



## Personal Reflections

12/20/2018

Dear IMSA Family,

Today as our IMSA students depart from their IMSA home to spend winter break at their "other" home, I want to wish them and their families a very joy-filled winter break. I know that our staff, including myself and the faculty, look forward to enjoying the holidays with our respective families.

Last Friday, our students, led ably by our Music Faculty Mary Beth McCarthy and Emily Cooley, put on a spectacular music program, "Sleigh Ride Around the World". Many family members who joined us can attest to the quality and variety of the performance. I was so impressed with the diversity of songs, composers, and instruments represented in the program. This diversity reminded me that I have not yet focused on Equity and Excellence in these Personal Reflections. As you might recall, I am using each issue of this year's Personal Reflections to focus on one IMSA Priority. Today, I want to focus on our Equity and Excellence priority.

### Equity and Excellence

On March 21, 2018, the IMSA Board of Trustees passed our [Equity and Excellence Policy](#). Through the Policy, the Governing Board of IMSA took a clear stance regarding IMSA's philosophy concerning diversity, equity, and inclusion. In summary, IMSA believes that the systemic inequities found in our society that have prevented persons of diverse backgrounds from being exposed to rigorous academic content, after-school enrichment, and summer learning programs because of their demographics must be considered in the admissions process. The [Admissions Policy](#) provides additional justification to IMSA's admissions process that seeks to ensure geographic, gender, and ethnic representation in admissions decisions.

IMSA cannot achieve its educational goals, nor live its mission and vision without considering equity-consciousness as a tool necessary to recruit and retain a diverse student, faculty and staff community. Both the Equity and Excellence Policy and Admissions Policy reflect IMSA's stated [beliefs](#) and gives staff confidence in our focused efforts to increase the representation of Culturally, Linguistically and Economically Diverse students, and staff, including faculty.

Specifically, through the Equity and Excellence Policy, the Board charged me as President to pursue equity and excellence by:

1. Developing and using an equity lens when considering major policies, programs, practices, or decisions in order to realize more equitable outcomes.
2. Implementing strategies based on the Equity and Excellence Model to recruit, support and retain staff, including faculty, as well as board members and external partners.



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3. Providing professional learning that continuously develops the cultural competence and equity awareness of staff, including faculty, as well as board members and external partners.
4. Supporting research, scholarship and innovative expression of staff, including faculty, as well as external partners that either address or promote the Equity and Excellence Model.
5. Implementing strategies to recruit, support and retain Culturally, Linguistically and Economically Diverse groups and support and retain marginalized groups.
6. Differentiating resources as necessary to provide every student with access to culturally competent pedagogy, curriculum, co-curriculum, support, facilities and other educational resources with an ultimate goal of achieving excellence.
7. Addressing Culturally, Linguistically and Economically Diverse and gender-based STEM education/career gaps by developing student and professional programs and services, as well as conducting research that will inform strengthening and diversifying the STEM education to career pipeline.

We have begun to engage the Academy's staff, including faculty, to develop a plan to make progress toward implementing this Policy. I view this effort as a social justice imperative and I'm pleased to be able to lead IMSA in this arena with a deep passion based on my personal and professional convictions.

Lastly, I want to wish all of you: students, parents, staff, including faculty, alumni, and others reading this Personal Reflection a very happy holiday season. May the New Year bring us love, joy, and peace.

Respectfully,

José M. Torres, PhD  
President