



PTA April General Meeting – April 3, 2019 10am – 11:30am

In attendance: May Wong, Nancy Steinbeck, Amelia Allred, Rosa Nakahira, Gretel Tardio, Mette Kjeldsen, Vanessa Kassotou, Shayna Blum Hodes, Martin de la Torre, Maria de la Rocha, Sissy Landaeta, Jill Monaghan, Benton Ives

Guest Presenters: Viki Stiebert, Chris Horton, Soledad Santos

President Jill Monaghan opened the meeting and invited director Viki Stiebert to share an update.

Viki shared several exciting pieces of news and updates and reminded us that finding ways to help students to be outstanding is her focus. With that in mind, she highlighted the following areas:

1. SET will be recognized for building solar power and computer lab in interior. Recognized internationally by AASSA.
2. Diego, a Grade 12 student and chief engineer in the ISP Near Space Program has been published in "Analytics Insights" as creating 1 of 10 best Artificial Intelligence apps of the year.
3. Extended essays presentations - a good way to be recognized and parents can attend. Last week a Nico Soto presented on Amazon and next week's presentation will be on Blockchain

Viki also addressed traffic issues and said Mr. Cruz has been holding committee meetings with community leaders in neighboring schools, with ATTT and others. No solution as yet. Next steps in reaching out further will be taken after the Panamá elections finish.

She also noted some calendar concerns from parents, and said the school would be as a result changing parent teacher meetings next year in the ES to minimize missing class time. This was a response to parent feedback.

Viki also noted there has been some frustration from parents around the school's billing practices and capabilities. The Board and the Administration have been working together on this and will be implementing a new system. The goal is for parents to be able to see their bills in real-time on Canvas and avoid any surprises. The timeline is still in process. "It is going to take time but there is light at the end of the tunnel," Viki said.

Viki noted that many groups of community stakeholders have met with the governance expert Mark Frankel. She said that initial meetings had been held with a variety of stakeholders and that the final report will be with the Board in May.

Finally, Viki noted that High School teacher Robert Mooney had suffered a serious cardiac event in the States and had maxed out his insurance coverage. He is making great progress but the family would greatly appreciate any help the ISP community could offer.

B) Jillian reviewed upcoming events and said that teacher appreciation day will be coming up on April 24. She said the committee was looking for volunteers to make deserts, while the cafeteria would be providing the rest of the lunch banquet. She invited others to join the committee and noted that further surprises for the teachers were being planned.

Jillian noted that subcommittees have been working to revise the PTA's bylaws and to finish work on this year's PTA grants. She reminded attendees that both of these committees are open and anyone who wants to join is welcome.

She said the bylaws committee was working to make them "more user friendly" as well as improve their clarity.

Jillian said this year's Fun Fair was a great success, noting that the food court raised almost \$10,000, and the whole event was supported by more than 200 volunteers made up of parents and more than 130 teachers. Those efforts allowed the PTA to contribute more than \$25,000 to various grants within the school this year.

Gretel followed with a detailed explanation of how PTA grants were distributed this year. She shared an infographic that provided more details, and which has already been shared widely with the ISP community.

Amelia updated attendees on VAPA's ongoing efforts, noting that this year's Wizard of Oz show included sets made entirely of recycled products. She pointed out that the show is entirely student run, including the 12th grade director.

She noted that the upcoming AMIS event has enough volunteer support from the ISP community to house all the visiting student performers.

Shayna reviewed STEM efforts at the school. She encouraged parents to get involved with the Destination Imagination competition, which needs parent volunteers to serve as judges.

Jillian noted that Pink Shirt day is upcoming on May 2, and a guest speaker will be addressing students from Kindergarten to 12th grade. Parents will also be invited to a session: timing still being confirmed.

ES Vice Principal Mr. Chris updated parents on some minor changes to the school uniforms for the coming year. He said the school was working to standardize uniforms, so, for example, all students in all grades can wear the same kind of bottoms, whether that's shorts or long pants, skirts or a new skirt option. He said they were tidying up the blue sweatshirts.

He also said the school would be integrating POD colours into PE uniforms for ES and MS students. For example, kids from the same family will now be in the same POD group for the duration of their time at ISP. He hopes to share samples at the next PTA meeting.

Finally, guest speaker Soledad Santos, an ISP alumni and representative of Education First, an official ISP partner, told parents about Education First language schools. They are a 50 years old company offering language and cultural courses with 580 offices and schools worldwide. Programs are available for students over the age of 12 as well as parents. Course run year round but EF has created special programs tailored to ISP students in Paris, Munich, and Shanghai in July.

Soledad left flyers with the PTA and shared her contact info:

Product Manager

Soledad.santos@ef.com

6670-7085

214-6000

@efpanama

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30