

BAIS BUZZ

Mission Statement

The Banjul American International School is an accredited international school providing a meaningful, rigorous American curriculum in a global context. In partnership with the local and international community, we empower students to become enthusiastic, creative, lifelong learners who value integrity, cultural diversity, and global responsibility.

Message from the Director

Dear BAIS Families,

The 2017-2018 school year is off to a spectacular start, and I'm excited to present the first *BAIS Buzz* newsletter to share the news of some exciting events already underway at BAIS. The *Buzz* will go out twice per month by email and will be an important means of communication about school news and upcoming events, and also a forum for celebrating the remarkable work of our magnificent students and teachers.

I was very pleased to see so many parents and caretakers attend the Open House this past Thursday to learn about the educational experiences we are providing for your children. Please know that all of us at BAIS are committed to communicating openly and often with families, and we see you as our partners in the education of your children. You are always welcome to arrange meetings with me and/or with any of your children's teachers to learn more about what is happening at BAIS, how your children are progressing, and how we can work together.

Thank you all for being part of BAIS's community of learners.

Caleb Steindam, Director

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Upcoming Events

Tue, Sep 12, 5:00pm

PTO Meeting in BAIS Library

Fri, Sep 15, 11:45am-12:15pm

Celebration of Learning –
“Class Share”

Sat, Sep 16, 12:00-2:30pm

Community BBQ

Mon, Sep 18

After-School Activities begin
(K and up, M & Th 3:15-4:15pm)

Fri, Sep 22

Muslim New Year (no school)

Mon, Sep 25

MAP Testing beings



Celebrations of Learning (CoL)

We will continue to gather as a school every Friday from 11:45am to 12:15pm for *Celebration of Learning (CoL)* this year.

We will alternate between a few different formats for CoLs. Some will be “community activities” in which the whole school joins together in an activity that can be enjoyed by all ages of BAIS students. We had a cooperative scavenger hunt this past Friday for our first CoL of the year.

Other Fridays we will have “Class Share” CoLs, in which parents/guardians are invited to attend as student representatives from all grades briefly share what they have been learning in their different classes. **The first “Class Share” CoL will be this coming Friday, September 15th**—we hope to see many of you there! The next “Class Share” CoL will be Friday, September 29th. (September 22 will be a holiday so there will be no CoL that week.)

We will also have CoLs, like last year, that feature one class sharing a project or other demonstration of their learning. These will begin later in the year, with the middle/high school class leading the CoL on Friday, December 8th.

Here are some photos taken by Mr. Scott of last week's scavenger hunt:



Character Education at BAIS

We have initiated a schoolwide Character Education program at BAIS this year, with specific values emphasized in each month of the school year. The values we are highlighting this month are **responsibility** and **accountability**. We encourage you to use these terms and discuss their meaning with your children at home. Here is the full list of values we will be promoting throughout the year, with our definitions:

August/September

Responsibility: acting as someone who can be trusted to do what is needed and what is expected of you

Accountability: holding yourself responsible for completing the tasks expected of you

October

Kindness: being gentle and helpful to others

Generosity: giving and sharing what you have for the good of others

November

Honesty: telling the truth

Integrity: being fair, honest, and true to the values you believe in

December/January

Courage: being brave to do something even if it is difficult or scary for you

Hope: believing that good things will happen

February

Perseverance: to try and try again even if something is difficult

Resilience: bouncing back and overcoming obstacles

March

Compassion: making an effort to help people in need

Empathy: being able to understand and feel what another person is feeling

April

Open-mindedness: considering different ideas or opinions

Acceptance: including all people and appreciating their differences

May

Patience: the ability to remain calm and deal with a long wait or with a frustrating situation

Understanding: being willing and able to understand other people's behavior and forgive them if you don't agree with their behavior

June

Reflection: careful thought about something related to your own feelings or actions

Awareness: knowing what is happening around you and inside you



After-School Activities

After-school activities will begin on Monday, September 18th! After-school activities are open to all BAIS students in kindergarten and up, and are held on Mondays and Thursdays from 3:15 to 4:15pm. Ms. Leah Woldman, our after-school activities coordinator, has been working hard alongside our teaching staff to prepare a schedule of excellent activities including swimming, wood carving, sign language, pottery, cross stitch, African drumming, and much more. The sign-up form will go home tomorrow (Monday) in both hard copy and email. **It is very important that you submit your sign-up form promptly** so that Ms. Leah can finalize the plans for all activities. (We'll need to cancel activities if not enough students sign up, and we can only offer swimming if we can secure enough offers of transportation and assistance.)



Community BBQ

We will hold the *BAIS Community BBQ* this coming **Saturday, Nov 16th**, from **12:00 to 2:30pm**. Please **enter through the rear gate** (same gate used for school entrance) for this event. All BAIS students and families are welcome to the BBQ, which is a celebration of the new school year and an opportunity for the BAIS community to enjoy good food together, get to know each other better, and welcome our new families. A big thanks to the US Embassy for lending us supplies for the BBQ including the big tent!



Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

The BAIS Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) is a vital part of the life of our school. The PTO organizes and leads school-wide social events and other initiatives that enhance school experience for students and all members of the BAIS community, and it raises funds to provide resources that directly benefit BAIS students. All parents and teachers are encouraged to be active in the PTO. **The first PTO meeting of the year will be this Tuesday (September 12th) at 5:00pm in the BAIS Library.**

Board of Directors

BAIS is governed by a **Board of Directors** which sets school policies, establishes the school's vision and long-term goals, and hires and oversees the School Director. There are six Board members, five of whom are elected by the Association (teachers and students) at the Annual General Meeting, and one of whom is appointed by the US Ambassador. The current Board members are **Joan Vives Tomas, Crystal Okebe, Amine Saad, Martin Antonio, Stephane Banna, and Doreen Farnitano** (Ambassador's representative).

Association members are welcome to attend Board meetings as observers, with the exception of executive sessions which are closed to the public. The first Board meeting of the 2017-2018 school year will be held at **4:30pm on Wednesday, September 20th, in the BAIS library.**

Association of International Schools of Africa (AISA) School Heads Retreat

BAIS is proud to be a member of the Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA). Caleb will attend AISA's School Heads Retreat in Dakar September 22-24 and the Solo Heads Meeting on Monday, September 25th. This wonderful opportunity to learn from the expertise of consultants and school heads throughout the continent, is made possible by funding from the US State Department Office of Overseas Schools grant.



Miss Asha, BAIS Intern

You may have noticed a new face helping out around BAIS this year. We are delighted to have Asha, a recent high school graduate, volunteering with us as an intern until February when she will head to Australia for university. Miss Asha has been providing assistance to BAIS teachers in various classrooms and is making a tremendous contribution supporting Ms. Leah in updating and reorganizing our school library.

Please greet Miss Asha when you see her and thank her for the great work she's doing for our school!

Middle & High School Retreat

The middle & high school students and teachers once again kicked off the school year in an extraordinary way with the **Middle & High School Retreat** held at the conference center of the Ocean Bay Hotel & Resort. This two-day program was organized and facilitated by the core middle/high school teachers (Ms. Amal, Mr. Scott, and Ms. Stephanie), with important contributions from all the rest of the middle/high school teachers (Ms. Leah, Mr. Wright, Mr. Badjie, Mr. Daniel, and Mr. Caleb). The two days were full of team-building, learning, fun, meaningful dialogue, great food, and swimming!

Some photos from the retreat are below. Ask a middle school or high school student to tell you all about it!

