

Dear all

Let me begin by thanking all of you for the time and interest you gave me when I travelled around visiting all the schools recently, it was a pleasure to meet so many of you active parents and the students themselves were simply outstanding. As I promised, herein is a little feedback from the visits and I hope you will find it useful reading.

The PTA Groups were, as I anticipated, a great set of parents. Well motivated and well organized, the groups operated in very similar ways with each having a Board, an active regular meeting time and a good connection with the class parent representatives. The PTA functions were as diversified as one could imagine but all of them were committed to providing support to the schools and to assisting the Principal. Primarily, the PTA's help with extra events connected to the schools ranging from End of Term Year 9 Prom Night, to the arrangement of Spring fairs where, food is to be baked, stalls attended and/ or where prizes are to be purchased. As PTA Secretary in Linköping, Mr Stefan Hyll, answered when I asked why they were so involved with the school, "it is because we make a difference" he poignantly pointed out.

The student unions were equally inspiring and enterprising and informed me quite openly about what was good (usually the teachers) and what was not good in their schools. The unions were most impressive in their desire to be an active part of THEIR schools and I witnessed some great ideas as the different groups attempted to achieve change and/or make improvements to their schools. Students were enthusiastic, creative and polite. IES Borås told both I and Ms Bergstrom that the main reason they had chosen IES was because they liked to be seen – and previously they had not. IES Linköping realized their own student union could be better if they had their own office space and IES Bromma are hopefully still enjoying the great support from Mr Thomas Callaghan and participating readily in "Mr Smith's Social Society".

What became apparent to me during this trip was that we, the PTA, the students unions and IES, can progress in one or two areas of our interaction. Firstly, that those PTA where a member from the student union was present, had an advantage with a direct link/input from the students themselves at the PTA meetings. Secondly, the student unions also greatly benefitted and worked more effectively if one teacher was present constantly who was responsible for the maturity of the union. This one adult responsibility leads to stability, development and trust. Finally, the issue of continuity

was the area where most student unions were weakest. Most unions had Year 9 presidents or leaders and naturally this led most of them to have a 1 year plan only. I am not certain what the solution would be to this issue but bringing it to light may lead some of the schools to consider incorporating long-term strategy into their future planning.

Naturally, as is the way of IES students, the unions were full of inquisitive comment and ideas and the two reoccurring thoughts that stuck out were the desire to create an IES old fashioned newspaper and the wish to have an organizational IES LAN party at some point in the future. Both ideas are challenging and stimulating and I will take them forward with me to the principals and assess if these suggestions can be implemented or not?

To conclude then, thank you for letting me listen and I look forward to hearing from you all again in the near future. Our job as an educational organization, is to provide top quality learning in a safe, calm, quiet environment. The PTA are an invaluable part of this community and their support is appreciated and never underestimated by IES Principals who recognize the 'bridge of support' that these parental volunteers provide. In turn, the student unions are also an integral part of this living, all absorbing, culture, wherein respect and erudition are balanced together to create challenging but well-mannered minds

Without your support and interaction IES would be far less richer in its own community.

Peter John Fyles CEO