

# **CIPLC Annual Report**

## **Report 2019-2020**

### **Board of Directors**

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**Luis Alvarado – Vice President**  
**Desiree Quero – Treasurer**  
**Aldo Aguilera – Secretary**  
**Leamsi Sangronis – Member-at-large**

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**Kyle Ross – HS Dean**  
**Sandy Corey – MS Dean**  
**Michele Hussey – ECE/ES Dean**  
**Rafael Rincón – Business Manager**  
**Mirtha Tovar - Registrar**

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# Introduction

Each year the CIPLC administration and the Board of Directors reflect on the state of affairs at CIPLC. This reflection – which we use to guide and improve the school – is contained within the pages of this Annual Report. Our obligation is to report on our financial status, our educational data, and other important aspects of school life at CIPLC. In the past, the news has often been very positive because CIPLC offers an outstanding educational program, and this is consistently born out in the learning data. However, recent news isn't as rosy. The biggest challenge is that we had to abruptly transition to distance learning due to health protocols required by the COVID pandemic. On top of that, a severe gasoline shortage in Venezuela complicated things even more. Exacerbated by those new conditions and the pre-existing political and economic uncertainties in Venezuela, our financial outlook is not on solid ground as we finish the school year. Due to declining enrolment as a result of the political and economic situation in Venezuela, we will end this school year with a deficit for the second year in a row. However, in spite of these challenges, our school community stays motivated to provide an outstanding education for our students because for many of us the school (even when it's virtual) represents a safe haven from the concerns that surround us each day. Providing some semblance of normalcy and the opportunity for children to continue their learning is a motivator for us to be our very best for them.

In this report we will share with you the learning and financial data that will demonstrate our continued commitment to our Mission and Vision in the face of the challenges that I mentioned above. As we continue with our improvement plans, and analyze the data we get from student performance, we continue to be able to understand our students' social and academic needs. By knowing these facts and by virtue of our small size, we continue to offer a program tailored to the specific needs of our students. Our small size is our greatest asset and our greatest challenge. Getting to observe and know each student as an individual, allows us to provide educationally specific interventions as needed. The "challenge" of our small size is that we can't offer a wide variety of student choice in our academic programs at the secondary level. That said, though, we still offer a wide variety of athletic activities and after school activities to keep our students engaged, and all of our students take a challenging and diverse sequence of courses.

Each year we survey the parents, students, and staff to gather their feedback about the school experience, and even in the midst of an entire academic Quarter of distance learning, our results indicate that parents are generally satisfied with the education their children are getting, and students can readily identify and reflect on their own learning and development. There is, of course, general concern among students, parents, and staff about what "school" will look like next year. However, we are confident that CIPLC will continue to be safe haven for the students and staff.

## CIPLC Mission and Vision

We refer to these statements on a regular basis in student, staff, and parent meetings because they are what guide our work each day. When a decision needs to be made about the educational program at CIPLC, we consult the Mission and Vision to be sure the decisions are aligned.

Our Mission guides our daily decisions and procedures. Our Vision is the mountain in the distance that we aspire to climb.

### **CIPLC Mission:**

Inspiring students to develop a lifelong passion for learning and social responsibility while teaching critical thinking and effective communication skills.

### **CIPLC Vision:**

To be the premier provider of an internationally focused education in Latin America.

### **CIPLC Students:**

- Achieve academic excellence through a U.S. based curriculum
- Act with integrity and make responsible choices
- Appreciate cultural and individual differences
- Challenge themselves in a wide variety of co-curricular activities

# From the Superintendent

## David Carlson

For several years we have been working diligently on three major improvement goals:

**Goal A:** CIPLC teachers will improve student learning through differentiation at the classroom level and necessary interventions to meet the needs of all learners.

**Goal B:** All CIPLC educators will effectively use student-learning data to as a vehicle to improve student learning.

**Goal C:** CIPLC will foster a culture of continuous improvement that reviews and challenges current school-wide practices and procedures for the purpose of effecting change that will improve student learning.

The next step in our improvement plans is to keep to our targets and continue to offer engaging learning experiences for our students to ensure that they continue to grow and excel. We continue to measure our students against norms provided to us by external agencies. This year we only administered the MAP tests once (in the Fall). However, we were able to offer the AP exams and several of our high school students also took the SAT in preparation for college applications. We plan to resume MAP testing next school year, and we expect to see that after our students have been with us for a number of years, their scores comfortably exceed those of the norm groups.

CIPLC has always been a great place to learn and grow. The strong sense of community that we normally share has definitely been challenged by being remote, but we have full agreement that improving student learning is our main goal, and with the support of our parent community and our outstanding staff, we were able to implement a rapid transition to distance learning and continue to provide to a safe learning environment. Our sudden switch to distance learning highlighted that the single biggest contributing factor to student success in learning is the mutual support and cooperation of the parents and teachers.

In international schools around the world, the turnover of teachers is a major concern, and as we end this school year, many of our foreign-hire teachers have decided to return home. It takes a lot of time and effort to recruit top notch teachers, but we continue to attract teachers to CIPLC and Venezuela. We do this by building a strong relationship based on trust with those we are considering for positions and enticing them to CIPLC based on our strong reputation as a great place to work.

SCHOOL YEAR	TOTAL STAFF	B.A./ B.S.	M.A./ M.S.	U.S.	VZ	OTHERS
12-13	33	8	24	25	4	4
13-14	36	13	22	25	5	6
14-15	27	10	16	16	6	5
15-16	27	10	16	10	10	7
16-17	27	15	11	11	10	6
17-18	26	15	11	11	10	5
18-19	24	16	8	10	10	4
19-20	21	13	8	12	8	1

Finally, I want to end with some commendations and public appreciation. The reason CIPLC is such a successful place is not attributable to any one individual. It is absolutely a team effort. Our teachers, aides, support staff, maintenance team, security team, and administration contribute every day to the success of CIPLC as a school and community and to the learning and development of our students. Together we have dealt with unprecedented challenging situations, and we have done this while always keeping the students' best interests in mind.

Our parent community, embodied in our active and supportive PTO, manages to find ways to find ways to connect us all. In addition to "normal" things like welcome events & orientations, Thanksgiving lunch, our Arepazo, a Christmas Parranda, and a visit by Santa, PTO hosted a concert evening with a local orchestral group as well as a virtual comedy night even after the COVID lockdown! Finally, every successful team has strong direction, and our Board of Directors provides this to me. CIPLC is very fortunate to have five dedicated, intelligent, and caring parents who commit a great deal of time to provide direction to the school. I personally appreciate and benefit from their guidance and support.

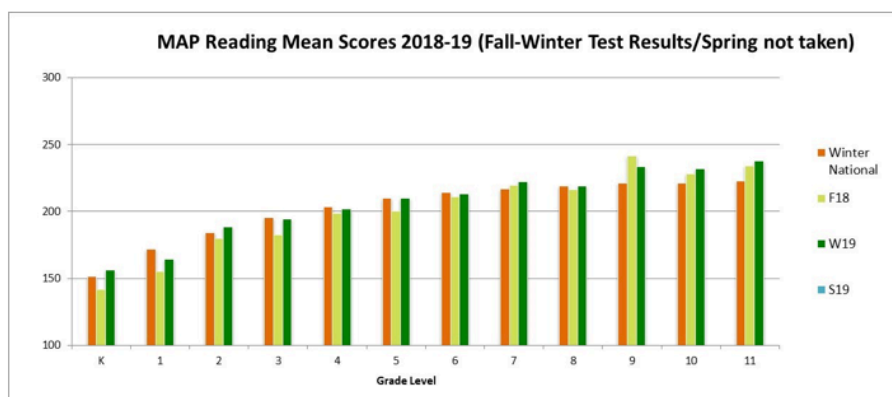
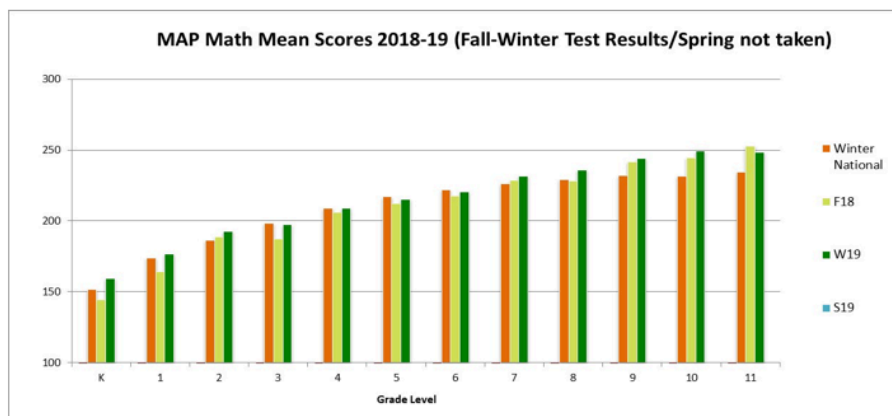
# Student Performance

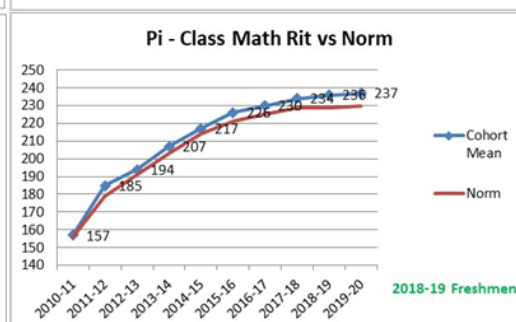
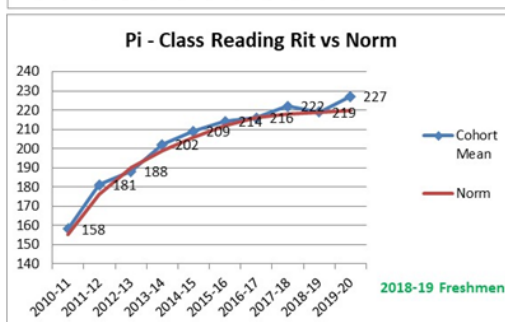
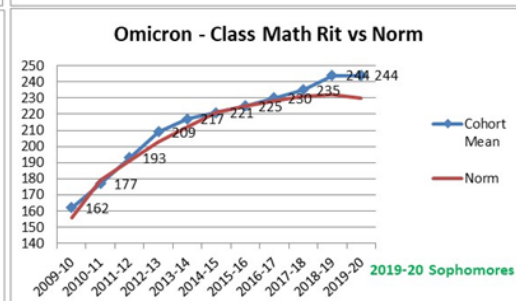
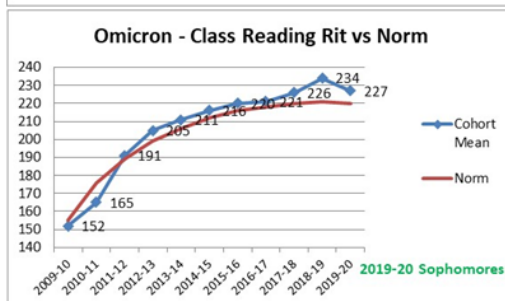
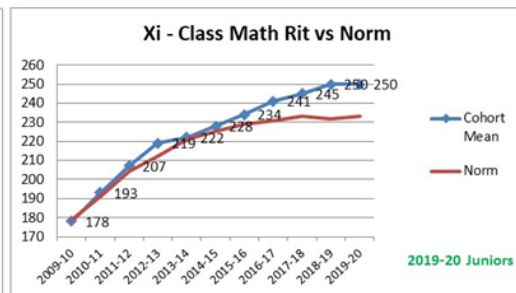
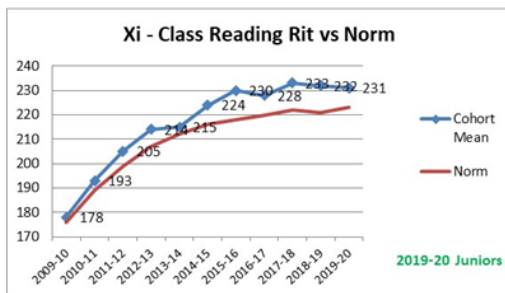
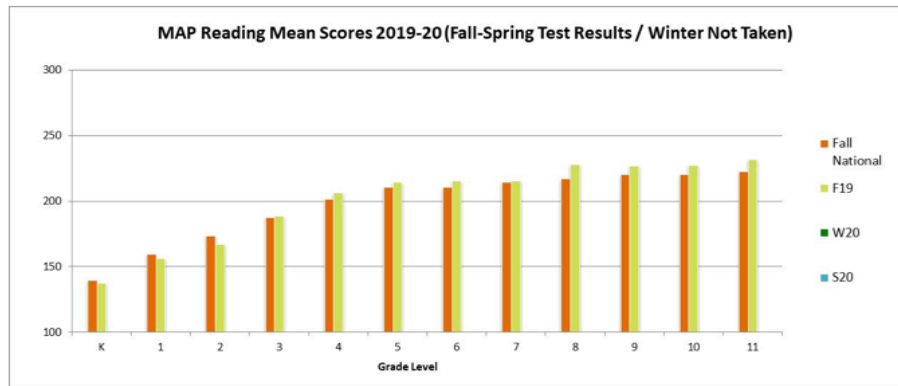
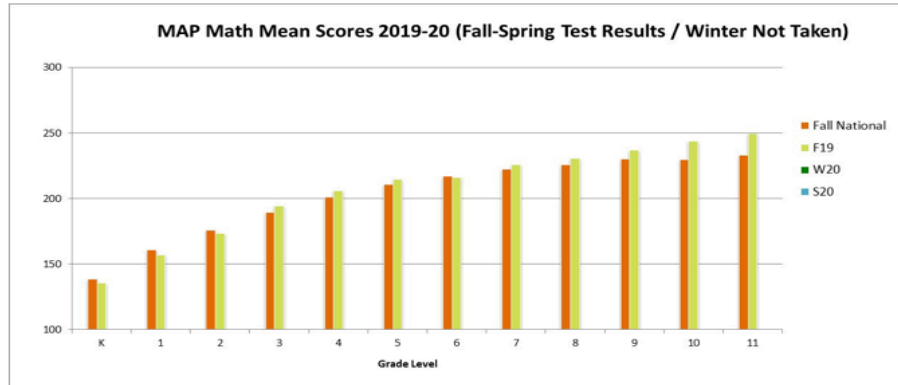
Of course, the single most important goal of any school is to improve student learning, and CIPLC students are a happy, engaged group of learners. As an international school based on the American model, we draw heavily on curriculum and testing from the US. One of the most valid means of demonstrating student growth is by using external assessments such as the MAP, PSAT, SAT, and AP exams which provide an unbiased view of our students against worldwide norms. Other ways we gauge student learning include assessments that we create ourselves to determine how well our students learn the curricular standards put forth by the various agencies such as Common Core, AERO, NGSS, ISTI, and other curriculum governing bodies.

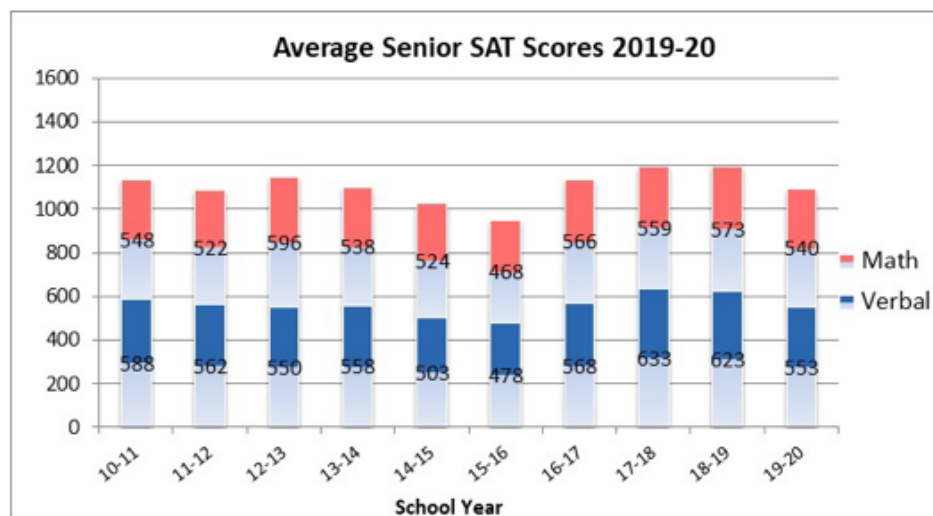
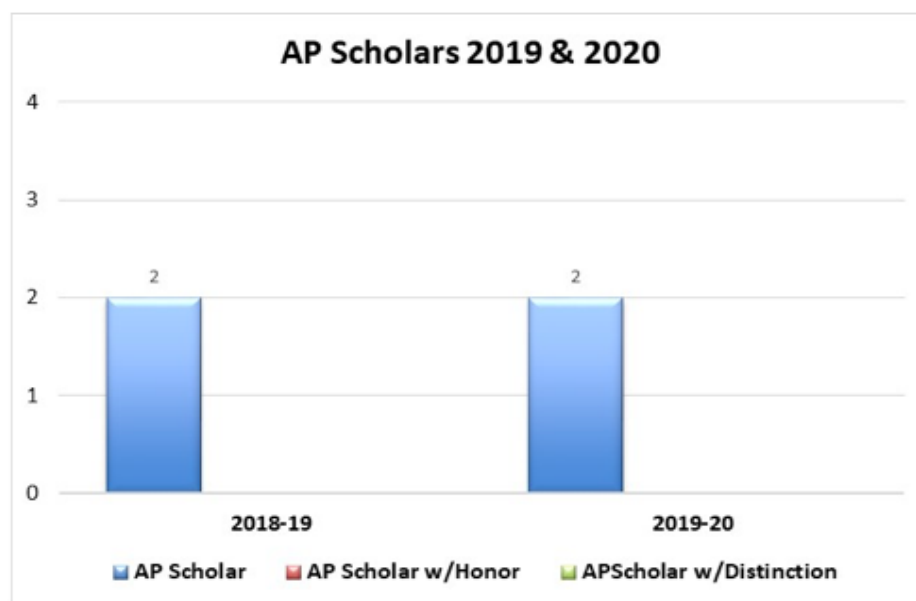
Writing continues to be the curricular area that challenges us the most. Our students show strong results in their writing skills in both English and Spanish, and they are able to express themselves very effectively, but not to the level we have been working toward. The ability to write persuasively with clarity, using powerful vocabulary, is a critically important skill. Much research indicates that strong writing skills is highly correlated to the ability to clearly formulate thoughts, think critically, and ultimately leads to success. Ideally, we would see comparable results in Spanish and English indicating that our students are fully bilingual and biliterate which will help them to be successful in our increasingly connected world.

These are lofty goals, and we continue to refine our pedagogy and practice which is based on the teaching methodology for reading and writing from Teachers College at Columbia University. The "Workshop" model is now being employed in both English and Spanish so that a common methodology and vocabulary can help facilitate transfer of knowledge and skills from one language to the other.

As you review the graphs in this report you will note that our students consistently outperform their peers in other countries and schools in standardized tests. For some of these tests, these "peers" represent up to 1.5 million other students – many of whom are native English speakers. That means that our students, most of whom are not native English speakers, are still achieving at a level that surpasses their counterparts. Of all the data you see in the charts, I draw your attention to the cohort graphs (Xi, Omicron, and Pi), which contain longitudinal data for our students over their years at CIPLC. We have many students who have been here for a number of years, so we have a lot of learning data on them. For their growth in all of these areas, we are most proud of our students.







CIPLC prepares students for admission to colleges and universities in the United States and abroad. This year all of our Seniors received offers of admission from multiple colleges and universities of their choice. However, unfortunately, due to COVID travel restrictions almost all of their plans were thrown into at least some level of chaos. Some students were able to start learning at their university of choice remotely. Another graduate had to change majors because their initial major (a lab science) was not offered via distance learning, and another student deferred their start by a semester. I have to say that as traumatic as this was, the student, their parents, and the colleges all were gracious and supportive.

## Looking Ahead Goals 2020-21

Our work in the upcoming years will continue to focus on improvements in these areas, all of which have a direct impact on student learning. Below are some specific successes we achieved this year and will continue to work on in the upcoming year.

**Continuous Improvement Plan:** We have revised and implemented an improvement plan that has enabled us to stay focused on our mission and vision and document our progress. The plan was segmented into themes and divided amongst various School Improvement Committees.

**Data Usage to Improve Learning:** The Professional Learning Communities (PLC) model helps ensure that “we only discuss students from a data perspective”. Under the CIPLC PLC model, the Divisions had a formal structure for their weekly meetings, part of which was using data as the basis for all student discussions. Our small size enables us to individualize our programs for our students.

**Technology:** CIPLC has a 1:1 iPad program in all ECE and elementary school classrooms. In the MS and HS we have a BYOD policy, and the fact that our secondary students were already using Google Classroom helped them transition smoothly to distance learning.

We continue established practices of systematically replacing digital projectors (the technology that gets the most use), stocking a “maker space” in our Elementary School, the tradition of first-semester STEM day which is a highlight for students and teachers, and our Maker Space Club which is one of the most popular non-sports clubs on campus.

As with any school, continuing to keep technology (hardware, infrastructure, and software) up to date takes a great deal of resources. This year was strange because the biggest change in technology was caused by the shift to distance learning.

**Special Populations:** Most of our students have special learning needs because they are English Language Learners and they have to work in two languages throughout their school day. The time needed to become proficient in English as a new language continues to “mask” the identification of students who may have learning challenges. So, we added to our repertoire parallel standardized tests in Spanish to go along with those we currently do in English. For example, we have added the Spanish counterpart of the MAP testing to our schedule. By assessing students in both English and Spanish on multiple tests we are able to better determine if language is a confounding factor in student achievement.

Teachers identify their two “lowest” and their two “highest” achievers. In our small school, with only one section of each grade level, and classes of 6 (smallest) to 16 (largest), we are able to get to know our students at a deep level. We monitor academic performance and student behavior to help us determine if students might need to be referred for outside evaluation.

**Teacher Supervision & Evaluation:** CIPLC teachers are evaluated using the Stronge's Teacher Evaluation Performance System. Over the course of the school year, teachers reflected on each of the benchmarks/indicators for each of the standards and how those were applicable to their own classrooms. In addition to having teachers (individually or as teams) identify student learning goals early in the school year and analyze whether or not those goals were met, this May we did not collect Student Feedback Forms from all of our students because it seemed too awkward to do so in the middle of distance learning.

This year the Deans and the Superintendent initiated one-on-one meetings with teachers and assistants to help guide reflections about student effort and achievement. The Deans have been particularly effective at communicating with teachers and coaching colleagues as needs are identified. Having “collegial leaders” has facilitated more and higher-quality conversations.

**Infrastructure:** We do not have any major projects pending, and most expenditures this year were for basic maintenance and covering some storm damage.

**Budget:** As we look toward the future, we are, of course, concerned. This year is the second in CIPLC history that we had a deficit budget. Next year's financial outlook is also concerning as we plan for still another year of deficit operations. CIPLC had a healthy reserve, but going from deficit to deficit has depleted this reserve. A very conservative increase in “individual” tuition while maintaining the level of “corporate” tuition was necessary to try to stem the tide of student loss that has been happening in previous years while also acknowledging our increased operating expenses. As usual, we must continue to use our resources wisely to protect the quality of the school to be prepared for a better future.

**Recruitment and Retention:** With the stress of the pandemic added to the background challenges of Venezuela, we lost more international teachers than expected and several broke contract. Still, we have recruited three new teachers to join our faculty, and with reduced student numbers, we are fully staffed. We will continue our annual recruiting efforts to seek out talented and experienced educators.

**Safety and Security:** We continue to stay focused on providing a safe, secure learning environment for our students and staff. This not only includes electric fences and security cameras as well as security guards, it extends to the daily movement of students around the campus.



# Finances and Fiscal Management

CIPLC has again received a clear audit report. The most recent audit was prepared by the international firm, KPMG. The report was also reviewed and approved by our Board of Directors who also approved a budget for school year 2020-2021.

Fundación Colegio Internacional Puerto La Cruz						
2019-20 Budget/Forecast comparison (As of February 2020)						
	Budget		Forecast		Over (under) Budget	
	Students	USD	Students	USD	Students	USD
Corporate	13	737.000	17	906.400	4	169.400
Individuals	131	1.073.749	134	1.116.753	3	43.004
Total Income	144	1.810.749	151	2.023.153	7	212.404
Expenses		2.027.401		2.099.101		(71.700)
Surplus (Deficit)		(216.652)		(75.948)		140.704
Beginning Cash Reserves	900.000		906.828			
2019-20 Deficit	(216.652)		(75.948)			
Ending Cash Reserves	683.348		830.880			
Non-Discretionary Reserves	800.000		800.000			

## Challenges

The “normal” social-economic-political challenges of Venezuela continue to weigh heavily on our m. Each year I remain hopeful that this will be our last year of austerity measures, low student numbers and deficit budget. However, things continue to deteriorate in the economy of the country, making it very difficult to operate on a balanced budget. In spite of this, as a school we will continue to provide a learning environment for our students that focuses on personal growth and learning and opens opportunities for their futures. The most inspiring aspect of the CIPLC community, and the thing that will help us through the many challenges we face, is the people. Our teachers, staff, parents, and students are a unique group of positive, resourceful, resilient people, and they continue to inspire me.