

PRINCIPAL'S FORUM ISSUES & RESPONSES

*This document lists recent concerns shared by high school parents and addressed in a Principal's Forum meeting. These are **not** the words of the HS administration, but a **compilation of the notes taken at the meeting by the high school representatives**. Please review, and if further information is needed/desired, please submit your questions to the HS PTA representatives at hspforum@isb.ac.th. If you feel this information is incorrect, again, please contact the HS PTA representatives so corrections can be made if needed. This is meant as a resource for parents, and is not an official statement from the school. Official school policies can be found in the [HS student/parent handbook](#). Thank you!*

FEEDBACK ON STUDENT LEARNING

(Addressed on February 28, 2017)

Why aren't written assessments and tests sent back home for review and reference?

Teachers have been encouraged in the past to allow students to take home the paper assessments, tests, and rubrics, and some do allow this. HS admin will discuss this again with the heads of departments. The HS admin will look into making this a standard practice and would like students to be able to learn from their mistakes at home too. Occasionally, teachers will keep the assessment and send home the rubric, so they can compare student work or keep an example of perhaps what a 5/6/7 performance looks like.

(Addressed on [December 8, 2016](#))

How can I tell how my child is performing on assessments?

Parents receive information on their student's work through Powerschool. Teachers may or may not leave comments with the scores. Teacher feedback may also be given through Haiku. Parents do not have access to their child's Haiku account, but may ask their child to share it with them. Rubrics that have been used to assess student work should come home for parents to review.

Parents, teachers, and HS admin all agree that feedback on school assignments should happen quickly. There is no set deadline on how quickly assignments and assessments are entered into Powerschool. If slow reporting is persistent, please talk to the teacher. If you are not comfortable talking to the teacher, email Susan Canobie.

IB PREDICTED SCORES

(Addressed on February 28, 2017)

Will ISB's *accurate* IB score predictions put my child at a disadvantage when applying to universities along with students from other schools who may have *inflated* IB score predictions?

Many students at ISB apply to the same universities, and these universities are familiar with ISB. ISB is considered a high yield for certain universities. This is definitely linked to ISB's accurate IB predictions.

(Addressed on [December 8, 2016](#))

When are IB scores predicted? What is the highest possible score?

The first IB score predictions are made by teachers in October to meet the early admissions deadlines of many universities. A second prediction is made in January and a third prediction in March. The highest score possible is a 45, with 42 points coming from a possible score of 7 in each of 6 classes, and 0-3 bonus points awarded from performance in TOK and the EE. ISB students average an IB score of 35.

(Addressed on [October 20, 2016](#))

Why does it seem like other BKK schools predict scores that are higher than ISB's predicted scores?

UK and some other university acceptance is conditional on predicted scores. A predicted score for a student can range from 10-45 as a total for all classes, with each class having a maximum score of 7. An accurate score prediction is +/- 1 when compared with the actual score. Inflating a score prediction by even 1 for each class taken by a student would inflate their total score prediction by 6. ISB does well in predicting scores accurately, with 66% of predicted grades within 1 point of the actual grade. Universities track an individual school's predictions. Accurate score predictions are necessary for ISB to stay honest and keep its integrity intact.

IB TEACHER CONTINUITY

(Addressed on February 28, 2017)

Many students in IB courses will have a change of teacher during the 2 year course. It is not possible to line up the course offerings with the teacher contracts. Often, when a teacher leaves after the first year of the 2 year course, he/she is replaced with an existing ISB teacher, to ease the transition. Outgoing and incoming teachers will communicate with each other regarding curriculum that still remains to be taught.

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING

***to be discussed in further detail in our March 30, 2017 HS PTA Parent meeting!**

(Addressed on February 28, 2017)

Why does ISB limit the number of college/university applications to five only?

ISB counselors encourage students to focus their search to ten universities, including "reach" schools, "target" schools, and "safety" schools. This saves time and money during the application process. A limit of ten university applications in a way increases chances that those schools will accept a student's application. Universities know how many other schools a student is applying to. If a student has applied to 20 universities, and one particular university is considering accepting his/her application, they might decide not to once they see how many other universities the student is considering. Universities recognize that it is unlikely this student would end up attending their university and would rather not hold a place for this student, nor extend an acceptance.

What is considered a "best fit" or "right fit" or "target" university?

Some parents have felt that ISB counselors are not doing enough to encourage students to apply to the elite universities of the world. ISB counselors and many scholars encourage students to search for a university that offers the best environment for learning and growth

for that student. This is different for each student. For some students, the elite selective universities may be a “right fit” for them, but for many students these are “reach” universities. Some students thrive in small schools with small class sizes. Other students will thrive in a very competitive large school. There are many factors to consider when searching for university.

Naviance has a scattergrams tool which is very helpful in determining if a student with a particular GPA and test scores will be admitted to a certain university from ISB. There are now several years of data in the system. If you do not have access to Naviance yet, the counseling department can help you, or you can have your son/daughter show you.

SUMMER SCHOOL

(Addressed on February 28, 2017)

What summer school options are available after the grade 11 year?

Several options are available to students who have completed their junior year. Students planning to graduate in December of their Senior year take courses to complete graduation requirements. EAL students may take courses to increase their english language proficiency. This year, a science enrichment course is being offered to students which will include writing scientific articles. Outside of ISB’s offerings, there are many great summer camps for IB students all over the world, and they may not be as expensive as you think. Counselors will have information on these camps, as well as Mr. Bradley and Ms. Canobie. Living abroad for a few weeks in the summer would be a good way to increase language skills. ISB does not offer summer school courses for students to review the previous year’s coursework nor to prepare for IB exams. In the past, grade 11 students were required to attend an EE writing workshop during the summer, and this was highly unpopular among both students and parents.

SENIOR GRADUATION

(Addressed on February 28, 2017)

Why is there a gap of several weeks between exams and the graduation ceremony?

The number of students in the IB program has steadily increased over the last several years. Years ago, most students were taking their regular final exams just a few days before the graduation ceremony, will only a small amount sitting the IB exams in May. ISB then decided to align the testing period, and all seniors, IB diploma or not, now take exams in May. The HS admin agrees that the graduation ceremony date can now be moved up to eliminate the 3-4 weeks of Senior break between exams and the graduation.

SCHOOL UNIFORMS

(Addressed on February 28, 2017)

ISB requires students to wear uniforms. This unites the student body, reduces peer pressure, and decreases the stress of deciding what to wear everyday. ISB is a multicultural school, and would like students to dress in a way that will not be considered offensive to other students. HS students occasionally have free dress days throughout the year. ISB is also considering changing the uniform if/when the school changes its logo. Information regarding dress standards for prom will be communicated before the end of the year. More

information on the uniform policy can be found [here](#) on ISB's website, or you can contact Mr. Vaughan.

Bottoms:

Khaki/ beige or black pants, shorts, skirts

No yoga pants

Do not have to be purchased at school

Tops:

Navy or white short-sleeved uniform polo shirt

Black, navy, white, or yellow long-sleeved shirts purchased at the Booster Hut

Long-sleeved "team" shirts, including ISB sports, IASIS, CC, MUN

No club shirts, except on certain club days which will be advertised

No short-sleeved shirts other than the uniform shirt

FRESHMAN SEMINAR

(Addressed on February 28, 2017)

All grade 9 students take a freshman seminar course for their first semester in HS. The school is reviewing topics covered in freshman seminar so as to not overlap with topics covered during the newly implemented advisory time for all HS students.

IB HL EXTENDED DAY SCHEDULE

(Addressed on February 28, 2017)

The HS has been looking at new ways to increase instructional time for IB HL courses. This year, when a student has a HL course as the last period of the day, that period is lengthened by 35 minutes. This schedule will allow for an additional 11 hours of instruction in the HL courses. The HS admin feels that teachers are using this time very well. Some students have found it difficult to get help from teachers after school, as teachers may have an HL class in session or the student may be in an HL class and need help in another class. The HS is looking at other ways to increase instructional time. It is suggested that HL courses receive 240 hours of instruction over two years, and SL courses should have 150 hours of instruction. The current system has increased HL course instructional time from 205 to 216 hours, but still falls short of the 240 hours suggested. SL courses receive well over the suggested amount.

COMMUNICATION

(Addressed on [December 8, 2016](#))

How will I know if there is a change in my child's teacher in the middle of a semester?

The high school will notify parents of a change in teacher or use of a long-term substitute by email. Email notifications are sent via Powerschool to the parent emails currently in the database. To ensure that contact information is current, parents can log into their Powerschool account and select "contact update" from the navigation bar on the left side of the screen. The teacher's name will also show up in Powerschool.

At what point would you notify parents of a substitute?

HS administration will inform parents of a substitute teacher when they know the substitute will be in place for more than a few days, and they feel the change may affect student learning.

AWAY GAMES

(Addressed on [December 8, 2016](#))

Is it possible to decrease the number of mid-week games played each season?

Most mid-week games are BISAC games. ISB must play these preliminary games to be seated in the BISAC tournament. Rescheduling games for the weekend would be very difficult as ISB hosts many events involving all three schools and other community activities. Travel time for teams is much worse for season 1 sports than for seasons 2 and 3, as there is more rain, and therefore, more traffic and more time spent in the vans.

RIGHTSIZING

(Addressed on [December 8, 2016](#))

How will “rightsizing” affect the number of HS teachers and class sizes next year?

Currently, with the lower enrollment in the high school this year, the high school has a teacher to student ratio that is higher than normal and cannot be sustained. In order to balance the teacher to student ratio, several teachers who wanted to continue with ISB must leave. Teachers retained have maximum flexibility, being able to teach various subjects or various levels of a subject. Sometimes existing teachers are paid an additional stipend to take on more responsibilities, rather than hiring another person.

Does the high school know which courses will be offered next year?

No, aside from the second year of the 2 year long IB courses. In the spring, course packets will be distributed and students can make their selections. Every course will be offered, but might not be held in the end if there is not enough student interest. This is the process that occurs every year.

Are other schools in Bangkok facing lower enrollment this year as well?

Pattana and NIST both traditionally have a higher population of Thai students than ISB does. ISB has a larger population of expat students. With more expat students and families, ISB experiences much more fluctuation in student enrollment than do Pattana and NIST with their more stable populations of Thai students.

HIGHER LEVEL SCIENCE COURSES IN GRADES 9 AND 10

(Addressed on [December 8, 2016](#))

Could the HS consider offering “honors” courses in the sciences for grades 9 and 10?

The HS considers Physics 2, Biology 2, and Chemistry 2 to all be more challenging. For students who want to study sciences in more depth, they may enroll in more of these courses instead of taking just what is required. Often in the US, “honors” courses come along with a higher weighted GPA, which is not offered with grade 9 and 10 science courses

in the high school. All of the science courses offered in grades 9 and 10 are designed to lead to IB HL courses. Any student may enroll in IB HL science courses in grade 11. There is concern that by creating an “honors” science track that leads to IB HL science courses, many students will be excluded from HL courses later on if they weren’t able to take the preliminary “honors” class in grade 9.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

(Addressed on [December 8, 2016](#))

What should a student do if he/she has more than 2 major summative assessments scheduled for one day?

Students and parents need to alert teachers when this happens. HS admin will bring up this topic with teachers, and remind teachers of the need to work with students who have more than two summatives on one day. Teachers also need to inform students on how “major” each summative assessment is, so students understand what is expected of them.

PROPOSED 7-1 GRADING SYSTEM

(Addressed on [December 8, 2016](#), see slideshow from PTA meeting on [November 17, 2016](#))

How can ISB market itself as the best option for US families if the grading system is not A-F?

The credit based system is what makes ISB similar to a school in the American school system. Regardless of whether a student takes art or math, a certain number of hours in the classroom are required, and a fixed amount of credit is awarded for each course. Students are required to have a certain amount of credits in various subjects in order to graduate. ISB’s commitment to the arts, athletics, and university counseling for students going to US universities is the best in Bangkok.

If it isn’t broken, why are we trying to fix it?

In the HS at ISB, incremental adjustments are always being made. The grading system is not broken, but the proposed new system is an improvement to what we have currently. Many schools have adopted this grading system, so this is not uncharted territory.

My daughter’s teacher told her he will never give a 7 in his class.

A 7 score is equivalent to an A+, and is difficult to attain. A disproportionate number of ISB students score 7s in their classes.

Will universities understand the 7-1 grading system?

Placement of ISB students in quality universities is very important to ISB, and this is not something the HS admin would endanger. Of the hundreds of universities that have visited ISB in the last couple of years, none have said the 7-1 grading scale is a disadvantage, and some even said it was advantageous. If by chance there is a university that is unfamiliar with this system, ISB will work with them. When visiting or communicating with universities, make sure you talk to the international student admissions person as they are likely to be familiar with the 7-1 system.

FLIPPED INSTRUCTION (FI)

(Addressed on [October 20, 2016](#))

What are the benefits?

In flipped instruction classrooms, students prepare and receive very targeted instruction on their own, before they arrive in the classroom. Students are able to watch and rewatch videos at their own pace until they understand, or to read and reread materials until they feel comfortable with the information. With the teacher's guidance in the classroom, students explore topics in greater depth and work with other students to apply the information and extend their understanding. FI is increasingly common in universities, with students receiving content online, then participating in partner/group strategies when in class. Online courses generally use FI.

Could students move to another class that doesn't use this teaching strategy?

No, because most teachers are using this strategy. In March 2016, 90% of ISB HS teachers said they are using flipped instruction in some form.

This form of instruction increases computer face time.

Videos are often the preferred method for delivering content. Segments should only be about 8 minutes long.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION (TEACHER EVALUATION)

(Addressed on [October 20, 2016](#))

What should I do if I have a complaint against a teacher?

Students are encouraged to bring concerns to the teacher in person. If the problem does not resolve, the next step would be for the parent to contact and discuss the problem with the teacher. If a parent has done this, and is not satisfied with the results, he/she can go to the head of the department, the child's HS counselor, then the HS administration. Parents are encouraged to start the process and talk with someone if they have concerns. The HS administration only receives 5-6 complaints about teachers each year, and there are 80 teachers in the high school. Please refer to the [HS Student/Parent Handbook](#), Section 1-Channels of Communication.

How are teachers evaluated?

The purposes of teacher evaluations is to ensure that teachers are the best they can be and that students reach their full potential. Many factors determine teacher performance, including both learning focused standards such as instruction and assessment, and professional standards which include being caring and empathetic. A variety of strategies are used to evaluate teachers by looking for consistent patterns in their teaching:

Walk throughs-The HS administration, leadership team, and Mr. Davies very briefly visit classes unannounced. The classroom setting and student behavior are observed in addition to the teacher's performance.

1+5 visits-Mr. Bradley visits for the last minute of the break and the first 5 minutes of class.

Formal visits-Unannounced visits for 30-40 minutes of the class for new teachers, some teachers prefer announced visits which is accommodated.

Targeted observations

PPP goal setting-2 year cycle

Online anonymous student surveys-A teacher will send surveys out to all students from 3 classes. If the teacher is new or there is a concern, the surveys must be shared with the administration to help analyze the data collected.

Pantherline-The HS administration can glean information from student questions.

Parent surveys-Parents are encouraged to comment on individual teachers in the "comments" section of the online survey.

Counselors

External testing data

MATH COURSES FOR GRADE 9

(Addressed on [October 20, 2016](#))

The math course a student takes in grade 9 will determine his/her later mathematics course options. A detailed math course flow chart is available on the school website under [academic courses](#). For example, if a student is enrolled in Integrated Math 1 Standard, it will be almost impossible for him/her to take the IB Math HL2 in grade 12. It is possible for parents to "override" the advice of the counselor and request to have their child placed in a higher or lower course.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP WEEK (GCW)

(Addressed on [October 20, 2016](#))

What is the purpose of GCW?

There are many objectives of GCW and teachers are required to plan trips that fall under one or more of these objectives. A list of objectives and more information on GCW can be found on the school [website](#).

GCW trips are very expensive. Where is the money spent?

ISB does not make money on the GCW trips, and overcharges are refunded (unless below 500 baht). A sample budget for the Bhutan trip can be found [here](#) on slide 20. Budgets will be listed in the catalog for every trip before registration in the next school year. Generally, fees include the tour guide company, tour fees, visa fees, costs for teacher chaperones and nurses, flights/teacher flights, insurance, montri buses, bank fees, incidentals, etc.

What safety precautions are taken?

All teachers are trained in emergency first aid. Tour groups will have emergency plans in place. School nurses go through each student's medical history with the teacher leading the trip. The health information required on the registration forms will be altered for next year and will ask for food preferences/restrictions, not only food allergies.

What further trip information will parents receive after registration?

In December, parents will have online access to packing lists and other pertinent information regarding their child's trip. Students meet four times with their GCW group and teacher

leader. The first two meetings are for team building with only students. The third and fourth meetings are open to parents. In the past, not many parents have attended, but they are welcome.

EXTRA FEES

(Addressed on [October 20, 2016](#))

The accounting office works with the major employers to bill certain costs in a way that might possibly help parents to be reimbursed for some items. It is difficult to find a way to roll additional fees (like AP exam fees, trips required by certain classes, and supply costs) into tuition as every student participates in a unique set of classes, clubs, and activities. More information on fees required by certain classes will be available to students/parents at the time of course registration.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

(Addressed on [October 20, 2016](#))

ISB posts whole school [academic results](#) on the school website, which includes the results from the most recent year as well as the average of the five years prior to that. The school will not share the academic results of students of a specific teacher.

University acceptance is sometimes considered a measure of high school performance and the acceptance list for last year can be found posted in the HS counseling office.

LAPTOPS TOO HEAVY

(Addressed on [October 20, 2016](#))

There currently is no plan to replace the laptops at this time. The computers the students have are the most cost-effective and sturdy option available. School tried to incorporate the Macbook Pro, but found the screens broke more easily and often. The laptops currently in use weigh only a few hundred grams. Many textbooks are now available online, so students have less books to carry in their backpacks. Students are also encouraged to use their lockers to store heavy backpacks during the day.