

Minutes of the 2020-2021 HIS Executive Board Meeting #2

October 27, 2020 (Tuesday) 17:00 via Zoom and on campus

Members present: Rodney J Fisher, Nick Holywell, Karen Katayama, Phred Kaufman, Paul Nickel, Robert Pickett, Tim Schlosser, David Wakabayashi, Kathleen Riggins (auditor) Mitarai-Sensei (auditor)

Members absent: Teiji Midorikawa

Guests present: Neil Cooke (Principal), Barry Mernin (Niseko Administrator)

Quorum: Can have meeting without a quorum but cannot vote on anything. Email voting must be signed and sent before the meeting starts to be counted as present. A quorum consists of 2/3 or 6 members.

1. Call the meeting to order

Kaufman called the meeting to order at 17:03. We have a quorum for this meeting.

2. Approve agenda:

The agenda was approved.

3. Approve and sign minutes of August 25, 2020.

Minutes approved verbally via Zoom.

❖ Decisions made at this meeting:

- **Motion: Kaufman moves and Nickel seconds the motion that the revised Sapporo budget be approved by the EB.**
- 8 in favor
- The motion is passed

- **Motion: Fisher moves and Kaufman seconds the motion that the EB approves the Niseko Middle School plan.**
- 7 in favor and 1 opposed
- The motion is passed

- **Motion: Fisher moves and Wakabayashi seconds the motion that the EB approves the hiring of a teacher for Niseko Middle School.**
- 8 in favor
- The motion is passed
- EB requests for Fisher and Schlosser to clearly map out an exit strategy for Niseko Middle School.

4. EB Chair's Report: October 27, 2020

Dear HIS Board of Councilors and Executive Board

Greetings, and I hope this letter finds you well. The Executive Board has had a productive first few months of the 2020-2021 school year, including a nine hour training over there sessions with Dr. Len Duevel and Dr. Linda Duvet, who joined us via Zoom from Norway. They provided us with a strong grounding in best practices for international school boards, including topics such as division of responsibility between heads and boards, principles of good school governance, design of the board / school / head partnership, goal setting, and evaluations. It was an invaluable experience, and we are very grateful to the Duels, as well as to the US State Department for their support in organizing the opportunity.

I have been very pleased with our start to the year thus far as a board, and I have also been impressed by several positive developments in the school community, including continued progress on the Niseko middle school initiative. The fundraising committee has been very successful in collecting the necessary financial support for that effort, and if all necessary benchmarks are met, we plan to move forward with the beginning the hiring process for a new teacher there soon.

Thank you all for your ongoing support of the school, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Phred Kaufman

Executive Board Chair Hokkaido International School

5. Head of School Report

Dear Hokkaido International School Board of Councillors & Executive Board,

I hope you have all been enjoying the fall season, and I am grateful to have the opportunity to collect our ideas and input on the work we have been doing so far this school year. Needless to say, with the pandemic still very present in our lives, this is not quite the way any of us expected the beginning of the school year would look. Nonetheless, our first months together have been busy and productive, and much has been accomplished. With regard to my transition, the four areas of focus for this year that I shared with the Executive Board and with HIS staff are:

- 1) Culture & trust
- 2) Recruitment & retention
- 3) Upgrading our digital footprint
- 4) Health and safety: including safeguarding and Covid-19 prevention

These were developed after the year-long transition and entry planning process, through input from stakeholders across the whole HIS community. Since first sharing those four points, I have received a lot of valuable input, and my thinking continues to evolve, especially after engaging in long-term goal setting at the Executive Board level and delving into our accreditation and strategic planning process. However, these four general areas of focus have continued to serve as a general guide, and I'll use them to frame my August - October highlights for you here:

1) Culture and trust

Building relationships and trust with the staff and the school community as a whole would be a major priority for any new Head of School--and especially so at HIS, where many requested that I hone in on this area. At the staff level, we have been working to lay an intentional foundation for our ongoing work together. I have held one-on-one, small group, and full staff meetings with this purpose in mind, and we are off to a strong start. The work has included an extensive process to develop collaborative agreements.

In addition, we have established teams and protocols that will support authentic shared decision-making and collaboration. One example of this, which grows out of the WASC accreditation work that has already begun, is the re-formatted Leadership Team, which promotes clarity, transparency, and staff voice in decision-making.

The focus on building key collaborative relationships has also included work with the Sapporo and Niseko PTAs, student leadership, community stakeholders such as Sapporo University and the Hokkaido Government, and a wide variety of others who hold a vested interest in our success as a school. As part of our accreditation process, we will also be sharing two surveys with the broader HIS community (with the first coming later in the Fall) to seek out input and feedback. I am a believer that trust is ultimately the most important currency needed for positive change, and that, as Peter Drucker wrote, culture eats strategy for breakfast.

2) Recruitment & retention

Currently we have 164 students (85 boys, 79 girls) enrolled at the Sapporo campus and 36 at the Niseko campus (200 schoolwide total enrollment). We have about six new families in various stages of the admissions process (with one set to start in the next month). We have also seen one family (two students) leave the school recently, reporting financial / economic considerations and a job change as the primary reason (we are standardizing our exit interview process and have shared a survey with this family to provide input). Dormitory enrollment remains steady, with 19 students here in person and 11 still abroad. We are seeing progress with issuance of visas (three new students from China are now moving forward with the process), and we welcomed two students back to the dormitory in person just last week.

On the whole, enrollment has been steady, though not yet back to pre-pandemic levels and not where we need it to be in the long-run. The impacts of the pandemic continue to make projections difficult, but generally I expect this trend to remain stable through the Fall and Winter, with an important window for recruitment opening up in early 2021, as the Covid-19 outlook (presumably) continues to brighten. With this in mind, we have continued our contract with Study International , a global marketing and recruitment firm, and have a significant digital advertisement purchase planned for release at that time (to coincide with launch of our new website). We have discussed recruitment and retention at length as a staff and with the Executive Board (sharing slides such as that below to provide shared budget context), and I am confident that with continued collective effort, we will see slow, incremental growth in student numbers later this year, and more significant growth going into next year.

6. School Principal Report

HIS Principal's Report - October 2020

Neil Cooke

HIS Annual Report (2019-2020)

Please find the 2019-2020 HIS Annual Report attached within this same Executive Board / Board of Councilors packet (October 2020).

WASC / School Improvement

Administration and the curriculum team (in its role as the WASC Leadership Team) will be devoting a number of meeting times this semester revising and completing the Mid-Cycle Report to be submitted in advance of our spring accreditation visit scheduled for either April or May. We are unsure yet in what form this visit will take place - in person or virtual.

During orientation week, the teaching staff had an opportunity to read and make constructive comments on following parts of the initial draft of the Mid-Cycle Report:

II: Significant Changes and Developments

IV: Progress on Critical Areas for Follow-up/Schoolwide Action Plan V: Schoolwide Action Plan Refinements

I'm looking forward to receiving input from the WASC Leadership Team about the Chapter I: School Profile in the weeks ahead.

WASC Community Surveys

Community surveys are a very important part of the WASC school improvement process in advance of each accreditation visit. At the end of October, I will be sending out surveys to every parent, secondary student and staff member of the school. Full results and analysis will be included in the Mid-Cycle Report that I will submit to WASC (and to the EB / BoC) in February or March 2021.

WASC / School Improvement - Curriculum Review Cycle

The three curriculum review groups are continuing their important work (after falling somewhat behind due to Covid-19 building closure last year). Among the goals these groups will address this year:

- vertical alignment across the school
- ensure common assessment practices / creation of common rubrics

- decisions around common teaching approaches - unit plan writing
- scope and sequence design format
- housing of curriculum

This year's focus will build on work started last year in the following curricular areas

Language Arts

Mathematics

Community Service and Leadership

Next year, focus is scheduled to switch to: Science

Social Studies

Other specialist classes and electives

Standardized Testing at HIS - AP PSAT 8-9, PSAT NMSQT, SAT, MAP Testing

See the 2019-20 Annual Report for an up-to-date record of HIS student achievement in College Board standardized testing. Please note that due to school building closure last year, NWEA MAP testing is missing from the 2019-20 report. MAP testing is a measure of growth from Fall to Spring in a given school year. Without the Spring testing, the Fall student scores had little left to offer in the way of analysis. However, I will

factor the Fall 2019 scores into analysis this year as we compare student achievement from last school year to this school year.

School Events (Fall semester 2020)

Administration and staff are continuing to work together to consider ways in which school events, trips and activities can be adjusted to allow them to proceed despite Covid 19. We were happy that cross country day was able to proceed as planned. As well, with added precautions in place, certain field trips and outdoor education experiences have gone forward. Finally, although tournaments that involve air travel have been cancelled, our HS girls volleyball team has been able to play a few games against local schools.

7. Niseko Administrator Report

Barry Mernin
Administrator and Seasonal School Coordinator HIS Niseko

October 27, 2020

Student Enrollment

As of this writing, I am proud to announce that we have 36 students currently enrolled at HIS Niseko. We have 8 Early Year students, 17 MP1 students and 11 MP3 students. This year, we welcomed the Chen, Ryd, Fang-Ono, Ruffato, Golowacz, Pribadi, and Fachin families to our community.

School Initiatives

I am proud, once again, to be part of this unique community of learners at HIS Niseko. As always, I look to provide leadership that is grounded in mutual respect for the craft of teaching and shared commitment to growth mindset.” This year, we are looking to focus our collective, cognitive energy towards community well being and development, student retention and striving for academic excellence. I am structuring our conversations to alleviate particular challenges our school faces. I am continuing to focus attention on talking with parents, staff and students to explore opportunities for community building.

Financial Assistance Donations

Our school is growing steadily and smartly. HIS Niseko is now a viable educational option for internationally-minded families of the area. Donations to the HIS Niseko Financial Assistance Program provides financial aid so selected students, with a compelling need for an international education, may attend HIS Niseko.

Middle School Update

We are moving toward the development of a learning space for Middle School students. This quarter, the Middle School committee has been meeting with builders in the hopes of creating a temporary learning environment for our upcoming middle school students. We hope to have a building plan finished by early December so that we can move on to curriculum development and teacher hiring and placement. Tim and I have met with the Mayor Niseko to tell him of our plans for the school. As of this writing, we have received 95.7% of the ¥15,000,000 of our funding target.

I am quite grateful to Rod Fisher for his excellent work in facilitating this project.

Community Building during Covid-19

This quarter we were able to schedule an outdoor Opening Ceremony and a socially-distant movie night for the MP1-MP3 students. Teachers met with parents via Zoom for Parent Orientation. We met in person for a socially-distant PTA meeting. The parents met for a get together at Lava Lounge in Hirafu for a meet and greet of new and veteran community members. Our EY and MP1 students were able to practice teamwork and confidence building with hikes up Annupuri and Asahigaoka. We had a very successful cross country event. I canceled a scheduled Full Moon Viewing Party due to inclement weather.

I am very pleased that Head of School, Tim Schlosser, has kept his promise to visit the Niseko campus, each Friday. His commitment to the Niseko campus is highly appreciated by all in the community.

Locals Only Seasonal School 2020

This year, we hosted a seasonal school for local area children. Limiting the spread of COVID-19 was our school's only priority. No residents outside of Niseko, Kutchan, Rankoshi or Niseko were allowed to enroll. I am grateful that we were able to employ two fantastic teachers, as well as a very reliable administrative assistant. I am grateful that the seasonal school did not operate at a loss. I am, of course, grateful that some local kids got to have fun at our campus.

8. Treasurer's Report

Financial report was included in the EB packet.

Discussion Items

9. Questions or discussions from content of reports

10. Housing Policy

11. EB Website update and pictures

12. Follow up on board training (goal setting, etc)

13. PTA

14. Niseko Middle School hiring

15. Other new business

16. Review of Meeting: need Zoom meeting again in a couple of weeks

17. Time and Place of next meeting: to be decided

18. Adjourn the meeting at 18:26

Minutes by Karen Katayama EB Secretary: October 27, 2020