed by the CCP coordinator. We are currently reviewing the program and its implementation in line with the strategic plan.

Q5: It is difficult for employers to hire and employees to accept positions if places in the school are not clear. Is it possible for the school to give a definite 'yes' or 'no' to families seeking a place in the school?

A. We try to give an accurate picture of what the enrolment is at different grade levels so that parents can make an informed decision. It is the goal of the school to be transparent in this.

Q6: English language testing is one part of attaining a place in the school. Has the process for this changed? Can students be tested before arriving in Vientiane?

- A. It is sometimes possible to test children in advance of arriving, but it is important to remember that admission is not first come, first in. Applicants are placed in a pool of potential students and each is looked at against the criteria of the school.

Q7: If English-language is the issue, can we put more resources into EAL?

- A. The school follows international best practice in terms of maintaining an appropriate balance between English speakers and those students that need EAL. Increasing EAL resources does not help with the balance between EAL and English speaking students. For the school to increase the number of EAL students, it needs to increase the number of English-speaking students.

Q8: Is the Nationality balance school-wide or is it by grade-level?

- A. In the past it was for the whole school but we have started to look at it in the primary and secondary levels.

Q9: We are challenged by the ability to communicate to a diverse parent population. Could there be parent group/cultural group representatives that help the school to communicate to various communities and to also hear from them on their issues of concern?

- A. We acknowledge the challenge and re-iterate a commitment to continue to engage with all the parents of the school. For example, last year surveys and questionnaires undertaken as part of the Strategic Planning process were produced in multiple languages. The Parents and Friends group has cultural representatives who have been very active and engaged.

Q10: In regards to student performance data: placement of students in universities would be useful.

- A. We have a lot of this data and we can give some data in relation to that in the future. We will post further statistics on the website.

**4) Approval of minutes from AGM 2014.** These minutes reflect input/comments from those that attended the last AGM. The minutes will be posted on the school website with a deadline of two weeks for comment. Nil comment on minutes will result in approval.

#### **5) Results of Board election:**

Thanks again to all for participation in this close election. The 6 elected board members are: Michael Victor, Dinesh Sellamuttu, Meagen Baldwin, Sandra Seastedt, Seng Thammavong, and Bill Pennington. Orathai Hoffman and Felicte Doudou are also Board members for 2015-2016.

**The meeting was concluded by the Board Chair at 18:58.**