



To: Members of the Vienna International School Association (VISA)
President of VISA
Director and Leadership Team of the Vienna International School (VIS)
Staff Representatives, VIS
Appointed & Elected Representatives of the VISA

From: Samir Mikhail
Secretary, VISA Board of Governors

Vienna, November 16th, 2018

Subject: Annual Meeting of the General Assembly of the Vienna International School Association (VISA) on Monday, December 3rd

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It is my pleasure to inform you that the Annual Meeting of the General Assembly of the VIS Association will take place on **Monday, December 3rd, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.** in the William Kirk Theatre of the Vienna International School. Registration desks will be open from 6:00 p.m.

A copy of the provisional agenda for the meeting and supporting documentation are enclosed for your information. Please note that the audited accounts for 2017/2018 and the budget for the year 2019/2020 will be presented to the Association; copies of these will be published in the Intranet (About us – Governance – General Assembly 2018).

An election of a member of the Board of Governors with regular term vacancy will take place at this meeting. Please note that in addition to the voting session during the meeting of the General Assembly itself, there will be an opportunity to cast your vote between 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. in the morning of Monday, December 3rd. Please see the note from the Electoral Committee for more information about the election process.

In order to allow for more focused discussions at the meeting, we ask members of the Association to submit questions that you have regarding any of the Agenda items in advance to the Director's office by using the following [link](#)

Hard copies of the provisional agenda and supporting documentation are available from the Director's Office (director@vis.ac.at) or can be downloaded from the Intranet by following this [link](#) (Intranet – About Us – Governance – General Assembly Dec.3, 2018)

Prior to the meeting, the Board of Governors would like to invite you for some refreshments at 6:00 p.m.

We look forward to welcoming you on this occasion.

Thank you!

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**Annual Meeting of the General Assembly of the
Vienna International School Association (VISA)
Monday, December 3, 2018, 6:30 p.m.
William Kirk Theatre**

Draft Agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting by the President of VISA	Michael Tojner
2. Adoption of the Draft Agenda	Michael Tojner
3. Approval of the Draft Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the General Assembly held on December 18, 2017	Michael Tojner
4. Election of Member to the Board of Governors	Electoral Committee
5. Report by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors	Caroline Nicholas
6. Report by the Director of VIS, including address of questions received in advance	Peter Murphy
7. Report of the Site Development Committee	David Jepsen
8. Presentation of the Audited Annual Accounts 2017/2018 and Report of the External Audit	Mag. Michaela Slach-Putz – BDO
9. Adoption of the Audited Annual Accounts 2017/2018 with the concomitant discharge of the Treasurer and other Board members in office during the financial year 2017/2018	Michael Tojner
10. Presentation of the VISA Budget 2019/2020 and Financial Report by the Treasurer of the Association	Richard Golden
11. Closing of the Meeting	Michael Tojner



VISA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Monday, December 18, 2017

6:30 – 8:45 p.m.

William Kirk Theatre

Opening of the Meeting by the President of the VIS Association

1 The VISA President, Dr. Michael Tojner, opened the meeting, and welcomed and thanked the VISA members for their attendance. He stressed the importance of the Assembly, especially given the future challenges to VIS with the real estate development opposite the school. He asked the parents present to encourage fellow parents to attend future Annual Meetings. He thanked the staff for their engagement and work done during the last year and the Board members for their voluntary work and dedication to VIS.

Adoption of the Draft Agenda (Motion 1)

2 The Draft Agenda was adopted.

Approval of the Draft Minutes of the General Assembly of February 13, 2017 (Motion 2)

The minutes were approved by acclamation.

Election of New Member to the Board of Governors

3 Mr. Xiaodong Yang, newly-elected chair of the Electoral Committee, welcomed the two candidates for the election to the Board of Governors, Ms. Sophie Gouzman-Portaix and Ms. Jane Rigler, and explained the election procedures. Ms. Gouzman-Portaix and Ms. Rigler both gave a statement of their motivation. After the casting of the ballots in the Theatre, the ballots were counted together with the ones from the morning voting session, monitored by the Electoral Committee.

4 The result of the election was announced as follows:

- 59 votes total
- 1 vote void
- Ms. Sophie Gouzman-Portaix – 39 votes
- Ms. Jane Rigler – 19 votes

5 Mr. Yang declared Ms. Gouzman-Portaix as new elected Member of the Board of Governors and thanked Ms. Rigler for her candidature for a 2nd term on the Board of Governors.

The VISA President, Dr. Tojner congratulated Ms. Sophie Gouzman-Portaix and recognized Ms. Rigler's valuable work and contribution as Board member over the last 3 years.

6 **Address by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors – Ms. Caroline Nicholas**

Ms. Nicholas congratulated Ms. Gouzman-Portaix and expressed her appreciation to Ms. Rigler's valuable contribution and work on the Board of Governors, as Chair of the Policy Committee and member of the Finance Committee.

Ms. Nicholas underlined not only the students' success on the academic side, but also in a whole range of sports activities, performing arts and social activities, indications of a rich community forming well rounded, confident and articulate students caring for their environment.

7 **First Eco School Award**

The students' and staff's care for the green environment was recognized by the Republic of Austria, with the first Eco School Award in Austria presented by President Alexander Van der Bellen during his school visit on November 23rd.

Parent Teacher Association

Appreciation was expressed to the PTA for numerous events and activities supporting especially new families in the community.

8 **Board Responsibilities**

Ms. Nicholas explained the Board Members' responsibilities, which focus on the longer-term needs of VIS and particularly financial questions, so as to ensure the school has the facilities and resources necessary to carry on the excellent work. She added that the Board does not deal with operational matters, which are the responsibility of the Director.

9 Despite its challenges, VIS is in good financial shape, and the Board can address the need to develop a new **Strategic Plan**, which will be undertaken with all parties involved (parents, students, teachers).

Repairs to the building that were the responsibility of the Republic of Austria, but which were not done, present one of the key issues the Board has to deal with and it will try to integrate facility improvements during the repair work.

10 **School Fees:** Thanks to the efforts of the Finance Committee, the Director and the Senior Leadership, the Board, which is keenly aware of the financial pressure on parents, has implemented a lower level fee increase than was budgeted.

The Board is also looking at all options to **enhance effective income and possible tax**

11 **savings** and is working on measures to make VIS more attractive for teachers to work and stay with VIS. **Lessening the tax burden** (imposed by the Republic of Austria in 2008 on teachers with children at VIS) is one measure the Finance Committee has been asked to consider in the budget. The Board, the Director and representatives of staff are assisting in this process.

Given, the increasing demand for **Learning Support** for children with special needs to achieve their full potential, the Board asked the Finance Committee to devote some funds to strengthen and systemize the existing support system, so more students can benefit from it.

12 Money, facilities, supporting enrichment of academic and extra-curricular programmes are the biggest tasks requiring an enormous effort from everyone involved. Ms. Nicholas expressed her gratitude to all who worked on and with the Board, and to all working in and volunteering in the school. A special tribute was given to Mr. Richard Golden, who will continue to work as co-opted member to the Board as Treasurer for an additional year. In many ways, VIS owes its good financial performance to Mr. Golden's expertise, knowledge, talent and dedication. The Board will have to start the **succession planning for the Treasurer's position**.

Parents were thanked for their patience with the traffic situation at drop-off and pick up times and their attendance at the General Assembly. The Board will also do what it can to attract more parents to attend the General Assembly in the future.

13 Report from the Director

Parent Questions

1. **Future Profit-Loss structure of the school as not only Austrian subsidies will be phased out, but also maintenance-cost will rise in an aging building.**

Question to be answered in the Treasurer's report.

2. **Could it make sense to discuss moving to a different location with the Austrian government?**

14 Given that a considerable number of persons representing the VIS community is working close to VIS, there is no intent to move, but it has been discussed.

3. **What is the projected level of school fees in the coming years?**

Question to be answered in the Treasurer's report.

4. **What is the status of the construction site in front of the school?**

Question to be answered by the Chair of the Site Committee.

- 15 **5. Would it be possible to make a customer survey about the school's catering services as it would be supportive to know average satisfaction levels as some children complain, some are happy.**

There is a standing Committee of parents and students meeting monthly with the caterer. Any questions related to the catering service should be addressed to the Committee.

- 16 **7. Would you please consider changing the frequency of German classes in Primary School from two double periods a week to, for example, four single periods a week? The more often children have access to a foreign language, the more effective their learning. Shorter but more frequent classes might be a better option especially in the case of younger kids, whose attention spans are shorter. It's actually true about most - if not all - skills they're learning and I think it's really disadvantageous to them that some specialist classes are spread over two weeks (Art every second week, 7-day break between one PE class and the next one).**

Staff and teaching time in Primary classes have been increased and there are more stratified learning levels this year. The German team has set ambitious targets for native German speaking students to be at the same level with colleagues in Austrian Schools.

- 17 **8. The issue is: use (and misuse) of PCs and smartphones in the school and time children spend using them; and arranging of the supervised free time for Secondary School students (during lunch break, and an hour after school, before the After School Activities start; or maybe they can start right after school?).**

In the most recent "Meet the Director" it was agreed to hold a separate meeting and to create a working group with parents, students and staff to look particularly at the issue of using the mobile phone in classrooms and verifying whether the use of the phone in classrooms is more distraction than aid (social media creates distraction). The computer clearly plays an important role in the classroom in terms of working and studying.

- 18 **9. Another issue I am concerned about is the level Mathematics and Science subjects are taught in the school.**

Mathematics is a repeatedly expressed concern also in other schools. The IB Organization is trying to look for evidence whether the perception is actually founded in reality. An important place to look for evidence is looking at data from external sources rather than to rely on own assessments.

Results from ISA tests (grade 3, 5, 7, 9) and PISA tests (see presentation) are proving that VIS students would not be performing at a different level if they were in other settings. The PISA data shows that only one school in Shanghai is outperforming VIS in the mean performance. Diploma results of all 3 Diploma Mathematics classes (Studies, Standard Level and High level) in a global comparison of mean performance (150.000 students) are certainly respectable.

Parents who are interested in more details are invited to contact Mr. Murphy directly.

19 **Science** – The mean score of the Diploma High Level results are consistently above the world mean by an average of 0.6 of a full grade. Standard Level courses mostly are also outperforming the world mean performance. There is a perception that VIS could do a bit better, but the indicators VIS works with do not show any alarming trend that students at VIS are being disadvantaged in their math studies.

20 **IB Diploma Results**

Data on the **Diploma results** are available in the GA presentation and in the Annual Report (Moodle).

The IB Diploma is increasingly offered in State Education, especially in the US. VIS, despite being an Open Enrollment School with students of 102 different countries, with 72 different languages, has a remarkable **96% success rate** (with 5.28 average points in comparison to 4.3 global average).

21 Scores

- 40+ 13.8% (global percentage: 10.1%)
- 38+ 23.9% (giving access to Ivy League/Russell Group Universities)

- Bilingual Diploma 22.6%
- Diploma Course Certificates 4%

22 **Systems Migration**

As school VIS is committed to become more digitally in terms of systems that operate behind the scenes. Parents are acquainted with **Managebac**. **iSAMS**, the School's Information Management System, is a platform which in future will accommodate all data, feeding other systems used. **Open Apply, Timetabler and Parent Evening System** are newly implemented systems, which soon should automatically communicate with each other (this project was delayed because of vendor non-compliance with the contract).

23 **ECO School Award**

The visit of President Alexander Van der Bellen presenting the first Eco School Award of Austria to VIS was a very proud moment in the history of VIS.

24 **Beyond the Classroom**

There is a rich community of learning experiences for children with all kind of different interests taught in the extra-curricular activities. Students coming to school at 7:00 a.m. and others leaving at 8:00 p.m. or sometimes even later are proof that VIS is a heartbeat different from other schools.

- 25
- International trophies were the reward for several sports teams (VG Volleyball, VG Soccer, JV Soccer, to name some)
 - The Performing Arts Department had very successful performances in- and outside VIS ('39 Steps' theatre performance, orchestra/choir performances in the British Embassy, Musikverein and at the President's visit)
 - Model United Nations
 - Formula 1 – Position 7 in Malaysia
 - Math Competitions
 - Science Competitions
 - Maher (supported 80+ children with housing and education)
 - UNODC Project – Global Partnership
 - International Award (Gold Award Students)
 - Yearbook and Spotlight

26 **Operational Focus**

VIS' priority is to be a learning focused institution based on 5 silos of activity all linked directly to an impact on learning.

- Ensure professionals/staff are equipped to do their job as expected.
- Collect data from assessments to be used for the next stage of learning
- Transdisciplinary Learning (a constructive learning paradigm)
- Development of strong pastoral programmes helping to develop skills of students
- Curriculum reviews as a continuous process

27 **Site Committee Report – David Jepsen**

Completed Building Compliance Work is mainly centered around the new Austrian fire regulations.

- Reconfiguration of the Secondary
- Fire safety alterations in the basement
- Replacement of fire doors
- New ventilation systems in the VISMA rooms.
- New cloakrooms for the Early Learning Center
- Inspection and renewal of all fire protection bulkheads (in progress)

28 **Completed Discretionary Building Enhancement** contains

- Complete refit of the Secondary School Library (incl. new furniture)
- New IT Services and Design offices
- Finalization of outdoor (ECO) classroom
- New paint next to new fire protection doors (in progress)

29

Main activities of School Year 2018/2019

Building Compliance Work

- Replacement of entire gym roof
- Renew sports changing rooms
- Upgrade power supply system
- Replacement of fire-doors

30

Discretionary Building Enhancement

- Installation of a semi-permanent structure to cover the red court to allow continuation of Physical Education and flow of sports activities
- Re-surfacing of the red court and four remaining gyms
- Installation of 2 additional classrooms for Learning Support/Specialist Places
- Fence-off the waste disposal area

31

Forum Donaustadt Development (see presentation)

Signa will take ownership of the car park and fence the whole area in summer 2018. Estimated construction time: 5 years (latest construction plans were shown)
The traffic concept still needs to be finalized, especially the timing of the traffic lights to reduce queues and ensure traffic flow.

32

Presentation of the Audited Annual Accounts 2016/2017 and Report of the External and Internal Auditor thereof

Mag. Michael Slach-Putz from BDO, the newly assigned auditors, presented the Audit Report of the Financial Statements as of July 31, 2017 and the examination of the accounts for the fiscal year from August 1, 2016 to July 31, 2017 (see Moodle/Parents/VISA)

The audit is a statutory audit and was conducted mainly in October 2017.

33

Approval of the Audited Accounts and Discharge of the Treasurer and the Board of Governors (Motion 3)

The motion to approve the audited annual accounts and to discharge the Treasurer for the year 2016/2017 was passed by acclamation.

34

Financial Report 2016/2017 by the Treasurer of the Association and Presentation of the VISA Budget for 2018/2019

Mr. Richard Golden presented the Financial Report 2016/2017 and the Budget for 2018/2019 (details see presentation) in the following order:

- Financial Results 2016/2017
- the Current Year Interim Report

- 35
- Income and Cost Structure
 - Budget Assumptions 2018/2019
 - Compliance renovation of building
 - Tuition fees

36 **Budget influencing factors**

The reduction of the Educational Amount to 6% of the revenue and additional investment of Euro1 Million for compliance, modernization and repairs had quite an impact on the budget.

In 2017/2018 another Euro 2.25 Million will be invested in modernization and compliance renovation and Euro 600.000 in repairs.

In 2018/2019 the amount of compliance renovation costs is estimated Euro 3.98 Million.

- 37 **Tuition Fees:** The reduction of the education support is also reflected in the fee structure adjustment of an average increase of 5.75% for the school year 2018/19 and 6.0% for 2019/2020.

Forecast: 2019 – 2021 will be subject to adjustment to reflect the investment needs.

- 38 **Long-term options/solutions for the building and site changes** due to the Forum Donaustadt development and the potential expansion of the school facilities has not been considered in the budget.

39 **Adjournment**

The VISA President closed the Assembly by thanking the organizers, the Electoral Committee, the Board members and attending parents.



To: Members of the VIS Association

From: Xiaodong Yang, Chairperson of the VIS Association Electoral Committee

Date: November 16th, 2018

Subject: **Election – VIS Association Board of Governors**

I have pleasure in submitting herewith, the names of the candidates and the summary of their experience and motives, for the forthcoming election of member to the VIS Association Board of Governors, on December 3rd.

Regular Election

Dr. Regine Ahner
Mag. Gregor Hofstaetter-Pobst

The above candidates are eligible members of the VIS Association and supported by at least twenty-five 'Full Members' of the Association or their registered spouse. Attached are the candidates' summaries of experience and motivation for Board membership as well as a short summary.

The term of office for this vacancy on the Board of Governors is from June 1, 2019 to May 31, 2022.

Please note that the election will take place at the Annual Meeting of the General Assembly of the VIS Association on December 3rd, 2018, beginning at 6:30 p.m. For those who are not able to attend the meeting, there will be the opportunity to cast votes between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. in the school mall in front of the William Kirk Theatre on December 3rd. Each member entitled to vote will be given one ballot paper during registration at either the morning voting session or the meeting of the General Assembly (registration from 6:00 to 6:30 p.m.). The counting of ballots and announcement of the candidate elected will be held at the meeting of the General Assembly.

Note: VIS employees whose children attend VIS are not eligible to vote!

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Candidates for the VISA Board of Governors

Dr. Regine Ahner



Current Position: Associate Professor in Obstetrics & Gynecology at the Medical University Vienna, Private medical practice

Key message: Sunshine is the best disinfectant

Most important issues for the VIS:

- Completing the VIS transformation into an independent entity by ensuring its long-term sustainability; Enabling the VIS global community to become a recognised international model
- Raising the VIS profile as Austria's first eco-school
- Aligning the power of digital technology with the international baccalaureate program's goals
- Ensuring safe and secure entry and exit to the school grounds before impending construction before the facilities.

Goals for the next 3 years:

I'll strengthen governance at the VIS by encouraging greater transparency across the community. The board needs to improve its understanding of the specific needs and concerns among students, teachers and parents. My goal is to make the VIS more responsive to the community while exercising oversight on management of the school

Most relevant skills/experience:

- Taught at Cornell Medical School, Harvard Medical School and the Vienna Medical School; Developed new medical school curriculums; **Managed change and new procedures in educational environments**
- Implemented health strategies as a World Bank consultant in India by **allocating resources and strengthening communities in diverse cultural environments.**
- Responsible for running all elements of a private medical office while attending to **high-risk situations in sensitive environments.**

Mag. Gregor Hofstätter-Pobst



Current Position: Chief Financial Officer, Member of Management Board at UniCredit Bank Austria AG

Key message: Leadership is service, not position

Most important issues for the VIS:

- VIS will have to take a decision whether or not to acquire the school premises while maintaining long term financial sustainability
- VIS will have to adjust the curriculum and learning in this technologically fast changing world

Goals for the next 3 years:

As a member of the Board of Governors, I want to contribute that all strategic decisions taken are based on sound financial management in order to allow VIS to remain the leading International school in Vienna

Most relevant skills/experience:

- I served as a Member of the Finance Committee and finally also as the Treasurer at ISP, the International School of Prague, for almost 5 years, where I was able to gain experience in school governance
- Next to my professional finance background, I am very interested in educational topics and have a good understanding of the skills and experiences companies are looking for when hiring graduates

3 October 2018

Dear VIS Electoral Committee,

My name is Regine Ahner and I'm writing to you about the upcoming vacancy on the Vienna International School's Board of Governors. Please accept this letter as an expression of my interest in serving the VIS community through a seat on its board.

I am a native Austrian, born in Vienna. After graduating from medical school, I was trained as an Obstetrician-Gynaecologist at the university hospital in Vienna. In Boston I received a Masters degree in Public Health at Harvard University.

Already during my early professional years I was intrigued by the cultural differences influencing the practice of my profession, which subsequently brought me to various countries around the globe. At research hospitals in Boston and New York I helped to create systems that ensured knowledge was shared between departments and teams and passed on to new generations. In clinical settings from India to Uruguay, I added to institutional integrity by empowering individuals with new skills and know-how. As a consultant for the the World Bank in India I was able to combine my knowledge in medicine as well as in public health. In 2003 my husband and I decided to move back to Vienna, where I became an Associate Professor in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Vienna and opened up a private medical practice.

In 2015 my son joined the VIS in grade six. Ever since the VIS community has become an important part of my family's life. First, through the support from our buddy family, then more and more through the PTA's activities. This led to our advocacy campaign last year to create guidelines to ensure the "digital health and safety" of our children in the school environment — A topic I feel very passionate about, both as a mother and a physician.

Through my activities at school, my network within the VIS community increased and I was able to gain more insight into the wishes and needs of the community. I recognise the daunting administrative efforts that go into supporting the VIS's inclusive learning environment, particularly as the school upgrades its infrastructure amidst financial challenges. I am convinced that with my experiences as a physician, a teacher and an administrator I will be able to help the VIS community navigate a rapidly changing educational landscape.

My life has been predicated on making communities stronger. In my duties as medical expert and program manager, I have to assure the excellency of service provided in term of medical competencies, financial viability and feasibility while remaining accessible to target population in severe need of health services. Being a native Austrian, I not only speak the country's language, but I am also familiar with its bureaucratic challenges . I will be always reachable and open to discussing how we can prudently steward the Vienna International School .

Sincerely,

Regine Ahner



Dear VIS community,



My name is Gregor Hofstaetter-Pobst, I am Austrian married with 3 kids. Emily and Laurence are attending Secondary school at VIS, Vicky is already studying at university. My wife Andrea and I lived as expats 15 years abroad, me working in top management for an international banking group: London, UK; Ljubljana, Slovenia and Prague, Czech Republic.

During our last assignment in Prague our kids attended ISP, the International School of Prague where I served as a member of the Finance Committee for more than 4 years and finally was the treasurer in the board of trustees.

Returning back to Vienna little more than a year ago it was very clear to us that we want our kids to continue an international education which helps them to become critical and curious thinkers, develop an open mind set towards diversity and being able to focus and develop their different talents. We naturally decided for VIS which was the most appealing school for us.

Despite being busy in my professional role as a CFO and board member of the largest Austrian Bank, I would like to serve in the Board of Governors in order to ensure that VIS will be able to continue to provide top-edge education to our kids and at the very same time has a sound and sustainable financial future and takes the right strategic decisions going forward.

Next to being a Finance professional I bring along a lot of experience in Board governance and am naturally interested in educational topics. I truly believe that the education our kids get at VIS will prepare them to become responsible citizens , to deal with the ambiguity of this globalized world, to cherish diversity rather than being afraid of it, to lead meaningful and healthy lives.

I really would like to contribute that VIS continues to be the best international school in Vienna and kindly ask you for your vote in the upcoming election.

Gregor Hofstaetter-Pobst