



**ICSA BOARD OF TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT**  
***School Year 201-2020***  
***(June 6, 2019 - May 20, 2020)***

**Introduction**

**CHAPTER VI - BOARD AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY (ICSA Statutes)**

**Article 26 - General** The Board shall be the governing body of the Association. It shall determine the official policy regarding the Association's activities unless that policy has been set by the Association itself in a general meeting. It shall see that its policies and those of the Association are faithfully executed. The Board shall further oversee the execution of policy on its behalf through the Director whom it shall appoint.

The ICSA Board 2019-2020 was composed of 9 members:

Elena Molina, Chair

Elizabeth Brogaard-Allen, Vice-Chair

Guillaume Dehem, Treasurer

Saija MacArtney, Secretary

Raluca Eddon

Adama Traoré-Wega

Eugenia Bhebhe

Erin Tyler (US Embassy Rep), served at the Board until April 2020

Mercy Kpotivi (US Embassy Rep), served at the Board until January 2020

Stephan Weir (US Embassy Rep), replaced Mercy Kpotivi as of February 2020

April Wells (US Embassy Rep), replaced Erin Tyler as of April 2020

The Chair and Treasurer position, elected by the ICSA Association for the period 2017/19 were appointed by the Board to serve an additional year to facilitate a smooth transition for the new Director and in light of a high turnover of the Board at the time.

Each Board member duly signed the Code of Conduct and Board Ethics document as per Board operations and Board Governance Charter procedures. Essential Board agreements on how to conduct oneself in meetings and between meetings were equally approved.

**Board training**

The Board participated in a 2-day Board training programme in May 2019 led by a consultant trainer, Richard Detweiler.

The Board approved for Richard Detweiler to be invited to organize the Board training for the new Board 2020-2021. The training, initially planned for May 29th-30th, is subject to having a new Board in place in September and the ability of the facilitator/consultant to travel due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.



## Meetings

The Board has held regular working monthly meetings since June 2019, date when the Board sits with voting rights for the first time. During the school closure, these meetings have been held on-line.

Annual General Meetings (AGM) were held twice, as required by ICSA By-laws, during the school year on October 16th 2019 and May 20th 2020. Due to restrictions of movement and gatherings because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the AGM in May was held online. 34 community members attended the meeting in October and over 90 connected to the online AGM in May.

The Board had two standing subcommittees in place: Governance and Finance. These committees have met monthly to discuss their specific areas as Board groundwork, and bring their suggestions for presentation, further discussion and vote at Board meetings. The Finance Committee held face to face meetings until campus closure, while the Governance Committee has conducted its meetings mainly online.

This year the Board organized three open community meetings (known as Coffee/Cocktail with the Board): November 27th, February 20th, and May 27th. The first meeting was a working session to have an open dialogue about how to prioritize different areas of 'Quality school' as per the Board Strategic Plan for ICSA. The Community was invited to share their definition and measurements of success of 'Quality'. This was to inform the strategic planning exercise to cover the next two years. The second meeting was an evening event which was open for Community members to meet and interact with the Board in an informal setting. A third meeting (online) was convened to discuss how different families experienced home-learning. Other matters discussed in this meeting were, fundraising options and further development of arts/music. The number of Community members who participated was 16 in November, 20 in February and 7 in May.

In an extraordinary meeting held on Sunday March 15th, the Board endorsed an emergency decision made by a small Committee which included US Representatives, Principals, Board Chair, Vice-chair (while in confinement at home) and Treasurer on a school closure for March 13th. This was based on a threat to US interests in Côte d'Ivoire. The Board also decided on a school closure for March 16th, 17th and 18th 2020 to ensure safety and test on-line learning readiness in light of the COVID-19 situation.

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire announced the closure of all schools in Ivorian territory from March 17th. Further to a new announcement that all schools in Grand-Abidjan were to open from May 25th, the Board sat in an extraordinary meeting on Monday, May 18th with the participation of the school SLT. The Board decided to keep campus closed until reopening in August for the 2020-2021 school year. Online learning should continue until the end of the SY 2019-2020 school year (i.e. June 10th). With compulsory virtual attendance.



Recreational use of campus, as an exception to the above-made decisions, was encouraged, with the community being asked to adhere to the guidelines and protocols prepared by the school administration. The guidelines are applicable from June 8th to July 12th, after which the members of the community will no longer have access to the campus since there will be works being carried out in preparation for school opening in August.

ICSA campus therefore remained closed from Friday, March 13th, until the end of the SY.

Each Board member has respected the meeting attendance requirements as stated in the Board operations policy and Code of Conduct, i.e. not missed more than three consecutive meetings during the SY.

### **Board Work Plan**

The Board followed an annual work plan, which needed to be adapted as per business and COVID-19 requirements.

The Board Work Plan includes internal functioning of the Board of Directors, as well as points pertaining to the governance of school matters:

- Board Strategy, internal Operations, election of officers and committees, training
- Director's objectives and evaluation
- SY calendar, COLA and salary scales
- Budget monitoring and approval of new school budget, including audit
- Personnel matters
- Enrolment and re-enrolment monitoring
- Endorsement of school learning initiatives
- Recruitment reports
- Approval of tuition fees and matters related to fee payment schemes
- Revision of marketing strategy

Subjects which needed to be reported for the new SY are:

- Board self-appraisal;
- Retreat / training;
- Director's evaluation
- Director's objectives for the new SY;
- Board elections.

### **Board Strategic Plan 2019/2020**

The main objective of the Board was to elaborate the **Strategic Plan 2019-2021** and reflect it in a **Strategic Goals and Intents Plan**.

Background: The Strategic Plan is intended to guide the decision-making process of the Board of Directors for a two-year period (academic years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021) at a



critical point in the development of the school. The past few years have seen significant improvements at ICSA in virtually all areas, which are reflected in the increase of the student population from 424 in June 2018 to 493 in September 2019. The Board is committed to ensuring that these positive trends can be sustained over the next two years, thus laying the groundwork for longer-term strategic planning in 2021.

Accordingly, the Strategic Goals and Intents Plan reads as follows:

### **1. QUALITY STAFF**

To ensure that 'learning and leading' can take place under the guidance and with the support of staff committed to the highest standards of professionalism, ICSA will focus on the recruitment, retention, and development of quality staff.

Strategic goals:

- Review and revise existing policies and procedures to develop a comprehensive, consistent and coherent personnel programme, including updating, and, as needed, expanding, faculty and staff manuals' personnel provisions by June 2020. The manuals should include relevant Board policy and supporting administrative procedures to define and standardize all aspects of the personnel services.
- Review, and, as needed, develop a recruitment strategy, including a recruitment programme actively focusing on removing obstacles to recruitment and creating an environment conducive to the retention of quality staff, for all openings that may occur by December 2019. This programme can provide continuity of practice yet would also be adapted to the specific requirements of the position(s) to be filled.
- Continue investing in multi-faceted professional development, including the development of interpersonal skills, based on an evaluation system/systems that establishes individual goals for all staff members linked to the overall needs of the school and supported by adequate and cost effective resources by November 2020.

### **2. QUALITY FACILITIES**

To support and enhance the fulfillment of ICSA's Mission and achievement of its Vision, the existing Facilities Masterplan will be reviewed and a Priority Plan will be developed to ensure that the learning environment and the use of spaces meets our needs.

Strategic Goals:

- By April 2020, an expert in school architecture will have evaluated the existing Master Plan, needs and available space on campus and make recommendations regarding priorities.
- A Priority Plan will be approved by the Board upon consultation with the ICSA community by June 2020.

### **3. QUALITY ACADEMICS**

To prepare ICSA students to be effective learners and leaders in a 21st century environment, ICSA will continue investing in the development of its curriculum, with a focus on critical thinking; creativity; collaboration; information, media literacy, technology literacy; flexibility; leadership; productivity; social skills, excellence etc.



Strategic Goals:

- The Lower School learning environment reviewed and adapted to individual student needs and the development of 21st century learning skills by June 2020.
- The Upper Upper School will continue expanding learning options, including but not limited to IB (e.g., Drama and Music) by January 2020.
- Develop a school-wide system for monitoring and acting upon external assessment scores by June 2020.

#### **4. SECURE FINANCIAL POSITION**

To ensure the current stability and future growth, including enhanced options for strategic planning in 2021, ICSA will take specific and deliberate steps to implement best practice financial planning. This in order to define operationally the financial resources needed to ensure the school can meet unexpected liabilities and to provide the necessary resources to ensure high quality programming for students.

Strategic Goals:

- The Board will ensure ICSA achieves financial goals annually (balanced budget) and through multi-year planning (reserve position).
- The Board will monitor and assess the school's standing through benchmarking against similar schools in the region.
- The Board will ensure ICSA reserves increase so that future major capital projects are financially feasible.
- The Board will continue to monitor the 3-year savings-plan set in motion during the school year 2018-2019, by evaluating Y1 budget results and setting specific related goals for Y2.

#### **Correspondence**

Board inbox: [board@icsabidjan.org](mailto:board@icsabidjan.org)

The Board received twelve governance related correspondences during this school year. All correspondences were discussed within the Board and responded to. Amongst those, there were a number of COVID-19 and campus re-opening related questions as the Community was asked to submit them for the May AGM.

In addition to the governance related correspondences, the Board received a number of correspondences related to operational matters (up to six). All of these were duly transmitted to the SLT to be dealt with.

To be noted that some correspondences were of shared nature between the SLT and the Board.

#### **Number of students**

The number of students enrolled in August 2019 was 490. This is an increase compared to previous years. Many classes function at full capacity and some classes, namely Grades 5th and 6th, had a waiting list. This situation invited the Board and the Director to make a plan on how to manage the growth. At the end of the school year, ICSA closed with 494 students, with an average of 492 students enrolled.



## **Facilities**

The Board approved a number of capital expenditures related to improvements of the school facilities: classroom interiors were improved and two offices were converted to create additional teaching areas, connecting the pool reserve to school water supply in order to use it as a school water reserve in case of city water shortages.

The Board approved the budget to update the system of electric breakers to conform to regulations.

The Board met with two architectural firms - first to revisit the ICSA existing (and outdated) Masterplan and decide on further improvements. A third quotation is still needed, but this process was slowed down by the restrictions on movement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other improvements were made based on the approval of the previous Board of Trustees. These include changing the cafeteria roof to a synthetic material to avoid leakages and insects, and the construction of a canopy over the pool which was finalized in February 2020. Equally, and over the summer break, the learn to swim pool, the athletics track revamp and refurbishment of changing rooms and toilets were also undertaken.

## **Director's objectives**

The Board approved the Director's objectives for the SY 2019-2020. The year objectives included specific goals related to Quality staff, academics facilities and Quality school in general, as a reflection of the Board Strategic Plan.

A mid-term evaluation was conducted in February, allowing us to readdress and adjust the objectives.

## **Personnel**

The Board approved different new positions for the SY 2019-2020 and 2020-2021:

- Middle school science teacher;
- Physical Education teacher;
- Assets and Inventory Manager;
- Pool Maintenance/Lifeguard.

No change was approved on salary scales or on hiring policy.

COLA for the SY 2020/21 was approved as a 1%.

## **Emergency plan**

Security-Contingency-Emergency Plan has been a fixed Board meeting item this year. The previous plan has been reviewed and updated to respond to the school set up as it is today



and in view of possible security and safety issues. The school has approved a budget for renewal and improvement of areas related to safety and security.

### **Policies manual**

To align with the new version of the school by-laws as approved in April 2019, the ICSA Policy Manual is under revision. Chapter 2.0 on Board Operations has been duly revised and approved by the Board. The Director continues to work on the updating of the other three Chapters, which need to be equally aligned with the ICSA Procedures manual drafted during the 2018/19 school year and endorsed for its use by the Board.

### **Budget**

The Board approved the 2019-2020 budget with an anticipated operating surplus above US\$ 500,000. The 2018-2019 financial year was break-even.

The Board requested a review of the format of executive reports to add a dashboard with key indicators on budget analysis.

The Board approved the 2020-2021 budget at a break even result. The decrease in income is due to the anticipation of receiving fewer students due to the financial impact of COVID-19. While the number of students is likely to slightly decrease, the cost of maintaining the quality of the school will remain the same.

The Board and the SLT are working on various strategies to encourage the timely paying of tuition fees which will improve the financial health of the school.

### **Audit**

The Board appointed the auditing firm, Fiduciaire de Conseils et Audit. Their contract is expected to last 5 years.

The Board met with the auditor and followed up on their recommendations and worked with the administration to instal a tracking mechanism for the implementation of the recommendations.

### **Banking**

The Board approved the closure of the Bank of America account and to transfer the funds (1.5 mio US\$) to the TD reserve account.

### **School fees 2020-2021**

The Board approved a 10% increase in capital fee and 1,5% increase in tuition fees for the SY 2020-2021.



The Board approved the Director's proposal not to charge new students for the last two weeks of the first semester if starting at ICSA in January. These students will only have to pay for the second semester, starting at the end of January.

The Board reinstated no change is to be granted concerning fee refunds.

### **School calendar for SY 2020/21**

The Board approved the school calendar for 2020-2021. The calendar has been made available on the school website.

### **Information management system**

The Board approved the change from Skyward to Rediker and requested an early, in-depth communication to the community as well as training of the staff.

### **Board elections**

The Board elections are to take place every year during the second half of the SY. The elections are to be organized by an independent Nominating Committee that consists of at least three Community members. The Board reached out to the community on three occasions to request volunteers for the Nominating Committee. By April 19th, only one person had responded to the call for volunteers and thus the election process was delayed. The situation was furthermore complicated by the COVID-19 campus closure.

As no Nominating Committee was in place by mid-April, the Board reached out to the Community highlighting the implications of holding the elections later than planned and launched a survey asking whether the elections should be held in May or at the beginning of the next academic year in September 2020.

The mentioned survey had a total participation of 48 responses and the results indicated a preferred option for September elections. Consequently, the Board of 2019-2020 will stay in place until the new Board has been elected and inducted.

In response to the appeals by the Board, 7 Community members expressed their interest in being part of the Nominating Committee. Screening of eligibility and formal hand-over took place in June 2020.

## **SUMMARY OF VOTES/DECISIONS**

### **May 2020**

- No change in hiring policy allowed
- No change in non-refund of registration fees allowed
- No refund of school fees



# International Community School of Abidjan

*Learning and Leading in a Collaborative Culture*

- Official recording of May 18th decisions:
  - Campus to remain closed until reopening in August for the 2020-2021 school year.
  - Online learning to continue until the end of the current 2019-2020 school year (i.e. June 10th). Compulsory attendance.
- Graduation of the 2020 Class to be held virtually

## **April 2020**

- AGM - make plans to organize online.
- Strategic Plan and Intents - document to be finalized 'as is' and to be reviewed at the beginning of next school year.
- Budget - Finance committee to prepare budget 2020-2021.
- School reopening - Director to plan different models for re-opening, before end of the school year or at the opening of next school year.
- Coffee with the Board - on hold, possibility and need to organize to be considered after AGM.
- The Board agreed the re-enrolment document to be sent to the parents, including a question on re-enrollment plans.

## **March 2020**

- Budget for the upcoming school year – Board voted to budget with an estimated 400-500 student scenario.
- Closure of the Bank of America account and transfer of funds to TD Reserve account.
- School Policies revision: Chapter 2 – Board Operations has been officially revised to align with the ICSA Statutes.
- Electricity works: The Board decided to start with the breakers.
- Annual General Meeting: moved provisionally to Wednesday, May 20, until we know what the situation in the country will be as the pandemic scenario evolves. Board elections were also provisionally postponed to May.

## **February 2020**

- 10% increase in Capital Fee : Approved
- 1.5% increase in tuition: Approved

## **January 2020**

- Vote on the Update of the system of breakers (disjoncteur) to conform to regulations.
- Recommendation on putting in place an early-confirmation system for Community members to let the school know their intentions on re-enrollment for school year 2020-2021.
- Vote on the replacement of the current information management system for the school, Skyward, with Rediker from next school year.
- Vote on inviting Mr Rick Detweiler as Board trainer.
- Cocktail with the Board: to be held on Thursday, February 20th at 6:00pm. All ICSA Community invited.

## **December 2019**

- Construction to create 2 classrooms for lower school French class: approved
- Connection of buffer pool to main plumbing system as back up in case of city water shortages: approved
- COLA of 1%: approved
- 2020-2021 school year calendar: approved

## **November 2019**

- Positions for the 2020-2021 academic year. approved: Middle School Science G6 (x2) & G7 (X2) = 1 teacher (new) and conversion of current PE position (consultant) to regular hire teaching position.
- The Financial Committee to work with the administration to come up with a tracking mechanism for the implementation of all audit recommendations.
- New students who start in January will not be charged for the last two weeks of the first semester.
- Endorsement of the use of the finance procedure manual as presented by the school leadership.
- Two offices will be repurposed, with a glass door between the two spaces, for two designated French language learning spaces.



**October 2019**

- The Director to further develop a target and timing for the school's marketing plan in order to deal with enrollment numbers (absorption capacity).
- The Director to further develop a policy for waiting lists and management of those.
- The Board to continue compiling the internal Annual Board Report.
- Coffee with the Board: November 20th, at 8am, on the topic "Strategic Plan 2019-2021".
- Policies Manual to be revised to be aligned with the ICSA Statutes.

**September 2019**

- Board strategic plan and intentions: to show and explain at AGM on October 16th.
- Emergency plan: agreement on setting up working group to revisit existing plan. Deadline for first draft: November 20th.
- Auditors appointed for 2018-2019 accounts review.
- 2019-2020 budget to be reviewed in Finance Committee and Board to approve online before AGM.
- Review Financial Executive Report format with dashboard and KPIs for better decision making tool.

**August 2019**

- Emergency plan: agreement on revision

**June 2019**

The Board voted for the approval and implementation of the following projects over the summer break:

- Learn to swim pool
- Athletics track
- Refurbishment of changing rooms and toilets.

The Board voted for the following additional positions:

- Assets and Inventory Manager
- Physical Education Teacher
- Pool Maintenance/Lifeguard