**Response to the IB Evaluation Report**

St Mary’s International School

October 4, 2013

St Mary’s is a well-established school that has managed a vibrant IB Diploma program since 1972. Its structure is such that it takes pride in its K-10 US inspired program and in its 11 – 12 DP Programme. Its methodologies and practices are underpinned by values of the Brothers of Christian Instruction, and guided by a clearly defined philosophy, mission and set of school-wide learner expectations that align well with the DP Programme Learner Profile. This structure has been used to propel dozens of graduating cohorts into higher education and profitable careers, so much so that St Mary’s enjoys a very high reputation as a premier international school among the many operating in Tokyo.

**B1.5 a – B1.5e: POLICIES (Admissions, Language, Special Educational Needs, Assessment, Academic Honesty, respectively)**

Although precedent in practice is central to the pursuit of education in St Mary’s, and although we value its merits in much the same way that nations with common law systems value the role of precedent to define practice, we also feel the need as a school to establish wide-ranging policies to promote continuity, consistency and overall quality in the educational program we offer. To that end, we envision developing a number of school-wide policies, including those identified as necessary by the IB Evaluating Committee: Admissions, Language, Special Educational Needs, Assessment and Academic Honesty.

In general, school-wide endeavors are identified as necessary and approved by the administrative team (headmaster, three principals, 2 vice principals, business manager, and curriculum coordinator) which also establishes the procedures and timelines on its own, or through a process of delegation. Part of the process requires that urgent endeavors are given priority over those that are seen as less urgent, and that all three sections of the school are ready to assume the responsibility for collectively articulating the process and seeing it through to completion.

In a departure from this practice, the school has decided to develop its policies in stages. In the first stage, the high school will address the need for the above mentioned policies at the Grades 9 – 12 level, thus including the DP Programme in its policy development from the outset. After that, similar policies will be developed at the middle and elementary school levels, and unified into a single cohesive set of school-wide policies.

To begin the process, a Policies Committee has been created at the high school level. This committee will operate with sub-committees whose task it will be to formulate the respective policies with the inclusion of the appropriate stake-holders. A 14-month timeline (attached) is envisaged, and has been approved.

**B1.6: Systems for the Continuity and On-Going Development of the Programme**

The Evaluation Report has asked the school to write “revised action plan…that ensures the continuity and on-going development of the program.” Since we did not attempt such an action plan, we recognize this as a directive. We have also been referred to pages 14 and 15 of the document, The Diploma Programme: From Principles into Practice, which are largely dedicated to providing advice to newly authorized schools.

As a result of the directive, the IB Coordinator is working to meet the requirement, and hopes to seek advice, if necessary, from DP School Services Associate Manager on November 29, 2013. A completed action plan is envisaged for March 1, 2013.

Evaluation of Practice B.1.5.e.6: “The school has systems in place for the continuity and on-going development of the programme.”

In our self study, we ranked level of implementation of the practice as **‘Medium/High’**. Had evidence been requested of us, we would have supplied the following, which allowed us to assess our progress in this area as satisfactory:

1. Process of teacher evaluation
2. Process of regularly updating the school curriculum
3. Professional development process
4. Process for incorporating technology in the school
5. Process for ensuring that all teachers have updated IB materials
6. Process for schedule improvement
7. A process for organizing internal and external assessments
8. Process of organizing and maintaining the IB Department through:
9. Regularly scheduled department meetings;
10. Regularly scheduled IB Representative (subject area head) meetings
11. A regularly maintained clerical methodology
12. A commitment to enhancement through technology, including the development of an IB-dedicated website

**B1.7: Programme Evaluation Involving all Stakeholders**

The evaluation process was thorough and meaningful. All IB teachers were involved in a systematic review, and levels of evaluation were established according to IB guidelines. Administrators were also involved, and through them, the governing body. Regarding the involvement of parents and students, the school preferred to make use of existing indicators, such as level of involvement in the DP Programme, student testimonials, and parental attendance at IB events. All this was included in the submitted self-evaluation report.

However, we did not specifically conduct student surveys, nor parental surveys and, while we did not deem them crucial to the self-evaluation with respect to establishing the worth of our IB Programme, we do recognize that useful information could be gathered by such surveys. To that end, a parental survey, a student survey and a graduate survey are all planned to take effect before December 13, 2013. The three surveys are attached. They will be formulated into electronic format, and stakeholders will fill them out in that manner.

With respect to how we will make the Evaluation Report public, it will be posted on our IB website by October 15, accessible to all.

**B2.3: IB Recognized Professional Development**

The school has a generous IB professional development program. An IB teacher at St. Mary’s may attend a relevant IB Workshop every third year in the Asia-Pacific region. Teachers are encouraged to attend, but are not mandated by this school. In response to this policy and the school’s associated overall PD policy, the vast majority of our teachers have sought out not just IB-recognized professional development opportunities, but others, including IB job-alike sessions and non-IB specific methodology workshops. Only the IB-recognized workshops have been included in the self-evaluation. In light of our policies, and in light of the IB requirement that at least one member of an IB subject attend an IB workshop during the review period, I would like to take the opportunity to address the specific instances that have been cited in the Evaluation Report as “not meet(ing) the requirements for evaluation.”

Head of School

The head of school, formerly the high school principal, has an in-depth knowledge of the workings of the IB Programme. He attends IB school heads (JCIS IB Heads) meetings with regularity, the most recent being on October 1, in Kyoto, Japan. Nevertheless, in line with the requirement in the Evaluation Report that he additionally attend an IB-Recognized workshop, he has agreed to this, and will do so in this academic year if possible. He is making a determination whether either a February 2014 workshop in Mumbai or a March workshop in Singapore is feasible.

CAS Coordinator

The Self-Study Questionnaire seemed to indicate that the data of present teachers be specified in the chart, not that of former teachers. The person functioning as CAS Coordinator from 2008 – 2010 (Mr. Charles Stanislaw) did, in fact, attend a CAS workshop in February 2009 in Kuala Lumpur, this being within the review period.

Since that time, there has been a high turnover of teachers in that position: Ms. Justyna Mc Millan, 2010 – 2012; Mr Chris Polley, 2010 – 2011 (Asst.); Mr. Scott Young (2012 – 13); Mr. Joseph Muyunga 2012 – present (Asst.); and Ms. Kimberly Fradale, (since August 2013). This turnover has made it difficult to incorporate meaningful IB-recognized workshop activities. Nevertheless, we ensured that Ms. McMillan attended a CAS job-alike, out of which the school made the decision to adopt the Managebac system. Also, the present CAS Coordinator attended a CAS job-alike hosted by this school in January 2013.

Despite the high turnover in that position, we have technically met the IB requirement that at least one member of the department within the review period attend an IB-recognized workshop. Nevertheless, we also feel the need to ensure that our present CAS Coordinator receive the best support she can obtain, besides the continual assistance of IB Coordinator, and of her more experienced CAS Assistant, Mr. Joseph Muyunga. She has therefore elected to attend an IB recognized CAS conference in this academic year. Registration is pending the choice of a suitable date.

Group 1 Teacher (English)

There is one Group 1 teacher (Br. Deogratias Ssekitooleko) who did not attend an IB-recognized workshop in the period of review. The other Group 1 teacher (Mr. Kevin Donovan), however, attended several in this period. The two teachers work very closely. The school is therefore in compliance with the following IB directive:

• At least one Diploma Programme subject teacher per subject/TOK/CAS coordinator must participate in a relevant IB

workshop if the subject or course has been reviewed during the period under review and a new guide has been published.

Group 2 Teachers

The list of IB-recognized workshops attended by the Group 2 teachers in the review period is comprehensive. The single teacher (Ms. Ritsuko O’Donoghue) who had not received professional development in the period under review works closely with the other teacher of the same IB subject (Ms. Tomomi DiMuzio). The same IB directive specified above has been observed by the school.

IB Economics Teacher

Until this year, this teacher, Mr. Shu Yabui, has been part-time, and the school’s policy on sending teachers overseas to conferences is restricted, for financial and contractual reasons, to full-time teachers. Now that Mr. Yabui is full-time, the school recognizes the need to provide IB-recognized professional development to him. It should be noted that, in the absence of IB-recognized professional development, Mr. Yabui has worked in close association with the other IB Economics teacher, Mr. Tom Molina.

Mathematical Studies Teacher

Mr. Lessandro Garciano, (no longer at this school and therefore not listed) attended an IB Math Studies conference in July, 2010, in Sydney, Australia. The listed Mathematical Studies teacher, Ms. Wallis Mayhew, who is still part-time, is no longer teaching that subject. The present Mathematical Studies teachers are experienced IB teachers, but at least one of them will go on an IB-recognized Math Studies workshop in the 2014 -15 school year.

Visual Arts Teachers

Two out of the three visual arts teachers have attended IB-recognized workshops in the period of review, Mr. Tom Stanley as recently as August, 2013. Additionally, there was a comprehensive IB Art job-alike hosted at this school, at which at least one IB Art examiner was in attendance, and which attracted 15 schools from the region. It was hailed as a success by all who attended.

Summary

In summary, we believe that this school’s approach to IB professional development is not such that the school can be viewed as significantly deficient in this area. Until now, we have viewed our approach to IB professional development as a strength.

**C1.1: Collaborative Planning and Reflection Addressed the Needs of the Programme (TOK)**

The school has specifically recognized the need to implement the IB directive to teach TOK not only as a separate subject by experienced teachers who understand the relevance of TOK to each area of knowledge, but also as a subject integrated into each individual subject area taught at the school. This is why we dedicated Action Plan C2 to dealing with this need.

We also dedicated Action Plan C1 to this and other aspects of pedagogy, by identifying the need to systemize common planning time. This is already under way, with meetings already held with the IB Subject Area Heads, and with the IB Department as a whole. A structure of common planning time, specifically identified units incorporating TOK and a schedule of planned meetings has already begun to take shape. It will be significantly developed by the time of the visiting DP School Services Associate Manager on November 29, 2013.