

# 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 local and international communities, we empower students to become enthusiastic, creative, lifelong learners who value integrity, cultural diversity, and global responsibility.

## Message from the Director

Dear BAIS Families,

At the AISA School Heads Retreat in Victoria Falls, there was an emphasis on shifting the educational approaches in our schools in order to cultivate adaptable, self-directed learners who will be prepared to take on future challenges. It is widely agreed that schools need to shift toward a more adaptable and personalized model of education, in which teachers nurture and challenge each student according to their individual strengths, needs, and interests. I was proud to be able to share some of the successful and innovative practices while learning valuable ideas and experiences from other schools. It is a joy and privilege for me to work with such a brilliant and dedicated team of educators here at BAIS, and also to have a network of highly accomplished and supportive colleagues in AISA schools across the continent. You can read more about upcoming and ongoing AISA initiatives on pages 5 and 6.

There's always a lot happening at BAIS! Please read through the updates in this *Buzz*, and let me know if you have questions.

Have a great week!

Caleb Steindam, Director

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## Upcoming Events

**Thu, Oct 18, 8:00am**

Pre-K Trip to Bakau Fire Station

**Fri, Oct 19, 11:45am-12:15pm**

Celebration of Learning – Specials Class Share (all age groups)

**Fri, Oct 19, 12:15pm**

Book Swap

**Mon-Tue, Oct 22-23**

NO SCHOOL (October Break)

**Sat, Oct 27 (tentative)**

Books for Breakfast (details to be confirmed)

**Thu, Nov 1, 8:15am**

Author's Tea and Edible Book Fest

**Fri, Nov 2, 11:45am-12:15pm**

Celebration of Learning – Core Class Share (all age groups)

**Fri, Nov 2, 5:30-8:30pm**

Halloween Party

**Wed-Thu, Nov 7-8**

Picture Days





Banjul American International School  
**HALLOWEEN  
PARTY!!!**

**Friday, November 2nd**  
**5:30-8:30pm**

Admission:  
**D200 per child (adults free)**

*All BAIS and US Embassy families  
are invited. BAIS families can  
invite up to 3 friends.*

*Admission includes...*

- Haunted House
- Trick-or-Treating
- Games
- Costume Party
- Movie: 

**\*Food and drinks will be sold.**

*\*Proceeds will benefit BAIS  
Student Council and PTO*



## Board of Directors

The BAIS Board of Directors held their annual Board Retreat on Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, at the Rees Seminar Room in MRC. The Board had a successful day building common understandings and clarifying the role of the Board in the governance of the school.

We have two recent changes to our Board membership. **Greg Sadowski** has joined the Board of Directors as an interim appointee, filling the seat vacated by Brenda Anna Kwambana-Adams, who resigned from the Board in September when she accepted a position at the University College London. **Caitlin Tumulty** has also joined the Board as the new US Embassy appointee, taking over the seat that had been filled by Doreen Farnitano. We are excited to have Greg and Caitlin with us, and we are deeply grateful to Brenda and Doreen for their outstanding service to the Board.

While we reviewed the Board's role and procedures for effective school governance during the retreat, the Board agreed it would be a good idea to also review and clarify this with the full school community through this newsletter.

### Role of the Board

The responsibilities of the Board of Directors include setting school policies; hiring and evaluating the School Director; setting the tuition and fees; and overseeing finances, including working with the Director to set the annual budget and approving any major financial actions or decisions. The Board of Directors also sets the long-term goals, priorities, and vision for the school.

The Head of School (also known as the Director) is responsible for the managing the education system and all day-to-day operations of the school.

### Communication Protocol

Any time a conflict or complaint arises, it is important to follow appropriate protocol in the interest of fairness and trust. The first rule of thumb is that you should first attempt to address the issue directly with the other person(s) involved. For example, if a parent has a concern or complaint about a teacher, they should attempt to speak with that teacher before bringing the issue to anyone else. If they have spoken with the teacher but have not managed to resolve the issue, then they should communicate the issue to Caleb who will then seek to find a resolution.

It is important to remember that the Board of Directors does not directly supervise any member of BAIS staff except the Head. Personnel and operational issues should be addressed to Caleb, not Board members.

If an Association member has an issue with the Head and have not been able to resolve it directly, or if they have a concern or request regarding a school policy, they may ask the Board to address the issue at the next Board meeting. Communications to the Board should be put in writing and can be submitted by email to the Head ([BAISDirector@gmail.com](mailto:BAISDirector@gmail.com)) or the Board Chair (Martin Antonio, [Martin.Antonio@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Martin.Antonio@lshtm.ac.uk)). It is important to understand that the Board as a whole holds the authority, not individual Board members. It is not appropriate to bring a grievance or complaint privately to an individual Board member and expect that Board member to address the issue on their own.

Please feel free to ask Caleb or Martin if you have questions about the Board's role.

## Upcoming Book Month Events

Friday, October 19th at 12:15pm (after the Celebration of Learning)

### BAIS COMMUNITY BOOK SWAP

Need new reading material? Here's a chance to trade in old books for something new to you. **Students, parents, and BAIS staff are invited to participate in this school-wide Book Swap.** Here's how it works:

**STEP 1: Bring gently used books that you no longer need to Ms. Leah by THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18<sup>th</sup> (the sooner the better).** There is no maximum number of books you can bring in. The more that are donated, the better the selection will be.

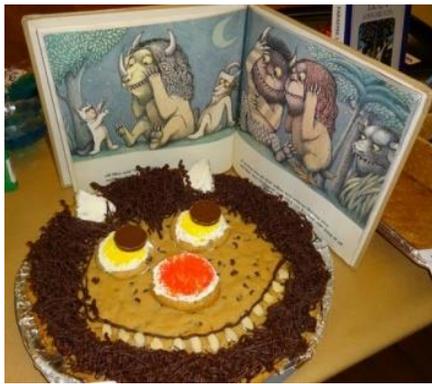
**STEP 2:** Get tickets. Each book you bring in will get you one ticket, which you'll use to acquire books at the swap. Student tickets will be distributed by their homeroom teachers. Adults can pick up their tickets when they arrive at the swap.

**STEP 3:** Use your tickets to get books that others brought. Each book will "cost" one ticket, so the number of books you bring equals the number of books you can take home.



Thursday, November 1st starting at 8:15am –

### AUTHOR'S TEA AND EDIBLE BOOK FEST



Join us for our culminating celebration of reading and writing where BAIS authors in every grade will share their published work.

As part of this year's Author's Tea, we are also inviting students/families to participate in our first EDIBLE BOOK FESTIVAL!

What's that? It's a chance to create **something to eat** inspired by a title, author, or book character. Edible books can be made from anything edible (not just baked goods). Creativity is encouraged! Entries should be brought to school on

Thursday, November 1st. We will view and photograph the edible books before enjoying them as snacks as part of our Book Month finale.



## AISA Educators Conference



BAIS is a proud member of the Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA), and we are very excited to send five BAIS teachers to this year's [AISA Educators Conference \(AEC\)](#) in Dakar next weekend: **Ms. Elin Jacobson, Ms. Leah Woldman, Ms. Stephanie Budd, Ms. Amal Abou-Alfa, and Ms. Debbie Sesay**. The AEC corresponds with BAIS's October break from October 20-23.

The AISA Educators Conference is the largest annual gathering of international educators on the continent, and the conference provides outstanding professional development content. AISA brings in world-renowned educational experts for multi-day "deep dive" workshops, which this year include the following topics:

### Morning Sessions:

- **The Role of Concepts in Curriculum, Learning and Assessment**
- **Easy is Boring - Impossible is Depressing: Meeting individual needs of all learners**
- **Making Thinking Visible: Introduction to Thinking Routines**
- **Understanding Global-Mindedness for an Interconnected World**
- **Blending Learning in Action: Station Rotation & Flipped Classroom**

### Afternoon Sessions:

- **The Role of Inquiry in Teaching and Learning**
- **Creating and sustaining a culture of excellence and innovation in your classroom**
- **Creating a Culture of Thinking in the Classroom**
- **Social and Emotional Well-Being for Living & Learning**
- **Maximize Student Engagement with Blended Learning**

We are proud that [Ms. Stephanie Budd won an AISA scholarship covering the full cost of her registration fee](#). In addition to this AEC scholarship, AISA also provided \$800 in grant funds to support Caleb's attendance of the AISA School Heads Retreat and Solo Heads Meeting in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. We are very grateful for AISA's growing commitment and generosity toward small schools like BAIS, and also for the US State Department Office of Overseas Schools for the annual grant that funds our professional development budget.

## AISA Small Schools Initiative

BAIS is a founding member of the *AISA Solo Heads Group*, which held its first official meeting last year in Dakar following the 2017 AISA School Heads Retreat. AISA formed the Solo Heads Group to recognize, nurture, and connect the heads of very small schools like BAIS who have a unique position as the single administrator of a school. There were initially seven members of this group, the majority of them located in the West Africa region.

Schools like BAIS face significant challenges including limited resources, extreme fluctuation in enrollment, geographic isolation, and vulnerability to political, economic, and social factors in the host country, and the Solo Heads Group offers a support system to help schools thrive in the face of these challenges. Yet it is important to note that AISA's decision to form this group was above all in recognition of the unique strengths of schools like BAIS. In many ways, solo heads serve as models within AISA. Our holistic involvement in all aspects of the school and community, our shared and inclusive leadership models, and our relationships with students and immersion in the lives of our school, represent principles of school leadership that other AISA heads are constantly aspiring to.

At this year's Solo Heads meeting in Victoria Falls, our group came to the unanimous decision to broaden our circle of membership from the current seven schools to up to fifteen total schools. The schools we will invite to join our group will be other small schools (though not "solo head" schools) that we will select based on affinity and common needs. As part of this expansion, we have changed our name from the *AISA Solo Heads Group* to the **AISA Small Schools Initiative (SSI)**. SSI will continue to meet at least once per year and correspond regularly through our AISA chat group. The current chair of SSI is Irene Epp, Director of the American International School of Freetown.

## Gambia Teachers Institute

BAIS is honored to be receiving funding from the US Embassy Public Affairs Office to host the third *Gambia Teachers Institute* on Saturday, November 17th, 2018. Over 100 educators from throughout The Gambia will come to BAIS campus on this day to attend workshops led by BAIS teachers on a variety of topics that will be relevant and applicable to Gambian schools and immediately beneficial to Gambian students. The 2017 GTI was attended by 116 participants from Gambian schools. (You can see examples of press from last year's conference [here](#) and [here](#) and coverage of the previous year's conference [here](#) and [here](#).)

We are looking forward to another successful and impactful conference this year! Please contact Caleb if you are interested in learning more or would like to help out with the conference in any way.





## Celebrations of Learning

We continue to hold **Celebrations of Learning (CoL)** every Friday from 11:45am to 12:15pm. Our CoLs have been phenomenal so far, including Kindergarten and Grade One's inventive take on the Gingerbread Man story last week!

The CoL **this Friday** (October 19th) will be a **Specials Class Share**, featuring students from every class sharing highlights from their "specials" classes (French, Art, PE, and/or Music). This CoL will be held outside on the basketball court, and all family members are encouraged to attend.

**Next week's** CoL (October 26th) will be a celebration of **UN Day**, which we will use as an opportunity to recognize our diversity of international cultures here at BAIS. Next Friday, please help your child to wear blue and white in celebration of the UN, or have them wear clothes representing their home culture. If you have ideas or want to contribute to our UN Day celebration, please speak to Mr. Caleb or Mr. Badjie.

The November 2nd CoL will be another Class Share, this one featuring the "core" subjects (Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies). As with all Class Shares, students of all ages will be presenting and all families are encouraged to attend.



## Special Olympics

BAIS is excited that the [Special Olympics is taking off in The Gambia](#). The Special Olympics is an international project that empowers people with intellectual disabilities to discover new strengths and abilities, skills, and success. We look forward to finding ways for BAIS to support the efforts of the Special Olympics for mutual benefit and learning. If you would like to support the Special Olympics or are interested in learning more, please consider attending the **official launch of the Special Olympics Gambia on Saturday, October 20th, 2018, from 10:00am to 1:00pm at Qcity, Brusubi.**

