



School Advisory Committee

INTRODUCTION

The School Advisory Committee (SAC) at Cayman International School is represented by CIS parents, faculty and staff who meet periodically throughout the school year to discuss a variety of topics and issues regarding all divisions of the school. The purpose of the committee is to aid CIS in realizing the school's strategic plan and to enhance communication. Upon conclusion of each SAC meeting, the committee provides a bulletin to the school community in an effort to inform and clarify.

Constructive discussion and additional points of view regarding these topics and other issues are welcome. Please talk with a representative of the School Advisory Committee to share your input.

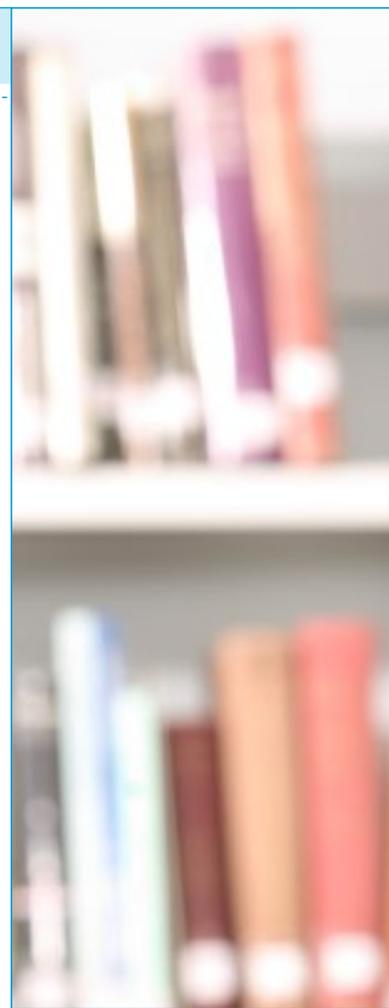
Members of the School Advisory Committee



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Note that issues and information shared in the bulletin are categorized by school divisions based on the representatives who shared the questions/concerns, but there are several issues that are school-wide and apply to all divisions.



EARLY CHILDHOOD



Issue/question: Is this the last year for the Nursery program at CIS?

Information: This is not the last year for Nursery at CIS; applications will be accepted in January. There are no current plans to eliminate the Nursery program. It could be possible in the future for incoming Nursery classes to be curtailed if there is insufficient classroom space, but there is no way of determining this at this point, and CIS is taking steps to avoid this through facility expansion.

Issue/question: Is the High Scope program the same as the Montessori program?

Information: High Scope is a well-respected, research based early childhood program that is different from the Montessori program. The High Scope program is consistent with the school's educational philosophy, and CIS is taking steps to educate parents about the High Scope program through Parent Workshops and various other methods.

Issue/question: Why is there not more diversity of after-school activities offered?

Information: The “after-school activities” program at CIS is targeted to elementary students, and is likely the most extensive school-based activities program in Cayman, facilitating approximately 120 elementary activity programs (approximately 900 individual meetings) annually. For each of the three activity sessions, the school offers after-school activities in general categories of crafts & entertainment, performing arts, sports, science & nutrition, and academics. Teachers are required to offer an activity for two out of the three sessions, the activities are based on student and teacher interests, and the faculty sign-up process ensures that there is a distribution of activities based in specified categories. In order to enhance the diversity and quantity of offerings, CIS facilitates 3rd party providers of after-school activities who have met the liability and insurance requirements, and parents pay for these 3rd party providers at various rates. CIS is open to additional 3rd party providers who meet the requirements and wish to apply in order to enhance the offerings. Note that the Secondary (Middle/High School) after-school clubs and sports are separate and in addition to the elementary offerings.

Issue/question: Registration for activities is frustrating because they fill up quickly and there is a fee involved.

Information: The online registration system is greatly improved from the previous system and activities fill on a first come first served basis, promoting equity and fairness in opportunity. CIS understands there is a significant demand for particular activities and will continue to review activities offerings. The school recognizes that the \$4 registration fee is an issue for some parents and that there could have been better communication regarding this \$4 fee.

Early Childhood Representatives



Jessica Wolfenden



Christina Frank

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Issue/question: Can the fire lane (between the field and the school) be paved in order to enhance play opportunities?

Information: Additional play opportunities that require a concrete surface may be available if there is adequate supervision on the courts. CIS is working with parents in hopes of developing a parent volunteer group to assist and facilitate these activities. The cost/benefit of paving the fire lane needs to be carefully considered, and ultimately, this is a decision for the Landlord, Dart Realty.

Issue/question: There is a lack of direct programming for gifted students during the school day.

Information: This issue is addressed in the CIS strategic plan, and future planning and dialogue will center on addressing this issue. There are many facets to consider, including definitions of giftedness, limitations, personnel, pedagogy and school philosophy.

Issue/question: CIS does not share the details of its finances

Information: All CIS income is dedicated to CIS operations and its monies are held in the Cayman Islands. There are no shareholders or profit seekers – ISS is a non-profit organization. While CIS pays ISS (at a discounted rate) for some important services (i.e. procurement and shipping, recruitment), no CIS monies are transferred to other schools or organizations. CIS provides basic financial information to the school community in the form of percentages and categories in annual reports and these are available on the CIS website. The school will explore ways to enhance financial information provided in annual reports.

Elementary

Representatives



Elena Oster



Ian
Whan Tong

Issue/question: CIS teacher salaries

Information: Currently, CIS teachers are among the highest paid teachers at any Cayman private school and salaries are close to those of public school teachers. There has been a 20% increase in teacher salary schedules over the past five years. As part of the CIS strategic plan, there is a Compensation & Benefits committee in 2015-16 that will be analyzing further data and conducting surveys in efforts to continue to recruit and retain high quality teachers.

Issue/question: There is a loss of prep time for some teachers due to scheduled collaboration meetings.

Information: Dedicated collaboration time has continually been a request by faculty and the new scheduled time has been positively received by the majority of CIS teachers. With the new schedule, elementary teachers lose approximately 20 minutes of prep time and gain approximately 40 minutes of collaboration time.

Issue/question: Some teachers are frustrated by additional planning related to flexible scheduling in technology and library.

Information: While the location of classes may or may not change based on the flex scheduling model, technology and library times have always been designated as co-planned and co-facilitated lessons for the specialist and elementary teachers at CIS. The actual amount of time related to planning and facilitation may vary based on individual lessons and teachers according to their collaborative dialogue and arrangements. CIS recognizes the significant demands placed on teachers in regards to planning, and while the current model will be maintained, exploring helpful solutions is encouraged by all.

MIDDLE SCHOOL



Middle School Representatives



Denis Corin



Sarah Parham

Denis Corin was selected by the committee to be the Middle School parent representative.

Sarah Parham, the middle school faculty representative, is on maternity leave and will return in November.

HIGH SCHOOL



Issue/question: Professional development for teachers has increased without adequate time for reflection and implementation.

Information: CIS continues to structure professional development time based on teacher requests and needs. This year, a clear professional development plan has been provided, outlining the key initiatives of the school and areas of focus and development. The recent professional development time (1/2 day in September) was dedicated to individual reflection and implementation.

Issue/question: The Student/Parent Portals in Secondary are utilized to varying degrees by different teachers. Some teachers feel that students need to be the primary source of communication and that required information on the Portals should be minimal. Some parents feel that information provided on the Portals is insufficient.

Information: Basic guidelines for Portal usage are provided to teachers. Teachers are increasingly utilizing technology in a variety of ways, and multiple educational technology vehicles are unavoidable. Teachers often use Google docs, blogs and other tools that are not always easily compatible with Portals. While portal utilization may vary among teachers, the basic expectations are consistent and need to be met.

Issue/question: The major stairwells of the school facility that are utilized by students are not covered, resulting in wet students, books, computers, etc.

Information: CIS has expressed a desire for covered stairwells to the Landlord, Dart Realty on multiple occasions. The request is still being considered as an element of future facility additions.

Issue/question: ID cards for High School students

Information: ID cards may be an added safety element as students travel overseas, and could possibly be used in other ways on campus. Parent(s) have suggested ID cards in the past and CIS welcomes the concept. Offers from parents to facilitate the development and procurement of ID cards will be well received.

High School Representatives



Sarah Dyer



Rashada Clarke

HIGH SCHOOL CONTINUED



Issue/question: The lunch line is too slow and the lunch time is too short.

Information: CIS staff members are present daily in the cafeteria during Secondary lunch to monitor lines, and Mise En Place provides adequate staffing. Overall feedback regarding Mise En Place services is decisively positive. It is extremely rare that the length of the lunch line results in insufficient time for students to eat their lunch, and this type of situation is usually isolated to the first days of school. Student interviews are being conducted to determine how student views relate to staff perceptions.

Increasing the lunch time has multiple implications as there are currently three lunch shifts at CIS, and the ARC is utilized by the PE department before and after lunch times. CIS is open to possible alterations of lunch times and school times, but the context and implications must be carefully considered.

Issue/question: The homework load is too heavy and students have assignments in every subject, every night. Can teachers evenly distribute the workload?

Information: Homework is not assigned in every subject, every night, and the time it takes to complete assignments varies based on individual students. Overall workloads of students can vary based on the educational program they choose. For example, students who choose to take more courses at the IB level often have more work to complete; this is a choice by students, and some elect to switch from the IB level if they have other priorities. CIS promotes a rigorous academic program to challenge all students, while also encouraging individual paths for individual students and does not overly push IB. High School teachers will not limit assignments to particular days of the week, as attempts to do this in the past have been unsuccessful and do not ensure even distribution of homework. Teachers currently use a testing calendar to ensure that significant tests for multiple subjects are not scheduled on the same day.

Issue/question: The school supply list indicates that parents need to supply materials for teachers.

Information: Parents do not need to supply materials for teachers, but they do need to provide materials for their children, including items like post-its and notecards indicated on the supply lists. In the past some teachers were frustrated when students did not have these items when they were needed in class, so they collected the items from the students and then handed them back out when students needed them. The language of the supply lists will be altered as needed.

Issue/question: Teacher turnover is a serious problem at CIS

Information: The faculty retention percentages at CIS are in line with other international schools. CIS has been successful in recruiting high quality teachers, and some of these teachers have chosen to be part of a larger international education system, staying at a particular school for only a few years. In addition, Cayman is inherently a transient community due to multiple geographic, economic and socio-political dynamics. While CIS recognizes negative factors involved in assimilating new faculty, the experiences that international teachers bring to CIS from other institutions around the world adds to the diversity and strength of the school. CIS will continue to have a reasonable faculty mobility rate and will continue to fill annual vacancies with high quality teachers. The aforementioned Compensation & Benefits Committee will analyze this issue in greater detail as part of its mandate.

Community and Staff Representatives



Aimee Bush



Wendy Foreman



Jeremy Moore