



ICSA BOARD OF TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

The school Year 2020-2021

(August 2020 - May 2021)

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 2020-2021 was composed of 9 members:

Ms. Elizabeth Brogaard-Allen	- President
Mr . Vivek Saraswat	- Vice-president
Ms.Couro Kane	- Treasurer
Ms. Sireesha Kumar	- Secretary
Ms. Adama Traore-Wega	- Trustee
Ms. Marly Bah	- Trustee
Mr. Joachim Lubiba	- Trustee
Mr . Stefan Weir	- Trustee / US Embassy rep
Ms . April Wells	- Trustee / US Embassy rep
Mr . Seamus Hennessy	- Director

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 online Board training program in September 2020 led by a consultant trainer, Richard Detweiler. Further, in the month of February 2021, the board members have attended the online training workshops organized by AISA. The topics such as *Sustaining Effective Governance, Boards as Strategists, Planning for the Future and Ensuring Success*, etc were covered during those 2-day workshops.

Meetings

The new Board has held regular working monthly meetings since September 2020, the date when the Board sits with voting rights for the first time. During the school closure, these meetings have been held online.

Annual General Meetings (AGM) were held twice, as required by ICSA By-laws, during the school year on November 18th, 2020, and April 21st, 2021. Due to restrictions of movement



and gatherings because of the COVID-19 pandemic, both the AGM were held online with about 65 participants in the first AGM and 28 in the latter.

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. In addition to the above-mentioned committees, an AD hoc committee was formed to work on the facilities plan.

Due to COVID -19 restrictions this year the Board couldn't organize any open community meetings (known as Coffee/Cocktail with the Board). Instead decided to include board reports in the FRIDAY FLASH emails, for an outer reach into the community.

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

- Board Strategy, internal Operations, the 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 that 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 2020/2021

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. 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, Intents Plan, and achievements read 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 program, 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 including work contracts.
- Continue investing in multi-faceted professional development, including the development of interpersonal skills, based on an evaluation system/systems that establish 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.

Actions:

- Gathered qualitative and quantitative evidence on retention, staff satisfaction, and professional development.
- Encouraged the majority of staff members to renew beyond the original contract
- Ensured that replacement teachers are of the highest caliber to ensure that teaching and learning continue to improve.
- Recruitment of a Senior Admin role in addition to the existing administrators to oversee the non-academic areas of the school.
- Approval of the addition of a Whole School Instructional Coach to work with teaching staff to improve school-wide teaching methods including online teaching and learning.
- Updated our legal policies and contracts to ensure alignment with the host country’s laws and regulations.

2. QUALITY FACILITIES

To support and enhance the fulfillment of ICSA’s Mission and achievement of its Vision, the existing Facilities Master Plan will be reviewed and a Priority Plan will be developed to ensure that the learning environment and the use of spaces meet 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 made recommendations regarding priorities.
- A Priority Plan will be approved by the Board upon consultation with the ICSA community by June 2021.



Actions:

- Architects have been identified to propose a concept for the school. Jonathan Holland Architects from UK and Tech 4 from Spain were each able to propose a concept.
- The architect was selected in consultation with the community in April.
- Agreement on priority plan should be obtained from the board and community by June.
- A budget and timeframe should be voted latest in fall 2021 to realize the construction.

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.

Actions:

- Additional IB courses offered - English B & diverse subjects online
- Implementation of a new monitoring system in lower schools to help analyze student achievement.
- Classes moved online for 4 days (October 26, 27, November 5, and 6) to ensure the safety of Students and Staff during the election period.
- Close monitoring of the COVID-19 situation in collaboration with the Senior Leadership Team resulted in a full year of in-person teaching at ICSA.
- An emotional wellness survey was prepared by the school counselors and presented to the Board with recommendations.
- Collaboration with the Ivorian Health Services on vaccine rollouts and availability for staff and community members.
- Organization of an information session with US Embassy health officers for staff to address questions and concerns around the COVID19 vaccine.
- Continuous monitoring of the authorization process for IB in 2021 and MSA accreditation in 2021-2022.

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 is 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.

Actions:

- Adhered to the approved operating budget with an expected surplus at year-end
- Investigated bank charges and currency fluctuation risks
- Introduction of a financial dashboard to track key performance indicators
- Close monitoring of outstanding tuition fees
- Improvements in the audit process

Correspondence

Board inbox: board@icsabidjan.org

The Board received three governance-related correspondence during this school year. This correspondence was discussed within the Board and responded to. It is noted that some correspondences were of shared nature between the SLT and the Board.

Number of students

The number of students enrolled in August 2020 was 429. This is an increase compared to previous years. Many classes function at full capacity and some classes, namely Grades 5 and 6. 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 487 students, with a max of 492 students enrolled.

Facilities

The Board approved the budget to purchase a new full school generator.

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.

Director's objectives

The Board approved the Director's objectives for the SY 2020-2021. 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 2020-2021:

- Upper School English Teacher
- Instructional Coach
- Head of Operations

No change was approved on salary scales or on the 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 the renewal and improvement of areas related to safety and security.

Budget

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 KPMG.

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

School fees 2020-2021

The Board approved not to increase the tuition fees for the SY 2021-2022.

School calendar for SY 2020/21

The Board approved the school calendar for 2021-2022. The calendar has been made available on the school website.

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.

Screening of eligibility and formal handover took place in May 2021.

SUMMARY OF VOTES/DECISIONS

May 2021

- Board Annual Booklet Report: The booklet has now been completed and is being printed and will be shared with the community before the end of the school year (both electronically and in hard copy).
- Facilities Ad Hoc Committee: After considering a number of factors, including feedback from the community, the Board voted and agreed to move forward with TEC4 on developing a Master Facility plan.
- Budget SY21-22: The first draft of the budget for next school year was approved and will be revisited when student numbers are known next school year.
- The board agrees to terminate an old pension plan, no longer in use, held with TIAA-CREF

April 2021

- The board retreat is scheduled for May 7 and 8.
- Board Self-evaluations and the Director's evaluation to be completed by the end of the month

March 2021

- Director's housing: the director has been a victim of a flood last year with serious damages. There is a need for him to move out before heavy rains begin again this year. The board has approved his move to a new house.
- Upcoming Board elections: there will be 3 openings next year in the board
- Board retreat: the Board will organize a Board Retreat/Orientation in early May for incoming and outgoing Board members
- AGM: coming up on April 21 and will be on zoom to allow for maximum participation.

February 2021

- The board has decided that there will be no increase in the COLA this year. There is still a good deal of uncertainty around Covid and how this will affect school enrollment in the coming year. In recognition of the hard work and dedication of staff in these difficult times, the Board agrees that all entitled staff should still move up one step on the salary scale.
- The Board has decided not to increase fees in the coming school year.
- The Board advised the Director to regularly monitor the outstanding fees as the Unpaid tuition is higher than the last year.
- The Board finance committee continues to work with the Director and the Business Manager to produce a useful budget analysis and monitoring report to more accurately track expenditures throughout the year. The overall aim is to have everything (invoicing, receivables, expenses) connected and online as soon as possible.
- Decisions for Registration for next year will begin sooner than in the past. It is imperative that parents pay their readmission fee as soon as possible especially as we have waiting lists for a number of classes.

January 2021

- The counselors shared a presentation to the Board on the result of the survey on students' and staff's well-being carried out in December. The Board appreciated their efforts and suggested the possibility for counselors to conduct surveys for parents to gauge overall well-being within the ICSA community.



- The director informed the need to hire someone for a Senior Admin type role in addition to the existing administrators to oversee the non-academic areas of the school. The suggestion was welcomed by the Board and the finance committee will work on the job description.
- The board recognized the success of the event organized by the PTO in the month of December and decided to send an appreciation email.

December 2020

- A strategy was adopted to monitor the achievement of the board goals and tasks for this school year by the Governance Committee, in line with the Facilities plan objective, an Ad-Hoc committee was put in place for the Priority Plan of the Construction Project. This Ad-hoc committee will assist in organizing presentation meetings by the architects and community meetings with the chosen architect for input and feedback.
- The Finance committee reviewed the October financial report and provided suggestions for a new presentation to improve analysis. They also reviewed the financial report provided by the external auditors. One of the priorities for the Finance Committee is to reduce bank fees, as such the committee began the analysis of these expenses to assist in negotiation with the banks.
- It was proposed and agreed upon that the board will organize a series of coffees in the new year linked to meetings with the identified architect. The activities will involve both parents and members of the board. The Ad Hoc committee working on the Facilities plan will propose a calendar and logistical details.

November 2020

- The next school year calendar has been approved by the board.
- The Board approved two new positions to fill for the next school year.

October 2020

- The board has decided that the school will go online for 4 days: October 26, 27, November 5, and 6.
- On-campus lectures will fully resume on November 9.
- Teachers and other staff members will have the option of working on campus or at home

September 2020

- The Board decided on Executive Committee positions, including Committee chairs and composition.
- Approval of the Essential Agreement on Board Operating Norms.
- Approval of revisions to Financial policies concerning refunds.
- Approval of transition period for check signing to allow operations to continue.

August 2020

- Review various policies in light of emerging needs.
- US rep to represent the Board on the Security Contingency Taskforce.
- Two board members to represent the Board on the Child Protection Response Team.