



## ISRAEL CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE THROUGH EDUCATION YEAR END SUMMARY 2020-21

### **OVERVIEW**

ICEE has three major divisions: Israel Arts and Science Academy (IASA), IASA-Middle School (IASA-MS), and Excellence Educators Institute (EEI). So much has happened during this tumultuous year that we have only written a short summary of each of the activities. The pandemic required every aspect of the organization to be examined.

### **ISRAEL ARTS AND SCIENCE ACADEMY**

Because of the lack of a plan to contain the pandemic, the government continually changed requirements. The leadership of IASA needed to be super-humanly agile to interpret the ever-changing regulations.

Under the leadership of IASA's principal, Dan Steinitz, IASA was able to immediately transfer from in-person classes to on-line education. Dan was head of the Science department at IASA when he was recruited by the MOE to become principal of the Ministry's On-line National High School for the Gifted. In that capacity, he utilized on-line learning for over 1,000 students. He transferred this experience to IASA within 1 day.

### **ISRAEL ARTS AND SCIENCE ACADEMY-MIDDLE SCHOOL**

The management of IASA-MS is the same as IASA, so the comments about IASA also pertain to the Middle School. However, IASA-MS is structured like every middle school in Israel, so the dealing with the tumultuous school year was somewhat easier.

### **Excellence Educators Institute (EEI)**

EEI has been reorganized. Long-time, valued leader of EEI, Dr. Avi Poleg, has retired after 20 years. He is replaced by Dr. Michal Azaz who has inspired new initiatives and direction for the Institute. EEI is extending Al Ma Da from elementary schools to middle schools. A second major initiative is organizing and digitalizing the

unique aspects of IASA-MS. In addition, unique highly developed programs at IASA, such as: the Crown Community Service Program, Project Week, Humanities Department, Brincat (Science and Arts) Camp, are also being prepared for marketing. This valuable IP will be shared across Israel and marketed abroad. EEI is engaged in a number of other teacher-training projects.

## **OPERATIONS**

The pandemic required ICEE to make every effort to reduce expenses. Every supplier and service provider agreement was reviewed and new contracts were negotiated at reduced costs in every case. A review of all workers was conducted. Alterations are ongoing to conform with new Ministry of Education regulations. Both ICEE and IASA offices were combined.

## **CAMPUS RENEWAL**

Air-conditioners were installed in all rooms of the dormitories, laboratories, public spaces and offices. A new fire alarm system was installed. The sewage system was renovated. Sprinklers were installed in all the outdoor green areas. The largest project is the expansion and renovation of the kitchen and dining hall. IASA's student population has grown by approximately 50%, from 200 to 300 and the enlargement and renovation are absolutely necessary. Plans have been drawn and approved. However, we are still waiting for a permit from the Municipality to begin construction. Two large tents have been purchased for temporarily housing the dining hall (purchasing price was less than the cost of renting the tents for 2 months). When the renovation is complete, these tents will provide additional revenue.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

We are all delighted that David Harman has accepted the Chairmanship. David brings a wealth of experience as a life-time educator. He is a Harvard graduate who was a professor of education at both Hebrew University and Harvard. David is well-known in and knows well the education system of Israel. David has also been responsible for bringing the Humanities Department to IASA and has brought significant philanthropic contributions to IASA.

The Board is in the process of rejuvenation. Michael Reitblat, has been appointed to the Board of Directors. He is a graduate of IASA, is one of the major high-tech start up successes (see “Latest News” on our website). Professor Avigdor Shenan, a highly respected history and philosophy professor, has joined the General Assembly of the Board. A number of IASA alumni, attended the Board meeting as observers. They are joining the General Assembly of the Board. Each of them brings a unique value. We look to the alumni organization as a major factor in the continuity of IASA.

## **NEW INITIATIVES**

In addition to everything mentioned above, there are a number of initiatives we are actively pursuing. There are four major brick-and-mortar initiatives:

- Adding a third floor to our current 2-story administration building which houses our gym and machine exercise facilities. This is needed for additional classrooms and new laboratories.
- Middle School: the Municipality has agreed to a building to house IASA-MS on our land. Applications for the 60 spaces in each new class continue at approximately, 300, requiring admission by lottery.
- Teacher-Training Facility: in order to implement our educational initiatives, we require space for teacher-training and broadcast facilities for remote communication.
- Fourth dormitory tower: The three existing towers house 220 students, the Head of the Dormitory and the Social Counselors. Currently, we have applications for many more students who require dormitory space.

Funds need to be raised in order to proceed with these projects.

The 2020/21 school year was a challenging year but we all have the feeling of having navigated it well. Despite the turmoil caused by the pandemic and the accompanying financial impact on ICEE, **we succeeded in moving forward in many areas**. Your involvement with ICEE-IASA has allowed us to reach this important juncture. We are on the cusp of a significant expansion of ICEE, both in Israel and abroad. Thank you for your continued interest in ICEE.

Please visit our website ([www.icee-iasa.org](http://www.icee-iasa.org))