



Personal Reflections

11/11/2015

Dear IMSA Community,

I grew up watching the TV series *Mission Impossible* and now enjoy watching Tom Cruise on the big screen as he portrays agent Ethan Hunt. I love how the main characters, faced with insurmountable odds, always manage to solve the conflict—in the end, the good guys win!

Today, as I write this personal reflection, I am reminded of the introductory scene in *Mission Impossible*. The classic one begins, “Good morning / afternoon / evening, Mr. Phelps. Your mission, Jim, should you choose to accept it...” The recording continues, weaving an intricate plot with twists and turns and revealing the potential for harm that ends with the warning, “As always, should any member of your team be caught or killed, the Secretary will disavow all knowledge of your actions” and, “This tape will self-destruct in five seconds. Good luck, Jim.”

While we’re not dealing with international secrecy at IMSA, or with life or death issues, there are certain parallels. First, acquiring a one year budget for IMSA is not an impossible mission, but it requires Ethan Hunt-like efforts. I’d like to acknowledge the efforts of my team, our whole faculty and staff, parents and especially our students for tackling this mission as a family. I was heartened to see nearly 200 members of the Class of 2016 sign a letter to our elected officials and our sophomores and juniors recording video messages about why they love IMSA. Many more community members have shared their voices through the [“IMSA Matters” community survey](#)...

As you likely know, we presently do not have a budget and continue to rely on the Comptroller to pay State Employees without a State budget. We are paying our non-salary expenses with locally held funds, which are funds that IMSA generates through program fees derived from our students and families and from our extension programs. We need your help to secure funding for IMSA because our unpaid invoices now exceed \$1,250,000.

The next step in accomplishing “mission impossible” is executing our plan, which has a dual focus: one that’s centered on the Executive branch and the other that’s focused on the Legislature. We continue to communicate our needs and budget status regularly to the Governor’s office and our colleagues in the General Assembly. I am also in frequent conversations with the Illinois Secretary of Education, Dr. Elizabeth Purvis.

Our local Representative, Linda Chapa LaVia, supported IMSA by successfully adding an amendment to HB4305 two weeks ago. This Amendment added IMSA’s Income Fund to HB4305. Our Income Fund contains no state funds and no general revenue funds, and it is generated by program fees. Should HB 4305 pass the Illinois House of Representatives, it would go to the Illinois Senate for a vote. If it passes and is signed by the Governor, our Income Fund will provide us with one more month of revenue to operate the Academy based on the current account balance.



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Here's where we need your help. Please write, call or personally visit your local Representative and ask him/her to support HB4305 when it is considered on the House Floor on November 10, 2015. You can find your State Representative here.

Finally, just as in *Mission Impossible*, I believe that we will accomplish our mission. IMSA will successfully complete this year and begin next year, our 30th year, stronger than ever. Thank you for joining us in this mission.

Respectfully,

José M. Torres, Ph.D.