



GOVERNORS' UPDATE

February 2008

Welcome to the update on the business of the Board of Governors at Sir James Henderson School. The Board met on Monday 4 February 2008 and the aim of this update is to provide parents and staff with a summary of the business of those meetings.

Prior to each monthly Board meeting two members are available in school if requested to provide a 'surgery' for discussion and comment on the work and operation of the school and its Board. If you are planning to attend the surgery it is essential to contact Reception and indicate the time you will arrive and the nature of the topic you wish to discuss. If there are no parents signed up by 3.30.pm we will assume there is no need for a surgery that evening.

Parents can communicate directly with all Board members by using the Board e-mail address: board@sjhschool.com

This update and other Board communications are available on the SJHS Community section of the new SJHS website: http://www.sjhschool.com/gov_update.asp

Treasurer's Report:

- The school's cash position remains strong and an additional amount was invested in a money market fund with a good rate of return.
- The Treasurer and bursar are currently working with our "*commercialista*" on revisions to our internal accounting procedures, including payment and cash systems. The school aims to tighten its accounting procedures after a small regrettable case of fraud involving payments of school registration fees.

- The school management team is currently reviewing next year's budget and will be discussing plans and priorities, particularly in view of the IB introduction. The Principal and the Treasurer will present a detailed budget to the Board in April.

Principal's Report:

- **Staffing update:** The Principal will soon start recruiting for next academic year. He has prepared job announcements for 8/9 vacancies for September, which are currently posted on the SJHS website. An early maternity cover has been found for Amanda Patrick (Music); a locally based teacher from ISM who will start after half term.

Mrs. Juliet Vanni, the Principal's Secretary, will not be returning from maternity leave and Mrs. Wendy Tooze, who was covering for her, will take her place on a more permanent basis.

- **Italian:** The Principal is working together with Martina Geromin, a Governor with extensive experience in the Italian and International education systems, to recruit 3 new full-time Italian teachers to begin in September 2008. Advertisements for the position have been posted in the *Corriere della Sera* and *La Repubblica* and the closing date is March 7th. The job listings are currently posted on the SJHS website and on the websites and the notice boards of the continuing education department of Università Cattolica and Università Bicocca in Milan. They have also been distributed to some private Italian and international schools in Milan and to the local Italian state schools with whom we have contacts. The school has also received several suggestions from the parent body.

The teaching of Italian will be integrated between the Lower and Upper School and with the teaching of all the other subjects of the School in order to establish a transversal collaboration between the various departments. The teaching of Italian will become increasingly important with the implementation of the IB program and changes will be made throughout the School and not just in the last two years. Changes in the Italian curriculum pre-IB (Years 10 and 11) already reflect this.

- **IB Authorisation Visit:** The feedback from the IB inspectors is that SJHS is a well managed, well organized, well structured and very successful school. We will not receive an official report on the visit including the decision on

whether authorisation will be granted until some time in March.

- **Enrolment and admissions - 2008.** We are now full in nearly every year group and there are waiting lists in several. Some year groups are at the maximum, particularly in year groups where new British families arrive and we must accept them.

School Calendar: The Calendar for the school year 2008/09 has been approved and will be posted on the website.

Building Update: Final permission from the Comune for portacabins has arrived and work on the installation will be done immediately after the end of term. In early January, five real estate consulting firms were invited to bid for a contract to find a new site for the school. Of these, 2 firms responded and the Board will evaluate their proposals. The Board is also considering several other potential sites close to the school.

New Committee Structures and Overall Aims

With the election of two new Governors, the Board reviewed the structure and aims of the various committees. This information will also be posted on the website on the Board of Governors page.

Building Committee: Tiziano Furlan (Chair), Jim Noble, Julian Berger, Marina Loiacono, Stefano Clini

Mission: Find a new long term location for the school which will meet all of the educational, artistic and sporting needs of the school covering the various needs of children starting school in the nursery classes through to Year 13 when they leave the school at age 18.

Communications Committee : Marina Loiacono (Chair), Alicia Romano, Ezio Ravaccia

Mission: Coordinate all communications from the Board to parents and the general public. It is also responsible for handling the public relations of the school. The committee is responsible for communicating to parents on a regular basis through the website, the Governors' Update and the Surgery. It is also responsible for providing other channels for communicating with parents such as Open Evenings

with parents to address topics of importance to the school (IB, the search for a new site).

Education Standards Committee: Martina Geromin (Chair), Alicia Romano, Philippa Knapp, Jim Noble, Trevor Church

Mission: Monitor the quality of the education provided at SJHS to ensure that its programmes are in line with the school's mission, which is to provide students with high quality education in order that they achieve their full potential. The Committee is a forum in which to discuss new ideas, issues and initiatives.

Finance Committee: Ezio Ravaccia (Chair), Jim Noble, Stefano Clini

Mission: Continue to ensure the financial well-being of the school and to liaise closely with the building committee to ensure that the funding structure of any new school location is in line with the school's current and future financial capabilities.

Health, Safety and Security Committee: Philippa Knapp (Chair), Julian Berger, Trevor Church, Karen Eastwood (Deputy Head, Upper School)

Mission: Ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and staff whilst on school premises and whilst engaged in activities on behalf of the school. It is also the Committee's responsibility to see that appropriate policies are implemented. These aims are to be met through supervision of the school's health, safety and security representatives and the health, safety and security consultants used.

Sponsorship Committee: Alicia Romano (Chair). This committee has been reorganized into 3 working groups which are comprised of parents, staff and alumni: Events (Chair: Marie del Bono), Alumni (Gregory Wright) and Capital Campaign (Alicia Romano).

Mission: Develop strategies for obtaining alternative sources of financing for investment in the school's infrastructure. Through its working groups, the committee aims to actively gain sponsorship, seek partnerships and to establish relationships with individuals, companies, institutions, philanthropic organizations and alumni to enhance academic opportunities at the school.

Main Priorities for the SJHS Board of Governors for 2008-2009

After a discussion of the aims and objectives of the various committees and a review of the major issues affecting the school in the next 12 to 18 months, Board members agreed on the main priorities that they must address. These are, in order of importance:

1. Finding new premises and finding solutions to space constraints in the interim.
2. Ensuring high quality education in all subjects across both Lower and Upper School. Areas for attention this year are the integration of the Italian Curriculum, on-going preparation for IB in September 2008 and monitoring the school's implementation of the Independent Inspection report.
3. Increase efforts to obtain sponsorship for financing investment in the school, particularly to finance new premises.
4. Review the structure of governance to ensure that the Board is able to properly fulfil its role of providing strategic guidance and financial oversight as well as monitoring and strengthening the school's programmes and services.
5. Improving communication between the Board and all stakeholders of the school (parents, staff, students) as well as with the wider community.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for 6th March at 7:30 p.m.