

## Personal Reflections

3/1/2018

Dear IMSA Community,

Even with the distance created by time between the shooting in Parkland, Florida and today, I still choke up when I consider the loss of life that happened at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on February 14, Valentine's Day, two weeks ago. Read the names and ages of the young people whose lives were taken:

<b>Alyssa Alhadeff, 14</b>	<b>Cara Loughran, 14</b>	
Martin Duque Anguiano, 14	Gina Montalto, 14	<b>Helena Ramsay, 17</b>
Nicholas Dworet, 17	Joaquin Oliver, 17	Alex Schachter, 14
Jamie Guttenberg, 14	Alaina Petty, 14	Carmen Schentrup, 16
Luke Hoyer, 15	Meadow Pollack, 18	Peter Wang, 15

Now read the names of the adults whose lives were taken while shielding and protecting these young people:

<b>Scott Beigel, 35</b>	<b>Aaron Feis, 37</b>	<b>Chris Hixon, 49</b>
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Ponder their lives, their unfulfilled potential and their unrealized dreams. Consider how we should live in this society. Determine what action you can take.

Many of our students at IMSA plan to participate in the National Walkout on March 14. I have asked Dr. Hernandez, Interim Principal, and Ms. Berger, Acting Executive Director of Student Affairs, to work with our students to support their participation in an "IMSA-way" walkout. I'm still considering my personal actions, but I'm presently planning to march on March 24 at the Washington, DC "March For Our Lives."

As IMSA President and a former school superintendent, I want to assure you, parents, students, alumni, staff, including faculty, that Cabinet has revisited our security protocols and we continue to be watchful and committed to maintaining safety and security, as well as a familial and community feeling at IMSA. If you notice ways that we can improve our security while maintaining our sense of "home" (after all we don't want to feel imprisoned in our own homes), please contact me directly at [jtorres@imsa.edu](mailto:jtorres@imsa.edu).



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In addition to creating a culture of safety at IMSA, we continue our focus on our three priorities for this year. One priority is focused on culture. A second priority is focused on teaching and learning. A final priority is focused on an event. Regarding culture, we continue working on ways to make IMSA a place where equity and excellence are the norm. This fall, we have been working on a Board of Trustees policy that will be recommended to the Trustees for action at the March meeting. This week, we engaged in courageous conversations with our juniors on bias and racism. Regarding teaching and learning, we have continued to assess and align our teaching and learning using the framework of the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to provide clarity about ways to fulfil our mission of *“igniting and nurturing creative, ethical, scientific minds that advance the human condition.”* Incidentally, engaging in basic science fundamentally is part of advancing the human condition. Finally, the priority event for IMSA this year is hosting the International Student Science Fair (ISSF) June 27-July 1, 2018.

You may find more information about each of these priorities using the following links:

[Equity and excellence – Diversity Plan Update](#)

[SDGs](#)

[ISSF](#)

Finally, I want to inform you that we’re gearing up for our annual budget hearings and testimony before the General Assembly. As you know, IMSA relies primarily on the generosity of the State of Illinois for our revenue stream. In fact, 80% of IMSA’s budget is appropriated by the General Assembly. Each year, I take IMSA students and staff with me to provide testimony before the House and Senate Higher Education Committees to request our budget and provide answers to legislators. The dates for our hearings this spring are March 15 and April 26.

Many parents and alumni ask me, “What can I do to support IMSA’s budget request?” I would reply that the best action is for you to inform your local legislator (Representative and Senator) of your appreciation for IMSA and ask them to support IMSA.

Finally, thank you once again for your ongoing support and trust.

Respectfully,

José M. Torres, PhD  
President