

FOCUS ON LEARNING
MID-TERM VISITING TEAM REPORT

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL EASTERN SEABOARD

MID-TERM VISIT: 24-26 MARCH 2008

MID-TERM COMMITTEE

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INTRODUCTION:

Brief Description

International School Eastern Seaboard (ISE) is a proprietary, non-sectarian, day school offering an American curricular program and the International Baccalaureate International Diploma Program (IBDP) in grades 11 and 12. ISE is owned and operated by International School Eastern Seaboard Limited (ISE Ltd.), which is a registered company in Thailand. The Board of ISE Ltd. meets annually to review school finances. The administration of the school is the responsibility of the school superintendent and chief financial officer who are members of the ISE Ltd. Board.

ISE enrolls students whose parents live and work in the Eastern Seaboard industrial area of Thailand. ISE employs 48 full-time and 4 part-time professional faculty members.

Current ISE student enrollment is 383. It is expected to exceed 400 in the second semester of 2007-08. There has been an enrollment increase of 25% since 2005.

Distribution of ISE students in the first semester of the 2007-08 school year: Pre School = 48 (12%); Elementary School = 181 (47%); Middle School = 78 (20%); High School = 81 (21%). The major change in the distribution pattern is that the number of Preschool students has doubled in the past 3 years.

The increasing enrollment in the 2007-08 school year is reflective of the expansion of businesses in the Eastern Seaboard development. The increase in High School enrollment (64 in 2005, 81 in 2007) may be attributed to students moving to ISE from schools that do not offer an IB program

ISE enrolls an average of 103 new students per year; the annual range over the past three years has been 80-122.

2005-06, 122 new students, 2006-07, 84 students, 2007 (first semester) 80 students.

The nationality composition of the current ISE student body is: Japanese (26%), Thai (25%), Korean (21%), American (12%), British (3%), German (3%), and Others (10%). This structure marks an increase of 5 nationalities since 2004. There has been a small increase in the English first language nationalities. The Asian first language group still predominates.

Asian first language students now constitute 73% of ISE's student body. The compositional change in the ISE population is consistent with business in the Eastern Seaboard. The trend is to replace English first language directors and managers with Asians.

The average length of stay for a current ISE Asian student is 3-5 years. European and North American students usually attend ISE for 2 – 3 years.

ESL Enrollment

28% of current grades 1-10 students attend ESL classes.

EFL/AED Enrollment

In the 2007-08 school year, secondary school EFL classes were renamed AED, Academic English Development. These classes are attended by 30% of Middle School and High School students.

International Baccalaureate Program enrollment

- ∞ All current grade 11 students are taking some IB courses; 77% are taking a full diploma course load.
- ∞ 18 out of 19 current grade 12 students are taking IB courses; 55% are enrolled in 3 or more IB courses.
- ∞ 13 of 18 current grade 11 students are full IB diploma candidates.

Achievement on Standardized Tests

ITBS- The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills are administered annually, in November, to grades 4, 6 and 8. Overall results indicate significantly lower reading scores than math scores. This is a reflection of the large ESL population. The range of math scores over the years 2005-2007 was 70%ile – 82%ile for grades 4, 6 and 8. Reading scores in grades 4, 6 and 8 ranged from 41%ile to 53%ile. The core totals for the three years ranged from 66%ile in sixth grade to the 58%ile in eighth grade.

PSAT- Of the eleven sophomores who took the PSAT in October, 2007, mean scores were: Critical Reading 35.7, Math 47.7, and Writing Skills 34.8. Eight juniors achieved the following scores: Critical Reading: 41.1, Math 54.6, Writing Skills 40.4.

SAT- The SAT is taken by approximately half the grade 11 and 12 students. Students who plan to attend a Thai university often do not take the SAT. Average SAT scores in 2007 were: Reading 525, Math 600, and Writing 495. Results from 2005 and 2006 were similar.

University Intentions

Almost 100% of ISE students intend to attend university. In the years, 1998-2007, ISE graduated 86 students. Currently four seniors have been accepted at Chulalongkorn University, the most academically prestigious Thai university.

Learning disabled students:

Learning disabled students receive support from teachers (who modify their programs), tutors, volunteers, counseling, modified programs and from smaller class sizes. At present, there are 12 identified learning disabled students in ISE.

Homework

Grades 1-3 students are assigned homework of less than half an hour per night; Grades 4-5, one half hour to one hour per night. Middle School homework is assigned daily and it requires an hour to an hour and a half. High School homework is often two to three hours in length.

After School Activities (ASA)

Almost all ISE students have an after school activity. All MS students participate in at least one activity. All HS students participate in 2 activities.

Community Service

Grade 11 and 12 students are expected to perform approximately 50 hours of community service over the two year period of time. Many students exceed this requirement and it is estimated they perform 60 hours approximately. There is no definite requirement for grades 9 and 10 but many perform community service.

Transportation

Approximately 50% (200) students use the ISE bus service, VP Transport. The remainder of the students live on the Burapha Golf Course (106) students or have private transportation.

Dwelling

At present, 106 (28%) of ISE students live in the residential area at Burapha Golf Course. Students come from as far as Chonburi city and Rayong. The majority of the students live in Sriracha and Pattaya.

Faculty Profile

There are currently 52 on staff (including two administrators and one counselor/psychologist); 48 teachers are full-time and four part-time; 28 (53%) are recruited and 24 (47%) are local hires. I.S.E. has 14 more staff members than in 2005. 51% (27) are female teachers; 49% (25) are male teachers.

Nationality

American: 27	Canadian: 5	Japanese: 1	Brazilian: 1
Australian: 4	Filipino: 2	New Zealand: 2	Korean: 1
British: 5	Italian: 1	Thai: 4	

Qualifications

2x	Doctorate level degrees
22x	Master's level degrees
27x	Bachelor's level degrees
1x	Applied Arts diploma
1x	Montessori diploma

Experience

- Years at ISE: 19% between 6 – 9 years; 15% more than 10 years.
- Years at international schools: 40% less than five years; 30% more than 10 years.
- Total teaching years: 8% less than five years; 21% between five and 10 years; 17% between 11 and 15 years; 53% more than 15 years.

Support Staff

- 42 support staff comprising:

17 teachers' assistants	1 office receptionist	1 computer teacher	
2 library assistants	4 business office personnel	1 event coordinator	
2 IT technicians	1 school nurse	4 maintenance	
staff 1 book store manager	1 print shop assistant	1 finance director	
1 book store assistant	1 office manager	1 office secretary	3 drivers
- 62% of the support staff have a Bachelor's degree (24)
- 10 % have a Master's degree (4) TA average years at ISE = 6

Significant Developments since 2005

In the three years since the last full self-study and visit by the WASC accreditation team, the major changes that have occurred at ISE are:

- ∞ The appointment of a new Superintendent (Dr. Robert W. Brewitt) in November 2006.
- ∞ The appointment of a new Elementary Principal (Mrs. Heather Naro) in August 2007.
- ∞ The appointment of an IB Coordinator in 2006.
- ∞ Appointment of Athletics/Activities director in 2007.
- ∞ Appointment of HS & MS Coordinators in 2006, Appointment of Secondary School Coordinator in 2007
- ∞ English first language students increased from 10% (2005) to 17% (2008).
- ∞ Asian students comprise 77% of the student body in 2007. In 2005, the percentage of Asian students was 73%.
- ∞ Approximately 115 (30%) students are receiving ESL support in 2007-2008 as opposed to 111 (32%) in 2005.
- ∞ Increased numbers of preschool, elementary and high school students at ISE.

	2005	2008
Pre- K	28	46
Elementary	163	176
Middle School	88	78
High School	68	81

- ∞ Current enrollment is 381 students compared to 304 in 2005.
- ∞ Faculty is comprised of 51.5 teachers in 2008 compared to 39 in 2005.
- ∞ Thai language classes for Thai national students were established in 2001 in adherence to government regulation that has been strictly enforced at ISE.
- ∞ Foreign language offerings have increased. Korean is now taught as of 2007-08 in addition to French, Spanish, Japanese, and Thai.
- ∞ ESL English requirements reviewed and up graded in June 2006.
- ∞ Policy changes regarding admission requirements have been approved and used since May 2006.
- ∞ Curriculum reviews are underway according to curriculum cycle.
- ∞ In January 2008, 52% of teachers were local hires, compared to 43% in 2005.
- ∞ 19 students graduating in the 2007-08 class (compared to past years 5 students in 2005-06, 10 students in 2006-07) a significant increase.
- ∞ 18 of the 19 twelfth grade students are enrolled in IB courses. Eleven students are full IB diploma students. Seven additional students are taking IB certificate courses. In 2005-06 we had one full diploma student and in 2006-07 we had two full diploma students.
- ∞ ES has developed and adopted a new report card format that integrates the former narrative comments with skill and content checklists. It also includes direct assessment of the schoolwide learning results which have been made more accessible and child-friendly through posters around the school.

Implementation Procedures

Each of the school's action plan teams is made up of faculty and administration. If there is the need for a broader approach, the Thai staff, students and parents are asked to participate. Such was the case for the Vision Committee, Long-range Planning Committee and the Fine Arts Center

Committee. Community-wide issues are discussed at the monthly Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Executive Board meetings. Five “all parent” meetings as well as the annual meeting of the PTA are held and issues and concerns are discussed. Reports and recommendations are sent to the superintendent and, if necessary, to the Board of Directors. Most plans are discussed at full faculty meetings and/or in smaller team groups.

Decisions and changes are communicated through faculty meetings, the daily bulletin, Email messages and the “ISExpress.”

Critical Areas of Follow-up

Recommendation: “Because of the school’s changing demographics and the need to further clarify the school’s identity and purpose, it is recommended that the school articulate a vision that generates understanding and support throughout the entire school community as to what the school intends to become. This vision should also consider program development in new areas of focus (e.g., IB, Middle School Philosophy and Practices, Foreign Languages, Fourth Quarter ESL Immersion Academy for new students). The value of the vision is to:

- a. **Establish educational identity in the surrounding community to reinforce support among existing members of the school and also to be attractive to potential members.**
- b. **Articulate a pro-active direction for the school that reduces reactionary responses and signals directions that the school fully intends to pursue and also sustain.**

Response: During the 2005-2006 school year, a “vision committee” was formed to help identify the future course of the school. This committee consisted of parents, students, teachers, Thai staff and directors. The committee solicited input from all members of their professional, national and cultural groups. The result was the following Vision Statement: “*A caring community dedicated to academic rigor.*” In the 2006-2007 school year, the school formed a long range planning committee. This committee included members of the School Advisory Committee, PTA members, parents, teachers, students and Thai staff. The task was to determine future programs and facilities that best meet the needs of the ISE community. This committee met monthly and solicited input from their representative groups. The committee made several major recommendations to the ISE Board of Directors. These were:

- ∞ ISE be limited in enrollment to 500 - 550 students and additional facilities should be built to accommodate that number.
- ∞ That ISE would offer the IBDP in Grades 11 & 12 and an American program in grades PreK-10.
- ∞ A new fine art center would be developed and additional staff added to strengthen the fine arts areas of the curriculum.
- ∞ That ISE would remain a day school without boarding facilities.
- ∞ That ISE would continue to enroll students with limited English through grade 8.

The ISE Board of Directors approved these recommendations at their annual meeting in November 2007. The following budgets, program and staffing plans would incorporate these ideas. After the Board meeting, a committee consisting of members from all aspects of the community was formed to proceed with the planning of the Fine Arts Center. This committee is currently working on program changes that would accompany the new Fine Arts Center. The committee is following the time frame outlined in the Vision. The Board is now working out financial details before completing the plans for the building and beginning construction.

The Visiting Committee, after talking to many stakeholders, believes that the immense improvements in the school, from atmosphere to attitude, are a result of the administrators' ability to frame their vision of the school in a way that makes "buy in" by the staff, parents and students very easy. The Vision Committee helped to develop the big picture of what they want the school to be, but these dedicated leaders have brought their vision to life.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the school consider ways to improve overall communications within and outside the school to ensure that all members of the school community are appropriately informed of opportunities, decisions and progress. In order to improve communication between the Board of Directors and the school community, it is recommended that the Board of Directors post "minutes" of all meetings and also provides information about the financial plan that the Board of Directors intends to pursue to enhance the overall educational quality of the school

Response: The school has improved its electronic communication with parents by ameliorating the school website and establishing an electronic mailing list; development in these two areas is ongoing. The decision to invest in the development of new administration software will grant stakeholders easier access to student achievement information in the future. The "ISExpress" is sent out monthly rather than weekly to encourage readership interest. The PTA hosts a bimonthly all-parent meeting where parents can ask the school administrator and ISE Directors questions. The Board of Directors has improved communication with stakeholders by asking for input from staff, students and parents, and by involving stakeholders in major decisions (i.e. the long-term visioning committee). The school has also put out new parent handbooks for curriculum at each level of schooling and ESL. Monday Morning Meetings with staff allow for timely information transfer and face-to-face sharing among staff. Staff feel that communications have definitely improved, particularly with greater use of the school's e-mail system. The visiting committee commends the school for all of its improvement in the area of communications.

While the VC wholeheartedly commends the Administration for their efforts to improve communications, it would remind them that it is a never-ending charge. Communications regarding budget formulations and allocations, and teacher staffing changes need to be relayed to all. If there is a choice between "need to know" information sharing and complete sharing, the team believes it is better to err on the side of too much information. When teachers have worked so hard on committees, either for WASC or general school improvement, they need to see how this has contributed to an overall plan. Sometimes this last step can be overlooked, but it is very important to sustaining the momentum for change and for providing continued incentive for future work.

Recommendation: Since ESL has become a major issue for the school, it is recommended that the school review all policies, procedures, program structures, evaluation criteria for determining program effectiveness, assessment instruments and

measurements of student progress, resources, support, teacher expectations, and practices that impact the successful education of ESL students at the school and also the successful education of the non-ESL students in the regular classrooms (with the mainstreamed ESL students). Prompt attention should be given to appropriate placement of new ESL students in the final quarter.

Response: The school formed a team to review and revise the ESL policies and procedures. Changes were made to the admissions of ESL students and new policies were made. The ESL department believes that the new policies have been positive and effective. The major changes were that students below high intermediate level will not be admitted into the High School program and rank beginner students will not be admitted into the second semester of fifth grade or first semester of sixth grade. A probation policy was made to determine a reasonable rate of language progress and that the necessary motivation is present.

During the 2007-08 school year, a Professional Development Team was formed and teachers have been encouraged to participate in ESL professional growth opportunities. The mainstream teachers feel that the training they have received from the ESL teachers has been helpful and supportive. The collaborative work time for teachers and ESL specialists encourages team planning and consistent support for students. Offering ESL professional growth will continue to be a focus at ISE due to the high percentage of ESL students.

Recommendation: The Board of Directors and Administration should review staffing needs of the school in correlation with its Vision, programming plans for the future (including IB), changing demographics and needs of ESL students, projected enrollment, secondary level administrative leadership/coordination, and essential support needed to ensure an optimum environment for delivery of a quality academic and social/co-curricular program to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of all students. The Visiting Team strongly suggests that the Board and Administration revisit and re-evaluate the possibility that large class sizes of second-language students will experience success in a classroom delivering a curriculum based on US Standards and Benchmarks. Therefore, the Board of Directors and Administration should consider lowering the guidelines for maximum student-teacher ratios (particularly in grades 6-12) and strictly adhering to these new maximum guidelines, possibly requiring additional staffing when allocations exceed these guidelines.

Response- Over the past two years, ISE has increased its ESL staff by adding one additional teacher in the elementary school and one in the secondary school. The number of students enrolled in the ESL programs changes regularly, but the school feels the current ESL staffing is adequate for the number of students enrolled. The admissions standards were increased in 2006 so that there are fewer ESL students in the secondary school program.

The Board of Directors agreed to increase the number of teachers by 4 F.T.E. for the 2007-2008 school year. The increase is primarily in the Pre-kindergarten and high school programs. The enrollment in the Early Childhood Program is growing and they have added an additional class section. In the secondary school, they will add a full-time art teacher, a drama teacher and a full-time physical education teacher/athletic director next school year. They split grade 10 into two sections, adding two sections of English, two sections of science and another section of mathematics. This will reduce the class sizes in the secondary school and allow the school to add to the number of

IBDP offerings. The additional staffing in the areas of art and physical education allowed them to increase the student time in the elementary school in these subjects.

The Visiting Team commends the reassessment of staffing needs and the consequent improvement in class sizes, leading to additional opportunities for meaningful teacher-student interaction. The committee commends any improvements that will add to the number of IBDP offerings that students can take advantage of. Additional personnel may loosen the time table (i.e. physics and art scheduled during the same block), a change which the students mentioned they would like to see.

Recommendation: Develop, adopt, and continue to review a quality curriculum for all subject areas and for all classrooms

- A) Review and refine the curriculum development processes and the adoption cycle, so that an inclusive and thoughtful process is successfully sustainable. This process should include a reasonable review of best practices and changes that have occurred within the subject areas as reported by recognized professional organizations that also carefully considers the context, demographics, and unique needs of ISE students.**
- B) The curriculum should provide a coherent and consistent format that includes attention to PreK-12th grade Philosophy, Standards, School-Wide Learning Results (ESLRs) in conjunction with specific subject area Learner Outcomes (what students will understand, know, and be able to do), with additional emphasis on identification of quality Assessments that support the curriculum expectations for student learning.**
- C) Provide a thorough search for the best possible resources for staff to review in support of their curriculum.**
- D) Develop a multi-year plan of professional development support to ensure that the curriculum and its aligned instructional and assessment issues and needs are appropriately and consistently addressed by all staff.**
- E) Provide systemic support for issues and needs related to the successful implementation of the school's curriculum. Types of support may include additional staffing to effectively implement curriculum objectives, attention to instructional time and student scheduling, graduation expectations and credit requirements, distance learning, parent involvement in student learning, team planning time for examination and discussion of student work/progress, and various other types of structures and opportunities that support quality students learning. Attention to the various types of support suggested and/or required by the curriculum moves a curriculum notebook off a shelf and into the hearts and minds of staff, students, and parents.**

Response: The school has set up a curriculum review cycle. At the beginning of each school year a team is formed to review and revise the subject within the curriculum cycle. The team reviews the current curriculum and makes the appropriate changes. Sample materials are ordered for the team to review. Careful consideration is made so that the school adopts the program that best suits ISE students' needs. Math was reviewed in the 2007-08 school year and a new program will be in place in August 2008. They have brought in a trainer from the U.S. to train teachers and support the implementation of the new ES math program. During the 2008-09 school year, the Language Arts curriculum will be evaluated.

Next school year there is a PD plan to emphasize Assessment and bring in outside experts for a workshop on effective assessment that will be integrated into curriculum documents in future. There is also a plan to review graduation requirements to increase the courses required for graduation.

The Visiting Committee notes the work that has gone into this recommendation. The curriculum cycle drives the review of curriculum, the search for new resources, updated standards and benchmarks, and the identification of appropriate K-12 professional development opportunities. The many facets of the curriculum will continue to be major areas for emphasis in the future at ISE, including curriculum mapping, alignment and following the Thai curriculum and government regulations. As the school continues to grow, it may wish to consider adding a schoolwide Curriculum Coordinator who oversees the Professional Development as well. It would also be appropriate during next year's focus on assessment to expand the use of assessment data beyond standardized scores to aid in decision making and prioritization for school development.

Recommendation: The Administration should establish a system of instructional leadership and support augmented by annual staff evaluations.

Response: During the 2007-08 school year the administrative team revised the teacher evaluation process. The new process consists of a personal and professional goal as well as classroom observations. At the beginning of the year each teacher met with their administrator to discuss ways of meeting their goals. In addition, classroom observations, a mixture of formal and informal, announced and unannounced visits, are conducted more frequently and are of a shorter duration compared to previous years. A teacher's evaluation will be based on the completion of his/her goals, as agreed upon initially with the administrator, in conjunction with classroom observations. Stakeholders are confident that administration has made every effort to hire competent teachers that are being held accountable to follow the curriculum as outlined. Collaborative meetings, committee work and shared planning time have all helped to support these efforts, along with use of staff meeting times for PD.

Recommendation: The School's admissions policies should be reviewed to ensure that appropriate services and support are provided by the school for all students who are admitted. (e.g. Learning Disabled Students)

Response: Admissions policy revisions from 2006-07 were added to the Parent/Student Handbook. The ISE Policy Manual admission statement requires revision.

The policy committee proposed that the administration form an admission policy revision committee at the outset of the 2008-09 school year to further review the admission policies and testing procedures.

The Visiting Committee notes the changes in the admissions policies, and fully supports the concept that students, for whom inadequate support for success exists, will not knowingly be admitted to ISE. The school will have to address the issue of LD students currently in the school and what support they need.

Additional recommendations:

1. The Visiting Committee supports the decision to adopt the IB. Students and faculty believe that this has proved “value added” in terms of an increase in the rigor of the program and in terms of the PR value of how the school is perceived by outside potential stakeholders.

The Visiting Committee recommends that the school further dedicate itself to supporting the students and teachers in their IB work. This support should include:

- ∞ Strengthening the classroom equipment and library resources, both in print and electronically, to provide support for the level of research and experimentation necessary for successful IB work.
- ∞ Strengthening the IT facilities to support the research required by the IB.
- ∞ Investigate the use of a virtual school to ensure communications are maintained in case of emergency.
- ∞ Investigating the timetabling options so that a student’s IB program is not determined by which courses they can fit into their schedule.

2. In light of the turnover of staff at international schools, the Visiting Committee recommends that the school consider referencing and indexing all of its curricular documents and processes with previous editions or outside sources. For example, the standards for chemistry, listed in the curriculum documents, could be tied to the “NSTA standards considered by the science team in 2006, and regularly updated as NSTA updates their standards.” This will give further strength to the curricular documents and decisions made regarding what is taught and appropriate for each grade level.

In summary, the VC wishes to highlight the following 3 major strands for continued improvement:

1. Support of the IB program, as mentioned in the additional recommendations above.
2. Increased communications with all stakeholders as mentioned under the second Critical Area for follow up.
3. Continued emphasis on, and resource allocation for, curriculum development as outlined in the third Critical Area for follow up.

Summary of Significant Progress:

The Visiting Committee believes that the school has made significant progress in completing the Schoolwide Critical Areas for follow-up. The team notes the atmosphere as being marked by openness, collegiality and confidence. Rather than the atmosphere often encountered of, “What are you going to find?”, there was one of “Come on in, we have something to share with you.” There was an obvious and well-deserved pride in all of the changes that have taken place!

