

Vientiane International School

Annual General Meeting Wednesday 10th May 2017

The meeting was called to order at 17:30.

Total 13 participants, including 7 of 8 board members.

Board Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

1. Board Elections

- Addressed the new board member election process.
- Introduced the candidates: Koen Everaert, Cliff Meyers, Sandra Seastedt, Dinesh Sellamuttu, Michael Victor
- Paid well wishes to board member leaving: Orathai Hofmann, Seng Thammavong, Michael Jeffress, Bill Pennington
- Voting was opened for AGM participants
- Quorum Established
- Voting was closed and final counting began outside of the meeting by Orathai Hofmann and Bryndis Chapman.

2. Minutes approved from AGM 21st September 2016.

3. Board Chair welcomed visiting Head of School candidate, Mr. John Burns and reminded the community of the parent meeting scheduled for 17:30, 11th May.

4. Director's Report - VIS 2016-2017

Key areas of focus:

1. Transition

- New families transitioned in to VIS: Teaching faculty (&IA's) 18, Admin & other 10, Primary students 109, Secondary students 35
- Enrollment of new students consistent in August 2016, lower primary fairly full
- Enrolment forecast were 460 students, actual were min. 478 and max. 491 students. Grades with wait pools are EY3, EY4, Grade 2,3.

2. Learning

2.1 Standardized tests

Internal data collected daily on student learning is triangulated with the standardized tests to determine growth and trends over time. This reveals strengths and areas of growth in our program. Primary focal points have been on math and language.

MAP testing results have improved compared to world averages. In some cases in the lower grades, like Gr.2, results may not be an accurate representation of student learning due to student perceptions and approach to the test.

ISA tests for the later years are more accurate representatives for growth.

Secondary focus has been on using data and knowledge about student learning (strengths and areas of growth) moving forward and to take students to the next level of learning.

2.2 IB-DP Results 2015 – 2016

- Diploma Results were above international averages
- Students average stay was 4.8 yrs at VIS
- 31 graduates (mainly return to Australia for University)
- 86% received DP
- 68% Bilingual DP (this requires 2 literature courses and is outstanding as Global averages are 30%)
- Highest points 35
- Average mean of 31 is slightly higher than world average.

Diplomas Year 2016-2017

- Students average 5 yrs at VIS
- 21 graduates (trend to USA for university). Exams currently in progress.

2.3 Professional learning

- Leadership and faculty have worked on retaining faculty and teachers using data from in-depth perception surveys of before and after.
- Teachers are key to the success of learning and seek professional learning experiences to improve their practice.
- Professional development included attending conferences to connect with teachers around the world and exchange technical knowledge and experiences, visiting consultants and mini professional learning workshops on Tuesdays with either focus topics or cross-divisional exchanges to give our teachers the opportunity to share, reflect and learn from each other.

3. Finances

The VIS Budget has shifted to a healthier one in 2016-2017. The previous 2015-2016 began with a conservative budget due to the concern with student enrolment, main operational expense is staffing.

In 2015 – 16, the Board Policy passed Reserve Fund. In 2016 – 17, surplus capital funds will be allocated to reserves.

Capital funds have been used for program improvement, including technology, replacing laptops with iPads for purposeful learning and infrastructure developments to ensure the network can meet the needs of the instructional program. Other projects support improved safety and the enhancement of existing facilities:

- Covering the canal for a second access for vehicles and emergencies.
- Changing lunch room to a multi purpose room for meetings and student use
- Revamp drainage for safety
- Creating open learning spaces, removal of walls from two classes to blend spaces and allow for more attention to individual needs of student learning.

Planning for the 2020 Vision included feasibility studies based on student numbers and budgets to be appropriated accordingly. Alternatives for expansion of Language program could be to supplement the program with online options and tutors for those students who are capable of a more independent program.

4. Accreditation

The school hosted onsite visits for accreditation teams from IB, CIS/WASC, Lao Ministry of Education. Results of the CIS/WASC accreditation visits and IB will be timely and included in planning the future strategic plan. The Director has shared unofficial comments and feedback with the faculty and at the AGM. Highly commendable areas:

- Variety of teaching strategies
- Assessment practices and reporting systems and structures
- Good variety of language options and depth of learning
- Connections to the community were clearly evident to the review team however VIS needs to utilize the parents' expertise more.
- Facilities are well resourced and appropriate for curriculum.
- Safety and student wellbeing, support services
- Strong relationships between faculty and students and collaboration of faculty were evident strengths.

Areas of growth suggested:

- a review of our guiding statements and policies,
- implementing new academic policies,
- integration of technology across the school,
- A question of small class sizes - do they support or hinder students
- Further vertical alignment of curriculum to support transition from 5th-6th grade and 10-11th grade.

5. Planning for the Future

During the accreditation visit, students participated in a session with the visiting teams. The teams asked students what will they take from their experiences at VIS, to pass on to their own families. This was shared at the meeting. Students' contributions were highly commended by the visiting team.

6. Demographics

VIS community of learners has a total of 46 nationalities. Board policy limits the number of Lao Nationals at 25 %.

Question and Answer Session:

Q. Were there specific comments from Accreditation visits on Sports/CCP activities? Not in particular besides commending the students' participation. The school will be completed a Self-study survey which will reveal more details on the area of sports. The type of questions the survey will ask are on growth, learning, passions and interests.

Q. Is there potential to open more classes in certain grades?

Currently no waiting list for grades except EY and majority are Lao nationals. We can consider opening a third section but we want to maintain quality staffing across the school.

Q. Projections of enrolment?

We are moving forward with current enrolment. Projection trends determine a flat-line for next year.

18:30 Election results

97 cast votes, 1 invalid = 96 votes

Congratulations to the new candidates for joining and those continuing another term as Board trustees: Koen Everaert, Cliff Meyers, Sandra Seastedt, Dinesh Sellamuttu and Michael Victor

Budget 2017 - 2018

1. Director explained the budget process calculating staffing and tuition.

1.1. Staffing Costs are the highest expense. Teachers salaries were reviewed and increased to remain competitive in the region ensuring we can attract and retain quality educators. As a part of the review process, teachers were provided with

factual data regarding cost to company, regional salaries and budget implications.
(Director)

1.2. Models, including a range of tuition fees and enrolment forecasts were devised and discussed by the board and finance committee. The budget and tuition fee setting process aims for a balance between expenses and revenue with no expected profit. VIS has increased the tuition fee every year approximately 7%, with a history of 9% five years ago. Next year tuition will increase by 4% only. (Director)

Q. Does VIS pay for staff housing?

VIS pays landlords directly. We provide a package, which includes a housing allowance. Teachers are allowed to take the cash differences on cheaper housing.
(Director)

1.3. Capital Budget –added value

- Canal Project used capital funds 200,000\$, remaining surplus will stay in the Reserve fund for unexpected situations e.g. if school had to close staff payouts are covered.
- There are large Project ideas in discussion such as an indoor gym sports complex to support P.E and benefit student/community activities. These are major developments and feasibility studies will take place in the near future.
- Priority areas to develop and upgrade have been determined using annual expenditure such as flexible learning spaces, new starter blocks for the pool, new computers and upgrade expiring programs, upgrade security cameras

Congratulations to the participants at the swim meet in Phuket, VIS had 65 participants and came 6th of 16 participating schools.

Q. Why is there less turn out to AGM than in the past?

More parents attended during the period of VIS transitioning campus, a drastic increase of tuition fees, uncertainty attracted 80-100 people. Other important issues attracted the community such as attaining IB, increase of teacher salaries. Teachers would attend the AGM as representatives on the board. Board meetings were open. Once people are content with what's going on less attendance. (Participant)

This year the Board scheduled additional stakeholder group meetings with parents, teachers and students to talk about the role of the board and how to make more information accessible. (Board)

Q. Would you come back or not? Was it meaningful?

Teachers no longer have a representative on the board so less attending.

(Participant)

When people are content with what is going on then less attendance. (Participant)

Q. Anyone have suggestions to encourage more parent participation?

There are three forums per year for board and parents to come together and could be about timeliness (Board)

Communication seems to no longer be a challenge. Only the timeliness of setting the budget, it is too late to get parent contributions on resources required now. Any proposals would take one more year to get implemented. Propose to hold a meeting in the fall with parent involvement to provide opinions on resources and budgets.

Discuss ways to make parents feel welcome into the school. Institutionalize activities to increase parent involvement. (Participant)

The Meeting concluded at 19:05.