

## General Summary of 17 November 2022 Parent Budget Meeting

The school hosted a parent information evening recently regarding the 2023 budget, and the following was discussed. First, Board Chair Megan Streeter led a discussion of what parents wanted most from the school. The priorities shared by parents were

- Numeracy and literacy
- Engagement
- Socialization
- Confidence
- Creativity
- Taking responsibility

Parents were then asked what fears they have about their children's education. Parents shared the following:

- Not learning
- Being mediocre
- Lack of confidence
- Ability to communicate
- Insufficient physical activity or sports
- Not learning how to be successful

Megan then shared that the school wants the same things as our parents and has set a goal of achieving excellence as a top tier international school. She said the school also is committed to continuous improvement. She acknowledged that the school's challenges include working with a transient parent population with shifting needs and interests, adding to the school's already complex challenges. However, she emphasized that the school board is not willing to accept mediocrity.

Megan shared excerpts from three key school documents which are available on the website. The first was from the school's adopted Vision Statement:

"International School Suva will strive to become the premier provider of primary and secondary education in the South Pacific..."

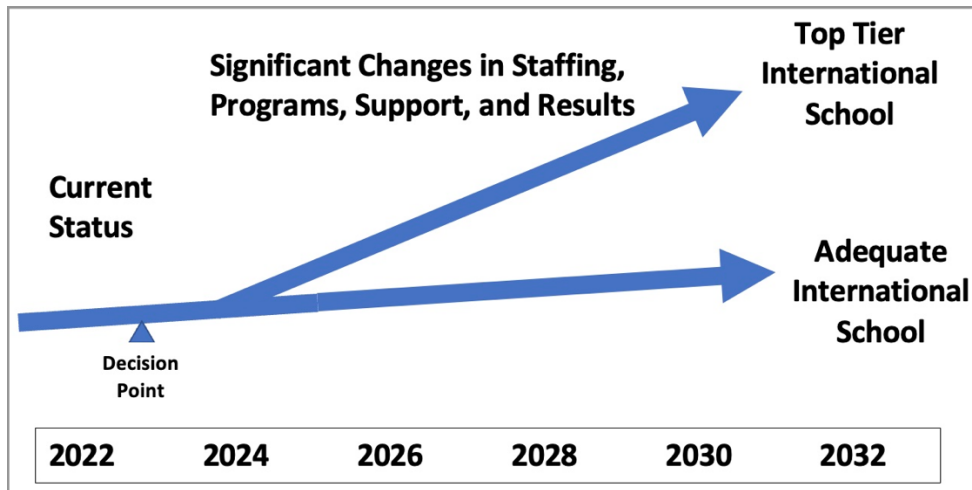
The second was from the school's current Strategic Plan:

"This five-year strategic plan gives clear direction for ISS to grow into a world class, relevant, distinctive, highly competitive institution."

The last was from the ISS Facilities Master Plan:

"To be a competitive global leader in high quality International Baccalaureate (IB) education..."

Megan then shared that the school is at a strategic decision point with a choice between progressing toward being a top tier international school and being an adequate or mediocre school. She said that the board is choosing to continue improvement toward being a top school, which she illustrated with the following graphic:



She then shared some general criteria describing “top tier international schools” which included the following:

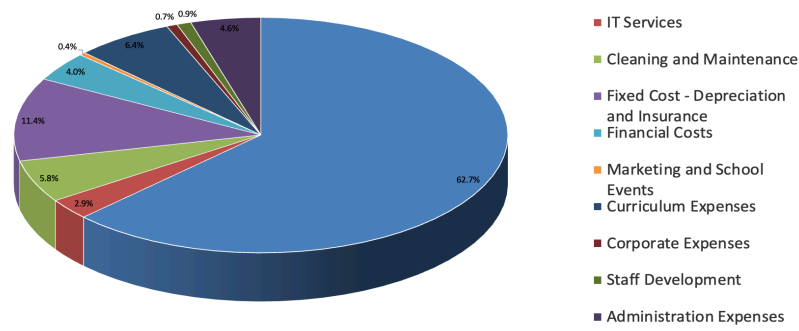
- High % International Staff
- International Curriculum
- Applied contextual learning (hands-on)
- Global involvement and perspective
- Innovative programmes
- Specialized equipment
- Rigorous academics & student support
- Relevant distinctive programmes such as Ocean Science
- Access to top global universities

Megan explained that our 2023 budget is based on making progress toward that goal and that fee increases are necessary for that. She shared the budget expenditure distribution which is as follows:

• Personnel: Salaries, Medical, FNPF, Staff Care, Recruiting	62.71%
• IT Services: Internet, Network, Software	2.89%
• Cleaning & Maintenance: Repairs, Disinfecting, Pest Control, Supplies	5.85%
• Fixed Costs: Insurance, Depreciation	11.45%
• Financial Costs: Bank Charges, Interest	4.04%
• Marketing & School Events: Admissions, Website, Communications	.41%
• Curriculum Expenses: Books, Accreditation, Supplies, Subscriptions	6.44%
• Corporate Expenses: Consultants, Audit, Legal, Board	.70%
• Staff Development: IB Training, ACT Moderation, Uni Tuition	.93%
• Administration: Utilities, Library, Business Expenses, Licenses	4.59%
	100%

She also shared the following pie graph showing the budget distribution.

### ISS Budget Expenses



Megan then shared the board’s planned fee increases for 2023 and summarized them as follows:

- 2023 Non-local Fees increase 10%
- 2023 Local Fees increase 4%
- No increases to enrolment fees
- No increases to building levy
- Budget enrolment assumption: 550 students
- How the increased fees will be used:
  - Increased number of international teachers
  - Staff Pay Increase
  - Increased student support services
  - Increased teacher training
  - Increased specialised programs and curriculum
  - Inflationary increases

She noted that the fee schedule is available on the website, and she explained that most of the increased revenue will pay for staff costs including a pay increase and increasing the number of internationally recruited teachers with global experience. She further explained that the purpose of the school’s fees is to provide quality educational programmes for students, to ensure continuous improvement to achieve the school’s strategic goals, and to pay for all operational costs. She stated that ISS receives no government funds unlike many other private schools. Other substantial international school costs that must be met by fees include funding curriculum, meeting international accreditation standards, and providing safe, modern learning environments for students.

She shared the following table comparing ISS fees with other regional international schools:

Notes:	Average Tuition & Fees First Year (USD)								Regional Fee Comparison	Ave Tuition + Fees - 1st Yr	Ave Primary Cost 1st Yr	Ave Tuition & Fees 2nd yr
Ex-Pat/International fee rates used									Ave Cost USD	\$48,639.53	\$41,124.71	\$42,490.64
All fees converted to USD									Ave. w/o ISS	\$49,530.38	\$41,895.91	\$43,286.98
		ISS % of Ave.	28.1%	26.4%	26.4%							
		ISS % of next 6 lowest	56.4%	59.3%	50.1%							
	<b>Conclusion: ISS Tuition/Fees are about one-fourth (1/4) of regional &amp; one-half (1/2) of the 15% lowest rates.</b>								<b>Disclaimers:</b> 1. All rates from published school web pages 2. Sampled only independent board-run schools 3. Religious mission schools not included 4. Non-international schools not included 5. No bus, boarding, uniform, or ESL fees included 6. Currency conversion rates used when data found 7. Fee structures varied so reasonable equivalents used (e.g. if different K-2 and 3-5 rates, used ave) 8. Randomly sampled schools, none excluded 9. Schools without published fees were not used 10. All data collected in April 2018			
EARCOS Rank for Fees	Lowest Rank	5th Percentile	10th Percentile	15th Percentile	20th Percentile	25th Percentile	30th Percentile	35th Percentile	50th Percentile	(i.e. no schools not reported because of low fees)		
ISS 1st Year Fees (USD)	\$13,897	\$24,100	\$25,700	\$26,230	\$27,160	\$30,610	\$31,940	\$34,620	\$39,620.00	9. Schools without published fees were not used		
% Increase from Current Fees		73.4%	84.9%	88.8%	95.4%	120.3%	129.8%	149.1%	185.1%	10. All data collected in April 2018		

She explained that ISS is the first school on the left and the red line shows our fee level compared to other EARCOS region schools. Steve pointed out that our planned fee increases will not change the fact that ISS charges the lowest tuition among comparable schools.

The key points Megan emphasized were that ISS has a vision for excellence and a plan to achieve that; all ISS budgeting is based on achieving its vision and goals; and ISS long term budget planning is based on having adequate resources to achieve our strategic goals within the next 10 years, although improvement will be immediate and continuous.

Megan then invited questions to further understand the board's direction. A parent asked about the school's inclusivity and stance regarding gender issues and learning support. Megan, Steve and Paul contributed information about the school's DEIJ policy and past practice of being inclusive as much as possible. They shared that the school has seven Learning Support teachers and a few TAs to provide support when needed. They also pointed out the increased mobility access with new ramps and a lift. They noted that two additional lifts are planned as well as several accessible connecting pathways between buildings. They also explained that the school is adding gender neutral toilet facilities to accommodate student needs. They said that the school has had inclusive admissions policies for several years and welcomes any students that can be accommodated successfully, sometimes even with full-time TA support.

Another parent asked about open spaces and student activities and Megan explained that the new ECH play area will provide play space for students. Paul explained that the school uses the adjacent athletic field under an agreement with Nasinu Council and that we maintain that field for the community in exchange. A parent asked about a swimming pool being deleted in last year's financial statements, and Megan explained that that was a write-off of design costs for a pool facility that had been planned about 7 years ago but was then canceled. A parent asked why the project was canceled and Megan explained that it was a decision by the board at that time and that a pool still might be an option, especially since up to 40 instructional hours are lost transporting children to the community swim center.

A parent asked how the school is ensuring good teacher quality and how that budget will pay for that. Paul and Steve responded that we have a good teacher appraisal system to guide improvement, but that currently our teacher compensation is not competitive making it difficult to have a wide selection when recruiting. They explained that in the international teacher recruiting process we must compete with schools that pay teachers double what we do, and that our other employee benefits are below international teacher expectations, particularly with respect to health insurance. Improving teacher compensation is one of the board's goals to correct this limitation. A parent also asked if we have a plan to have expat teachers at every grade level. Steve responded that teacher nationality has no relationship to teaching quality and that some of our best teachers are local and that we have, at times, hired international teachers who were not strong. However, faculty diversity is also important to have multiple perspectives and global experience, so ISS recruits international teachers!

A parent asked what the total budget amount is, and Steve said it is about 16 million dollars Fijian. In short, expenditures in the 2023 in the approved budget by category are as follows:

Personnel Cost	\$	<b>10,094,951</b>	62.71%
IT Services	\$	<b>464,618</b>	2.89%
Cleaning and Maintenance	\$	<b>941,010</b>	5.85%
Fixed Cost - Depreciation and Insurance	\$	<b>1,843,244</b>	11.45%

Financial Costs	\$	<b>650,256</b>	4.04%
Marketing and School Events	\$	<b>65,900</b>	0.41%
Curriculum Expenses	\$	<b>1,037,211</b>	6.44%
Corporate Expenses	\$	<b>112,610</b>	0.70%
Staff Development	\$	<b>150,057</b>	0.93%
Administration Expenses	\$	<b>738,729</b>	4.59%
Total Expenses	\$	<b>16,098,586</b>	

**Thanks to all who attended this session!**  
**The ISS Board**