



The mission of the International School of Monterey is to educate all children toward becoming conscientious, compassionate, and responsible citizens of the world.

Board of Trustees

May 27, 2009

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Dear ISM Community,

The past year has proven a challenging one for ISM due to unprecedented budget cuts and a midyear change in leadership. I am very pleased to report that we have successfully tackled those challenges. In fact, we will reach the end of the school year with the same high quality education being delivered by our amazing staff each day, and our budget should be just in the black after another round of anticipated state cuts.

Much of the credit for our success in managing through state funding woes goes to all of you who have rallied in support of the ISM Foundation and the Family Share and World Neighborhood Gala to ensure that we make our fundraising goals. As communicated in the most recent Foundation newsletter, we will do that with our highest Family Share participation rate ever at 82 percent and a total of \$338,000 raised.

Meanwhile, much of the credit for our success in continuing to deliver high quality education goes to Mr. Eric Pearlstein, who has capably stepped in as Interim Executive Director. In that role, he has continued to do a tremendous job on his originally assigned duties of overseeing teaching and learning, staff evaluation and development, and student services and discipline. He has also successfully taken on new responsibilities such as teacher hiring. He has done such a great job that the ISM Board, acting on the recommendation of a special Leadership Committee, plans to promote Mr. Pearlstein to Principal and Head of Academics starting July 1. In this role, Mr. Pearlstein will handle the day-to-day management of our school.

The Board has also concluded that there is no way that one person can manage the day-to-day operation of the school and provide necessary organizational leadership in all other areas critical to our long-term success. The fact is that we are more than a school. We also function in many ways as a district and as a nonprofit organization. While Mr. Pearlstein has stepped up to cover the immediate needs of managing the school, many functions previously assigned to the lead administrator have fallen on members of our Board and other volunteers over the past half year. This has worked over the short run as a stop-gap; however, relying heavily on volunteers to handle essential functions is not ideal, nor is it sustainable. So, again based on the recommendation of the Leadership Committee, the Board plans to hire a new Director to provide overall organizational leadership, while guiding resource development, ISM's identity as an International School, fundraising and grant writing, internal communications and external relations, strategic planning, relations with MPUSD and MCOE, and budget planning and oversight.

During its discussion of the duties to be handled by the new Director, the Leadership Committee—chaired by Dr. Sunder Ramaswamy, President, Monterey Institute of International Studies, with Christine Balbo Reed, J.D., Partner with Low, Ball, & Lynch and myself, Paul Gaucher, Owner Gaucher & Associates Inc.—came to the realization that one member of the Board has stepped in to provide outstanding leadership and work in virtually all of these areas in recent years and particularly over the past six months. We have seen this person take on a huge role addressing budget challenges and handling a variety of other matters like facilities negotiations with the district that typically would have fallen on the Director. And we like what we have seen—a person who builds teams, challenges them, and then jumps in with them to get hands dirty and get things done; an excellent communicator with great negotiation skills; and a highly vested member of our school community who cares deeply about the success of ISM.



In the end, the Leadership Committee concluded that it would make no sense to go through a long and costly search to find a new Director if we could recruit the proven leader and performer sitting right in front of us. So, we brought the idea back to the full board minus the member in question, who was asked to leave the room due to potential conflict of interest. We talked through all options, and the rest of the Board agreed with the committee's recommendation to explore the opportunity of hiring Sean Madden.

Many of you know Mr. Madden from ISM events, conversations, and personal encounters, yet I am not sure you know his professional accomplishments that helped the board make this choice. Mr. Madden has broad experience in the fields of education and communications. He knows the realities of the classroom as he taught high school language arts for five years in Washington State. He went on to coach volleyball at the NCAA Division I, professional, national, and international levels. More recently, he has served as Marketing and Publications Manager for CSUMB and Assistant Vice President for Communications and Creative Marketing for HSBC. He has a Master of Science in Rhetoric and Communication from the University of Oregon and graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Arts from Pacific Lutheran University. ISM has had the benefit of his skills as volunteer and parent as he has served on the Board of Trustees since 2003. Among his many roles and duties, he successfully chaired the first Strategic Planning Committee that produced the working document that guides ISM's future and was key to ISM being granted joint accreditation by CIS and WASC.

The Board made an offer to Mr. Madden, and, after taking a day to talk it over with his wife, he accepted, saying, "It is an incredible gift to merge passion and profession. I believe in our mission and vision. I am amazed by our achievements to date, and I believe in our potential to achieve much more. To help lead the way will be an honor."

Due to the abbreviated search process conducted by the Board, Mr. Madden has been extended a one-year interim contract rather than a permanent position. This will allow the Board to secure input from the broader ISM community before determining whether to conduct a full search for a permanent Director or to extend Mr. Madden's contract. Mr. Madden will assume his new duties as Interim Director on July 1.

Mr. Madden has resigned his position on the ISM Board effective May 26, and, as Vice Chair, I have assumed the role of Acting Chair pending the regularly scheduled election of new Board officers for the 2009-2010 school year at the Board's Annual Meeting on June 8.

We are very fortunate to have two proven leaders teaming up to navigate us through the next set of budget challenges, which will unfortunately become worse before they get better, and to take us to the next level as an organization and school. I hope you will have the opportunity to thank both Mr. Pearlstein and Mr. Madden for the tremendous work they have already done for ISM and to congratulate them on their new roles. More importantly, I ask that you do everything possible to support their efforts as we all work together *to educate all children toward becoming conscientious, compassionate, and responsible citizens of the world.*

Sincerely,



Paul Gaucher
CN = Paul Gaucher, C
= US

Paul Gaucher
Acting Chair, Board of Trustees

