



# **Executive Summary**

## **Escuela Bella Vista**

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## **Introduction**

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning. <br><br> The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

## **Description of the School**

**Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?**

Escuela Bella Vista is situated on 2.4 hectares in a developed urban & commercial neighborhood in Maracaibo Venezuela.

The campus consists of 29 classrooms, 3 renovated science labs, 2 computer labs 2 renovated art rooms, 2 music rooms, a renovated library/media center, 2 gymnasiums, an auditorium, two tennis courts, a renovated field for athletics and two playgrounds. Of the 29 classrooms 4 are enclosed in the Early Childhood area.

Student enrollment is 513 students grades Pre-K to Grade 12 which is the highest in the history since the school was founded in 1948. Most elementary grade levels are filled to capacity within the class size policy. Our infrastructure allows us to comfortably offer 3 sections of 2 grade levels and 2 sections of the remaining 5 elementary grades. Early Childhood enrollment is 66, elementary to grade 5 is 220, Middle School is 128 and High School enrollment is 99.

Our professional staff consists of 53 Teachers and 18 Teachers' Assistants. Total staff with security, maintenance and administration totals 122 full time employees. 11 part time coaches compliment the after school program.

Our students are 70% Venezuelan, 17% third country nationals and 13% U.S citizens. 94% of students are individual category and parents of the remaining 6 % are employed by international based companies. This has a negative impact on the annual operating budget as individual category students pay a reduced tuition. Annual tuition increases are restricted which also effects our autonomy in decision making in this area. This has been offset by increased enrollment and creative forms of advancement that will need to be further developed.

EBV benefits from relationships with international, regional, national and local communities. As an International Baccalaureate World School our teachers have access to the Online Curriculum Center and all receive training specific to their assignments.

EBV is a member of Association of American Schools in South America (AASSA) and takes advantage of a wide array of benefits made available by the association including purchasing, recruiting fair, professional development conferences and the Global Issues conference. Membership in Venezuela is through a close relationship with the Venezuelan Association of North American Schools (VANAS). VANAS hosts an annual Teachers' Conference and promotes cooperation and student exchange through the athletic conference.

Woodward Academy School-to-School Partner Atlanta Georgia has served many of our specific professional development needs. We invite their specialists to our campus based on school improvement and teaching strategy needs. We then sponsor their attendance as presenters at the VANAS Teachers' conference.

Locally, we cooperate with the Bi-national center (Centro Venezolano Americano del Zulia - CEVAZ) in shared values based activities. Our community service relationships are extensive with a strong commitment to the Salvation Army and new opportunities in charitable giving and leadership development. In both cases interactions are student based. EBV students remain active through participation in the local sports league (Copa Amistad).

A major change that has helped the school solve external challenges and has contributed to our overall educational program is the renewed participation of parents in various forms. The most structured is the involvement of our highly functional Parent teacher Students Association (PTSA). Parent participation in the school is truly a partnership based on best interest of students.



## **School's Purpose**

**Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.**

Escuela Bella Vista is a co-educational institution committed to fulfilling the educational needs of students of diverse cultural and experiential backgrounds who choose to benefit from the program we offer. We are committed to offering our students, within the framework of a U.S. oriented curriculum, an educational program which will provide a quality education comparable or superior to that which they would receive in the United States. This is highly evident when we have students transfer from the United States and find that they have come from programs that do not require 4 years of each of the core content subjects as established in our graduation requirements. We emphasize the importance of acquiring fluency in oral and written English and Spanish at all levels of our program, while providing a curriculum which allows our students to fulfill their college preparatory objectives. This is also supported by college acceptances and graduate feedback on their success at, and level of preparedness for, both U.S. and Venezuelan colleges and universities.

We believe in a learning process that addresses the total development of the student: cognitive, social, moral, cultural, and physical. We use programs and have completed audits in the best interest of basic health and safety needs. This is addressed annually through community approaches towards freedom from chemical dependency with external consultants and sustained through parent group organized workshops that center on a healthy community. An extensive nutrition audit was completed 2011 by a team of three external nutritionists. An external security audit was completed in 2010. Results from both audits have resulted in an environment that addresses basic needs as a priority. We believe in, and are committed to, the preservation of the ideals of a democratic society. We consider education to be a lifelong process through which people continually acquire skills, develop abilities, and increase potential, thus allowing active, intelligent, autonomous, and effective participation in society. Our students have a unique ideological perspective due to their life experiences. Venues are provided for students to debate issues of immediate interest and concern. Model United Nations and our own International conference are excellent examples of these opportunities.

Our Vision is to be an outstanding international school, preparing our students to become citizens of the world, able to excel in meeting the challenges they encounter.

EBV's Mission is to engage students with an internationally enriched accredited U.S. program providing them with a wide range of opportunities to reach their potential. We are committed to prepare our students to participate independently, cooperatively, and effectively in a multicultural, multilingual, technology-driven, and environmentally-aware global society.

Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLR) are derived from our Mission and ensure our purpose can be readily integrated into daily educational and co-curricular activities.

EBV Expected School-wide Learning Results

All EBV learners strive to be:

- Effective communicators who use multiple modalities to demonstrate competence as active listeners, speakers, readers, and writers
- Critical thinkers and problem solvers who know how to solve problems and form conclusions based on relevant, reliable data and information
- Global citizens who have a general understanding and appreciation for our diverse society

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- Users of technology who use technology and telecommunications in a way that demonstrates an understanding of legal and ethical implications and expectations.
- Self-directed lifelong learners who exhibit good study and work habits that include regular attendance and effective time management in order to accomplish projects

ESLR are embedded in classroom, grade level, school-wide and community activities and events.

Our community values are expressed in the EBV Citizenship Code.

As Citizens of the E.B.V. community, we are:

**Respectful:** We treat others as we would like to be treated. Therefore: We are kind, polite, generous, helpful and considerate to others and to our environment. We appreciate cultural diversity.

**Compassionate:** We strive to promote inclusion and eliminate marginalization in our community. We act with good will. Therefore: We are empathetic and recognize commonalities and appreciate differences. We engage in random acts of kindness.

**Fair:** We follow the rules and we offer everybody an equal opportunity Therefore: We are accepting, open minded and generous.

**Responsible:** We meet our obligations, are accountable for our choices and actively participate in school life. Therefore: We are role models for others, self-disciplined and safe.

**Honest:** We tell the truth and have the courage to make the right choices. Therefore: We are ethical, loyal and do not deceive, cheat or steal.

Various Citizenship code activities led by teachers, students, parents and guests keep these values alive in our day to day interactions.

Our expectations for I.B. students include the IB Learner Profile

IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers

Knowledgeable

Thinkers

Communicators

Principled

Open-minded

Caring

Risk-takers

Balanced

Reflective

The qualities of I.B. students are emphasized and integrated throughout the program.

Our Vision, Mission and citizen ship code are widely publicized through wall posters, presentations and communications publications shared with the community.



## **Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement**

**Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.**

The return of meaningful, active, productive parent involvement in the school is a significant, high impact achievement. Superintendent coffees, principal parent sessions and parent organized parenting sessions renewed authentic communication and cooperation between the home and school. A specific evening parent session in 2010 on parent responsibility in setting limits for their children, served as a catalyst that has been sustained through proactive Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) and 'Ser Papas' leadership and participation. The PTSA mission is to; plan recognition events for professional, maintenance and security staff, plan and implement social and recreational activities, promote and reinforce values within the community. 2011-12 and 2012-13 are model years where this group has successfully fulfilled their mission with persistence and enthusiasm.

Updated requirements of the I.B. Creativity Action Service (CAS) program have had a noteworthy effect on charitable contributions to the community and student leadership opportunities. The collaborative component has provided our community with numerous artistic events, activities and performances that filter down to the younger grades. I.B. student led film festivals, fashion shows, and tournaments have created a community environment for students by students. Charitable activities are numerous and funds raised for the less fortunate continue to increase. This is compounded by the growth of Student Council recreational and charitable activities over the past three years. The revival of STUCO involvement and effectiveness coincides precisely with increased parent involvement beginning in 2010.

Of the wide range of possible mentions for what staff state on open ended surveys about what they like best about EBV, an impressive 40% mention relationships, school environment and/or community. This is the highest frequency open ended response in open ended surveys and can be attributed to interactions and involvement in school life.

Our I.B program has matured to the point where 3 of the past 4 years, 100% of Diploma candidates were awarded the I.B. Diploma. The class of 2011 was above world averages in 10 subjects. This can be compared to above world average results in 6 subjects in 2010 and 5 in 2012. We recognize that our program is inclusive and all students have the option of challenging certificates or the full diploma. Comparisons are made to world averages that include schools that have selective programs. The number of students receiving points toward their total score from the Theory of Knowledge and Extended Essay matrix has increased from 50 to 83 to 100 percent over the past three years. Our goal is to strive for improved total scores which average 27.3, 31 and 28.25 for this time period.

Increased participation and improved results in Math Olympics have created a climate of respect and desire for high math achievement among students. 2012 was our most successful year with 12 of 101 medals at the regional competition awarded to EBV students. Of the 12 recipients one student went on to receive a national bronze medal. The Dean of Zulia's largest University gave special recognition to Escuela Bella Vista for the best results in the region of the 60 schools competing for the 101 awards.

Our athletics program development and success peaked in the 2010-2011 school year. High School teams played in 5 of 6 conference finals and were tied for total overall points at the end of the Venezuelan association of North American Schools VANAS season. We will strive to regain our place through consistent performance of our athletic teams that compete locally and nationally in VANAS athletics. 2012, Grade 1/2 soccer team celebrated winning the city league championship which we expect to build on in years to come.

Buildings, Grounds, and Sustainability Committee has demonstrated dedication to improving conditions for learning. A safe comfortable

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campus that meets learning needs is the priority of the committee. We have remodeled and modernized science labs and art rooms, enclosed the early childhood area and constructed to limit access from the front of the school. All air conditioners have been replaced and 2 electricity generators fulfill all electricity needs during the frequent interruptions to this service. Goals for the committee include; the design and construction or remodeling of a purpose built media center and expansion of both indoor and outdoor cafeteria space.

We are also proud of our achievements in attention to integral health of students and providing services that ensure basic needs are met and students are safe. This was achieved in part through an in depth nutrition audit and a commitment to continuing to offer the freedom from chemical dependency program.

Curriculum review is a high impact area for improvement that will be undertaken in September 2013. Personalizing learning supported by technology and innovation with students constructing learning will be part of the process.

A wireless service provider that meets our present and future needs has not been determined and will be essential to learning and organizational efficiency as we become more connected.

We will continue to improve conditions for learning through Improvements to infrastructure. Strategic reflection and planning resulted in the confirmation of need and decision to expand or relocate the cafeteria and remodel present structures or construct a purpose-built media center.

## **Additional Information**

**Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.**

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