I hope you have all had a wonderful summer and are looking forward to the new school year ahead. We have been busy helping our new colleagues settle in and welcoming back all of our returning faculty. We are getting ready to welcome around 108 new students and their families, and expect to start the year with nearly 580 students altogether.

We are delighted to welcome 18 new teachers to our international team, along with our new Lower School Principal Mrs Trina Haygaru. Between them they represent 9 nationalities, and collectively they have lived and worked in more than 23 different countries around the world and hold 14 Masters degrees. We are all excited about the immense enrichment that these new colleagues bring to our international school community. With our students and their families from the US and from around the world we are proud to have one of the most multicultural school communities.
Joining us in the Lower School:

Trina Haygaru joined us earlier this summer as our new Lower School Principal. We have introduced Trina to you in earlier communications. She is a midwesterner who has spent many years in international schools overseas, including Mozambique, Egypt and Thailand. She joins us from her previous position as Elementary Principal of an international school in Nigeria. She has a Masters in School Leadership, is certified in cross cultural, language and academic development, is experienced in the IB Primary Years Program and has a particular interest in children learning in a second language. She is accompanied by her husband John, who comes from Tanzania.

Cristine Postigo Corzo is from Peru but joins us from Barcelona, Spain, where she completed a two-year Masters in the Psychology of Education. She has a degree in Early Childhood Education and has spent seven years in international schools in Peru teaching in the IB Primary Years Program. Cristine will be teaching Grade 1 Spanish.

Claudia Rodríguez taught at ISI until seven years ago when she took a break to raise her family. Claudia is originally from Mexico and is bilingual in Spanish and English. She has a Bachelors degree from the University of Monterrey, and a Masters in Education from Northern Illinois University. She has also worked in Kenya and Mexico. She will be teaching Grade 3 Spanish. Welcome back, Claudia!

Kathryn Scharborough majored in early childhood education and graduated from IUPUI with a bachelor’s and certification to teach k-6. She gained her first experience teaching in Accra, Ghana at an international school and then taught for two years in Antofagasta, Chile at an international school with the IB. Most recently she has been teaching 3rd and 2nd grades in Warren Township and also coached Warrens JV softball team. Kathryn will be teaching Grade 5 English and IT.

Tsung-I Wu will teach our Grade 4 and 5 Mandarin classes. He is from Taiwan and joins us from IU Bloomington where he has completed a Masters in Education. He also has the Indiana Teaching License.

Joining us in the Upper School:

Marc Campos is from Barcelona, Spain and will be teaching Spanish and Humanities (in Spanish). He has a degree in Business Administration and a Masters in Secondary Education, with a focus on language and economics. Marc has taught at several local public schools.

Pascale Drieu la Rochelle is a French national joining us from Malaysia to teach French. She is a graduate of the École supérieure de Journalisme. She has taught French in schools overseas and has a particularly strong background in journalism and is a published author.

Benjamin Erny will teach Visual Arts and the Theory of Knowledge, and will be IB Diploma CAS Coordinator. Ben is a US citizen and has taught in Korea as well as at home. He has a Bachelors in Philosophy and a postgraduate teacher certification in Visual Arts.

Kristina Erny joins us to become Head of the English Department. She has a Bachelors degree in English Education and a Masters in Creative Writing. She is an International Baccalaureate examiner for English. She has taught in Korea and the US.

Olivia Enver is from the UK and joins us to teach Mathematics. She has a first class degree in mathematics from Imperial College London and a Masters in Applied Educational Leadership from the University of London Institute of Education. She has taught mathematics in UK secondary schools and has lectured in mathematics and education at four universities in the UK. She has taught mathematics at the British School of Boston.

David FitzGerald is a UK citizen joining us from Malaysia to teach Physics. He has a Masters in Environmental Biotechnology and Management of the Water Environment. He worked in UK schools for 10 years before moving into international education, and has also taught in Germany, Egypt and Spain.

Mary Godley will be teaching English as a Second Language. Mary is from the US and has a Masters of Education in TESOL (teaching of English to speakers of other languages). She has previously taught in New York.

Jaiewi Gu (Emily) is from China and will be teaching Mandarin. She has a degree in education from China, and has recently completed a Masters in the Teaching of English as a Second Language from IU. Emily, as she likes to be known, has acquired various teaching experience, and looks forward to joining us.

Asha Lynch is our new Drama and Theater Arts teacher and Head of Arts, and joins us from Dubai. An American citizen, she has taught at international schools in Nicaragua and Switzerland as well as the United Arab Emirates.

Kristin Nwokedi is originally from Detroit and joins our English department. She has a degree in French along with a Masters in French and a Masters in Teaching. Kristin has taught in schools in Michigan and Massachusetts, and is returning to the US after six years teaching in China, mostly at the Lycee Francois in Shanghai.

Fidel Padilla has arrived from Dubai to join our PE Department. He is from Nicaragua and has taught in his own country as well as in Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates. Fidel has a degree in Physical Education and is working towards his Masters in Educational Leadership. He is also a soccer coach.

Corrine St Angelo graduated from American University with a BA in International Relations, joined the Peace Corps and taught in Kyrgyzstan. She then taught English in Japan, before gaining a Masters in Education, and has spent the last 5 years teaching in public and charter schools here in Indy.

Xue (“Snow”) Zheng is from China and will be teaching Mandarin. She has a degree in English, a Masters in Intercultural Communication and Linguistics, and a Masters in Sociocultural and International Development Education Studies.

(Correction from earlier newsletter: Rosalía Sánchez Rodríguez will no longer be joining us.)

Recently joined staff members:

Jim Ewing joined us during the summer replacing Cheryl Ackerman as Vice President for Finance and Operations. He has a BSc in Accounting and is a Certified Public Accountant. He began his career with Ernst & Young and has been Vice President, Chief Finance Office and Chief Operating Officer of several companies spanning health insurance, IT, transportation and logistics. Jim has made a great start and you will find him very approachable and focused on achieving great outcomes.

Rissa Guffey joined us this summer as our new Director of Marketing and Communications from Butler University where she has worked for the last nine years in a number of roles, including marketing, admissions and operations management at the Jordan College of Arts. Rissa has a Bachelor’s in Theatre and has maintained a strong interest in theatre, having worked in various roles including artistic director, production manager and lighting designer.
And a warm welcome to:

DeAnne Harris, our new registrar;
Jeremy Jarvis, who will assist Kim Rose with our child care operations;
Neil Snorten, our IT Manager;
Janice Taylor, our new administrative assistant and receptionist at the Blackwell building;
Rosa Zichella, part-time data base manager in our Development Office.

Outstanding International Baccalaureate Diploma examination results: 13-14% above the world average!

In the May 2015 IB Diploma examination session our senior students achieved one of the best success rates in our high school history. Out of 44 full Diploma candidates, 41 obtained the Diploma. This makes for a Diploma success rate of 93%, which is 13-14% above the world average. All students received the Indiana Core 40 with academic honors diploma, and all have secured places at college. Congratulations to our Class of 2015!

Congratulations to our AP candidates!

With our commitment to the IB Diploma we do not ‘promote’ AP examination, but many of our students take AP World Language exams and do extremely well. In May, 9 Sophomore students and 10 Juniors took an AP language test. Fifteen candidates (79%) received the highest score of 5 points and four candidates (21%) received a score of 4 points. Most public universities award college credit for a score of 3 or higher, and private colleges generally allocate credits to scores of 4 and 5. In any case, ISI students performed exceptionally well.

Calendar differences between public and private schools

It has been brought to our attention that with the public school adoption of the balanced calendar and the early August return to classes, many working ISI families have found it very difficult to find child care or summer camp opportunities during the final two weeks of the ISI vacation. In our calendar planning we generally stay somewhat coordinated with local independent schools. Several of these schools are also starting back on Monday August 17th, or even a few days later. We aim to schedule at least 178 actual teaching days, and to balance the intervals between teaching days and days off as best we can while respecting holidays and vacations such as Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year along with public holidays and traditional breaks for fall and spring.

We do see some challenges with moving to a balanced calendar, in particular with recruiting and retaining our international faculty, but we are certainly interested in your feedback, so please don’t hesitate to email and let me know what you think about the calendar (dgarner@isind.org). One avenue that we will investigate is the provision of child care or summer camp-type activities during that period.

Thank you to Maria Vasey and to everyone who helped make our Summer Camp a dazzling success. Just look at those T-shirts!
What’s changed at ISI this summer?

Generous “Fund-a-Need” donations at the Travel Auction have allowed us to paint the gym walls at 49th Street and order a second scoreboard for the Blackwell gym. Additional donations have provided air conditioning units for the 49th Street cafeteria. Thank you, parents!

Following feedback we received from our students when they completed the recent community survey we have had discussions with our food service provider, Aladdin, about improving the service. We are pleased with the prompt and cooperative response that we have received. With our current manager Kelsey leaving, we have welcomed Vernon as our new Food Services Manager and Rhonda as our new chef at Taurel.

As part of our routine maintenance we have been re-sealing the driveways and parking lots at our Michigan Road campus. This proved a little more challenging than expected with the unusual amount of rain this summer and the number of days our buildings were in full use, but the work is nearing completion. We have also re-surfaced the Taurel lunchroom floor and the staircase in school colors. Our IT department has increased internet speeds at all locations and installed battery back up power to help us better cope with the rather frequent power outages that affect us.

Senior student Austin Moyer has been building a Concession Stand as an Eagle Scout project, sponsored by the Parents Association.

ManageBac

In case you missed our emails our Lower School will be following in the steps of the Upper School and replacing Edline with ManageBac. It is especially well adapted to recording and reporting on the IB curriculum and assessment at each grade level. The Upper School is very pleased with it and we believe moving the whole school to ManageBac will provide greater consistency and a better level of communication. ManageBac is being widely adopted by international and IB schools. If you are not already a ManageBac user you will need to create an account, and we have sent out emails with instructions on how to do that. The content for the Lower School will take a little longer to put in place and is subject to change as we finalize everything for the beginning of the year.

Looking forward

It’s going to be a really busy year ahead!

We will be completing the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program evaluation - this is an important verification of our program by experts acting on behalf of the IB Organization. This will be led by Stacy Gruen, who is now our PYP Coordinator, and will involve all of the Lower School faculty and staff, with opportunities for input by parents. It comes hot on the heels of our Middle Years Program evaluation which we completed last spring.

We will also be conducting the self-study as part of our re-accreditation process with the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS). This will kick off on October 7th, our staff in-service day, with a visit by an ISACS accreditation officer, and will last throughout the year. The feedback which we received following the community survey last spring will be used in the course of the self-study. Dan Reynolds, our Upper School principal, will chair the accreditation steering committee. All ISI employees will be involved in the self-study, and there will be opportunities for parent and student involvement.

Any concerns?

Most schools request parents to follow standard procedures to discuss concerns they may have. These include discussing your concerns with the teacher or with the person most directly responsible, and, if a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, going to the next level, typically the Principal, and if the issue is still unresolved, to the Head of School. We are confident that the majority of concerns can be addressed in this way. However, this is not intended to deflect or dismiss any concerns you may have, and you are welcome to contact me directly. We would much rather hear about concerns in a timely manner rather than let them grow.

Let’s get started!

I hope to see everyone at our traditional Wine and Cheese opening to the school year, on Thursday Aug 13th from 5:30 to 7:30 in the Blackwell gym. We will be handing out class lists at the Wine and Cheese. If you are unable to attend you can contact your front desk after the Wine and Cheese and request the class list.

Back to School and Meet the Teacher events take place on Friday August 14th, starting at 2pm at 49th Street and at 4:30pm at Blackwell and Taurel.

School starts for all students at 8am on Monday, August 17th. Our traditional Bell Ringing ceremony will get underway at 8:15am at 49th Street (please aim to be there for 8am), and at 10am in the Blackwell gym for students on the Michigan Road campus.

Ice Cream Social, Friday August 21st, starting at 3:45

This is provided by our Parents Association for all parents, students and faculty, and is a nice, relaxing way to enjoy the start of the year together. It will be at the Taurel building.

We are all looking forward to a great year!

David Garner
Head of School