

IMSA PAC MEETING MINUTES
November 5, 2005

President Sandy Hamman called the annual downstate meeting to order at 10:10 AM in Peoria, IL. Roll call was taken but there was not a quorum.

Gina Zager distributed minutes from the October meeting as well as copies of the Parent-Student address book to those parents who did not have a copy.

President's Report

Sandy reminded the parents that PAC was still seeking volunteers to attend the Regional Informational Meetings around the state, being presented to give parents of prospective IMSA students information about the Academy. Volunteers should be prepared to answer questions of parents of prospective IMSA students and give them the "parents' perspective" of IMSA. The meeting dates where volunteers are needed are:

11/8 – Rockford	12/5-- Effingham
11/9 – Oglesby	12/6 – Charleston
11/14 – Berwyn	12/6—East St. Louis
11/14 – Quincy	12/7 -- Urbana
11/15 – Macomb	12/13 -- Springfield
11/16 – Moline	

If interested, please contact Sandy (sshamman@adams.net) or Gina Zager (dgzager@comcast.net) for the specific meeting places and times.

Similarly, IMSA is seeking parents to attend the VIP Days on (November 12th and January 29) to provide parents of prospective students with information about life at IMSA from a parent's point of view. Please contact Sandy or Gina for details or to volunteer.

Sandy also noted that the Felicia Bragg has volunteered to chair the Minority Relations committee.

Vice President's Report

Barb Kulbida reported that there will be a meeting on December 3rd (immediately after the PAC meeting) to provide information and make decisions regarding downstate buses. Barb would like to form a committee the downstate coordinator and local bus coordinators. The goal is to deposit funds thru the PAC to relieve the local coordinators of personal liability and to maximize the PAC's bargaining power with the bus companies. Currently, the PAC is still awaiting incorporation from the state. There would be no changes to the bus program this year although the PAC Treasurer could handle the funds this year if the local coordinators want. She noted that the Rockford area parents would like to have a bus next year.

Barb also asked for contributions for the PAC newsletter. She mentioned that sophomore parents in particular would appreciate tips from the more experienced parents. She also

invited parents to send in questions of common interest and/or achievements of students or teachers. Barb requested that all contributions be sent to her by Thanksgiving at BAMKC52@aol.com.

IMSA Administration Comments

Eric McLaren stated that first quarter grades were placed in the mail on Thursday. He noted that there some textual oddities due to Word's SmartQuotes. He reminded parents that there are no grades in the World Language courses for the first quarter.

On November 11th, there will be a midday Veteran's Day program. Both students and staff will serve speakers on the impact of veterans in particular wars (e.g., WWII, Vietnam and Iraq)

Dr. Jim Gates, a preeminent African American physicist, will come to IMSA in the first week of the second semester.

Eric noted that the governor has ordered that all state buildings must be kept at 66 degrees during the day and 55 degrees at night to save utility costs. IMSA will do that for the main building, plus increase awareness of energy efficiency issues. One basic example is that students should not run the air conditioner or heater with the windows open. He noted that every building has unique hot and cold spots, although the second floors tend to be warmer.

Bob Hernandez (Student Life) reported on the following topics:

- There will be an Indian Culture celebration on Tuesday (11/8) from 7 to 10 pm
- There will be two student plays on the weekends of November 4-5 and 11-12
- On October 28, IMSA hosted "Ghost Tellers" who talked about spirits who stalked the IMSA campus 65 students attended.
- Students are taking advantage of many sponsored trips downtown and to the local malls.

IMSA Presentation

Dr. Clayton Skinner, history professor at IMSA, provided a presentation regarding the new SAT test which includes an essay portion. His research demonstrates that colleges are basically taking a "wait and see" attitude. The College Board is doing the same and may adjust the test further as time goes by.

Specifically, the Kaplan test preparation service conducted a survey of the 345 top colleges and announced the following findings:

- ❖ 170 colleges (including 13 colleges typically sought by IMSA students) stated they would ignore the essay portion entirely
- ❖ 78 schools (including 15 IMSA preferences such as University of Illinois) will give the essay portion "lesser weight"
- ❖ 60 colleges (included 14 IMSA preferences) will give the essay portion equal weight to the other portions
- ❖ 59 schools (including 10 IMSA preferences) are undecided

Eric McLaren noted that colleges develop sophisticated profiles of those students that succeed at their colleges. The success criteria might GPA, SAT/Math, SAT/Verbal, their application essays, etc. No one currently knows whether a high or low grade on the essay portion of the SAT correlates to the success or failure of students at a particular college. So many colleges are making admission decisions on the standard criteria and then tracking those students to later compare how well they did on the SAT essay with their success at the college level. It will probably take 3-4 years before most colleges change their admission standards based on the essays.

Dr. Skinner outlined the practical factors underlying the essay. Students have 20 minutes to write an essay on questions such as “Do people work for personal gratification or for money?” Two readers then judge the essay based (literally) on a two minute review of the essay. Skinner therefore stated that the best way to get a top grade on the essays is to have a very structured essay. Subtlety and nuance are actually detrimental factors, which runs counter to IMSA’s typical writing curriculum. Penmanship and neatness are also important since the essays are handwritten.

IMSA will be training students to maximize their performance on the SAT essays. He is assembling terms that would be appropriate for particular essays (i.e., hostility, conflict for a Civil War paper). Students will also be instructed to clearly identify essay criteria (transition, contrast) to make it patently obvious that those elements are in the essay. There will also be more emphasis on grammar and IMSA may even employ the traditional tool of sentence diagramming to aid students. Essentially, IMSA will make students aware of the rules of the game so that they can switch from their typically more sophisticated approach to essay writing to the simpler approach required for good grades on the SAT essays.

Student Life

Kim Schmitt asked that any wing that has not had a parent partner event inform her.

Gina Zager stated that the Senior Banquet will be held on June 2, 2006 at the Carlisle in Lombard. The budget and agenda have been established. Each student will be allowed to invite six guests, with a wait list being established for additional guests. She noted that last year’s banquet at the Lombard had 960 attendees, which was above the building’s capacity per local fire codes.

Announcements

The next PAC Meeting will be held at IMSA on December 3, 2005 at 10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Don Driscoll
(<http://parents.imsa.edu>)