



Personal Reflections

2/2/2017

Dear IMSA Family,

Today, the campus is growing eerily quiet as many IMSA students go "home" to their families for the winter break after completing final exams and the fall semester. I place "home" in quotations since recently I have been reminded by some of our alums that this "bunker" in Aurora becomes "home" to many students during their brief three-year stay.

I could have placed "family" in quotations, too, as we often refer to IMSA as a "family." And IMSA is a "family" and a "home" to many of us, both students and adults. We spend more "awake" time with our "family" at IMSA than we do with our family at home.

Many of you may have read or heard that IMSA is ranked as the No. 2 public high school in the United States by Niche.com (I would have preferred No. 1!). While it's nice to be recognized by this outside organization, the recognition that I value most is when students, parents, staff (including faculty), partners, and other stakeholders choose IMSA. Since no one is forced to attend IMSA, nor forced to partner with IMSA, nor required to work at IMSA, all of us have *chosen* IMSA. This is the best and greatest testimony of IMSA's value. And the intellectual capital and curiosity self-assembled as the IMSA *family* is the true value of the Academy. IMSA is No. 1 to all of us who choose to be affiliated with IMSA! This internal recognition and affirmation is something to celebrate during the holiday season.

During this season and the next few days and weeks, as you are "home" with your "families," I want to remind you to use this time to recharge your batteries. Re-connect with your loved ones. **Relax. Eat. Sleep.** And sleep some more.

When you are not sleeping, be fully awake. "Awake" means to rise from slumber. It means to be fully alive, to be present. All too often, we believe that being physically in one place means that we are present, but this could not be further from the truth. The best present you can give to those at home during this winter break is to be truly present.

Wishing you and your family happy holidays and a Happy New Year!

Warm Regards,

José M. Torres, PhD

P.S. Be on the lookout for our latest issue of IMSA360 for more information on what the IMSA family has been up to this semester! Please consider making an end-of-the year donation to the **IMSA Fund**.