



Annual Report

2014-2015



Nassif Elhadj

**ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015
Director's Report**

Dear Parents,

It gives me great pleasure to be able to present the first BAES annual report. The purpose of the report is to share with BAES parents the state of the school. We hope to share the things that have been accomplished this year, challenges faced and where we hope to go in the future. It has been a pleasure to work with our dedicated staff, committed Board, enthusiastic PTO, inquiring students and of course you, BAES Parents. This year has been busy as we all worked to move BAES forward.



- We completed the new primary wing
- We completed the opening of the library to become a multi-media center
- We completed an almost \$90,000 soft target grant thanks to the US Department of State,
- We continue to move forward with our five-year curriculum development plan
- We have seen our overall school MAP scores increase.
- We have begun our self-study in preparation for our Middle States visit in the spring of 2016
- We have added computers to every classroom
- All classes have internet access for the first time.
- We have purchased Foss Kits K-8 to improve hands on science instruction across all grade levels.
- Pre-School has received PE instruction this year.
- We have revamped our PreK-Grade 5 report cards to be more narrative and referring to our standards. Next year we will move to a true standards base report card.
- We have hired a full time Administrative Assistant.

We have also encountered challenges:

- The threat of Ebola caused our numbers to drop by 12 students having a major financial impact.
- The change in the dalasi status has also impacted our finances.
- Our facility is old and we realize that we need a long term facilities plan to address immediate needs and also replacement needs.
- In a small school it is always a struggle to get parents involved and we need parent involvement in the self-study, PTO, volunteering in the library etc.

Thank you for all your support this year as we all work together to move BAES forward in our long term strategic vision.

Have a wonderful summer.

Warm regards,

Sharon

Sharon A. Sperry
Director

**ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015
BAES Board Chair**

Thirty years ago a small group of parents from the U.S. Embassy identified a need and decided to do something about it. From that start, the Banjul American Embassy School emerged. Over the years we have seen ups and downs, but through it all BAES has delivered an educational product that has impacted generations of students. This year has been one of our strongest. The Board gave Sharon Sperry, our new director, three goals. First - focus on curriculum and our children. Second - properly manage one of our strongest resources – our faculty. Third - improve communication with parents. The year has not been without hiccups and challenges. But, Sharon has delivered on all three fronts while pushing us further along an upward trajectory. The Board is extremely pleased with Sharon's performance this year and looks forward to seeing what she has in store for us next year.

Meanwhile, the Board continued to grapple with difficult decisions to put the school on sound financial and legal grounding. This has not been easy and we have had to make tough decisions. If only we had limitless funding and boundless time on our hands! We started this school year with a new director, three new international and two local American hires, and a new teacher contract. The tragic Ebola epidemic in the region played havoc with our enrollment numbers and negatively impacted the budget. Nevertheless, we made decisions to invest more resources in curriculum, build three new classrooms (the first construction project since 1988!!!), and launch a two-year reaccreditation process. If we were not busy enough, the State Department's Bureau of Diplomatic Security awarded us a soft target security grant and we implemented significant security upgrades to our compound to ensure a safe learning environment for our children.

I recently sat in a meeting of accreditation committee chairs and was impressed at the complementary nature of the work that was taking place, the shared vision being realized, and the plans for the future. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the accreditation process and please keep it up! All of our efforts will pay off next year. BAES is and we are confident, will remain the only accredited school in The Gambia. Our faculty is the best in the country. By the end of the next academic year all of our faculty will hold an internationally recognized certification. In addition, all of our faculty complete a minimum number of continuing education credits each year, modeling a community of learners for our children. They have reinforced the "T" in Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and proven committed partners to the parents.

We have positioned the Board to build towards continued future success. A year ago we decided to make investing in our future through building up our reserves a regular part of the budget. That means operations are supported 100% by tuition revenue and we are heavily dependent on enrollment numbers. Our personnel costs are amongst the highest in the region, but our tuition is one of the lowest. This is the simple math the Board has struggled with. As I have already said, our faculty is the best in the country. But it needs resources – like the Foss science kits we bought this year. Even the best doctor is relatively helpless without the tools of his trade. To improve fiscal transparency we linked student activity fees with a student activities budget line to ensure those fees supported our students and not routine operational expenses. We recently made a similar decision to ensure that the school development fee is wholly spent on developing the school, and not on routine operational expenses. These decisions, while the right ones, do not make the Board's job any easier.

Next year will be full of new challenges and opportunities. We will complete the two-year reaccreditation process. We will enter the fourth year of our five-year strategic plan and the third year of the long-range technology plan. Our director and faculty will be in the last year of their contracts. Depending on the community's interest, we might be laying the groundwork to launch an International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Half of the current Board will have rotated off. Basically, it will be business as usual.

Before I conclude, let me leave you with a vision of a future BAES – one that might not be too far off. Imagine a full high school with 12 students in each grade. Added with our current enrollment that would put us over 120 students. Imagine a campus with a soccer field, basketball court, tennis court, swimming pool, and multimedia center. Imagine a fully wired campus with high speed Internet available everywhere. Imagine a green campus – humming with activity, but with almost no carbon footprint. Imagine our students graduating with several college credits and gaining admission to some of the best European and American universities and colleges. Imagine a campus with programs providing educational opportunities after hours and on weekends – leveraging the investment we make in those facilities. Sound like a pipedream? I do not believe it is, but the school will need to draw on the resources, commitment, and dedication of the community to realize this vision. It will need the same support you have given it over the last thirty years.

It has been my privilege serving the last three years on the Board and leading it for the last two years. I am indebted to the director, the faculty and staff, the parents, and the students. I am deeply grateful to my fellow board members who serve with little to no recognition, no remuneration, but full of commitment and dedication. Thank you Scott, Haytham, Sandra, Olivia, James, Rupert, Maureen, Joan, and Aji!

Richard T. Yoneoka

BAES Chair
2013-2015

Review of School Fees in West Africa

Please note that many schools are no longer putting their fees on their websites.

School	Tuition- PreK	Tuition K-5	Tuition 6-8	Tuition 9-12	Other fees Capital Development/ Student Activity	Discount
BAES	\$4,360 \$4,800	\$8,510 \$9,360	\$9,740 \$10,715	\$10,770 \$11,850	\$2,300	The top amount is self-paying
AISN Nouakchott	\$5,925	\$14,925	\$15,440	\$15,955	\$2375	No
AISN Niamey	\$4,435	\$16,631	\$17,800	\$19,959	\$3000	No
AISF Freetown	\$6,050	\$11,550	\$12,012	\$18,621	\$5,250	No
ISO-Ouaga	\$5,819	\$17,570	\$19,254	\$19,873	\$3,829	No
American School Yaounde	\$5,570 PreK-1 \$7,180 PreK-2	\$14,100 K \$17,800 1-5	\$18,840	\$19,570	\$10,650	No
AMC-Ivory Coast	\$9,350	\$14,850	\$15, 290	\$15,950	\$4,750	No

**ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015
FINANCE**

The Finance Committee:

This year the finance committee has met at least once a month, often more. The focus has been to ensure transparency, strong financial oversight and long range planning. We have worked to rectify some issues of the past and at the same time move the school forward. Specifically:

- We are now fully insured as was noted as a monitoring issue by Middle States in the mid-term report.
- We have drafted the first business procedures manual.
- The student activity fee has been used to fund student activities and is not part of the general operating fund for the first time.
- We have focused on increasing our books and materials line item to be more in line with best practices of international schools.
- We currently have a three-month reserve and are working toward building a six-month reserve to insure we are again in line with best fiscal practices in international schools.
- We have worked hard to mitigate the schools losses due to the drop in enrollment as a result of the Ebola crisis and the drop in the Dalasi to USD.

Most important we have taken our fiduciary oversight to heart and watched both the pennies and the dollars, working to insure that parents' tuition money is well spent.

We have faced many financial challenges this year as a finance committee but we have looked on them as opportunities to improve.

Haytham Hassan
Finance Committee Chair

APRIL 2015 BUDGET REPORT SUMMARY

	Revised Budget	Actual	Variance	Current Month
INFLOWS	992,541.36	879,485.50	113,055.86	114,326.82
OUTFLOWS	1,042,868.93	807,105.22	235,763.71	95,641.69
TOTAL Inc/Exp	-50,327.57	72,380.28	-122,707.85	18,685.13

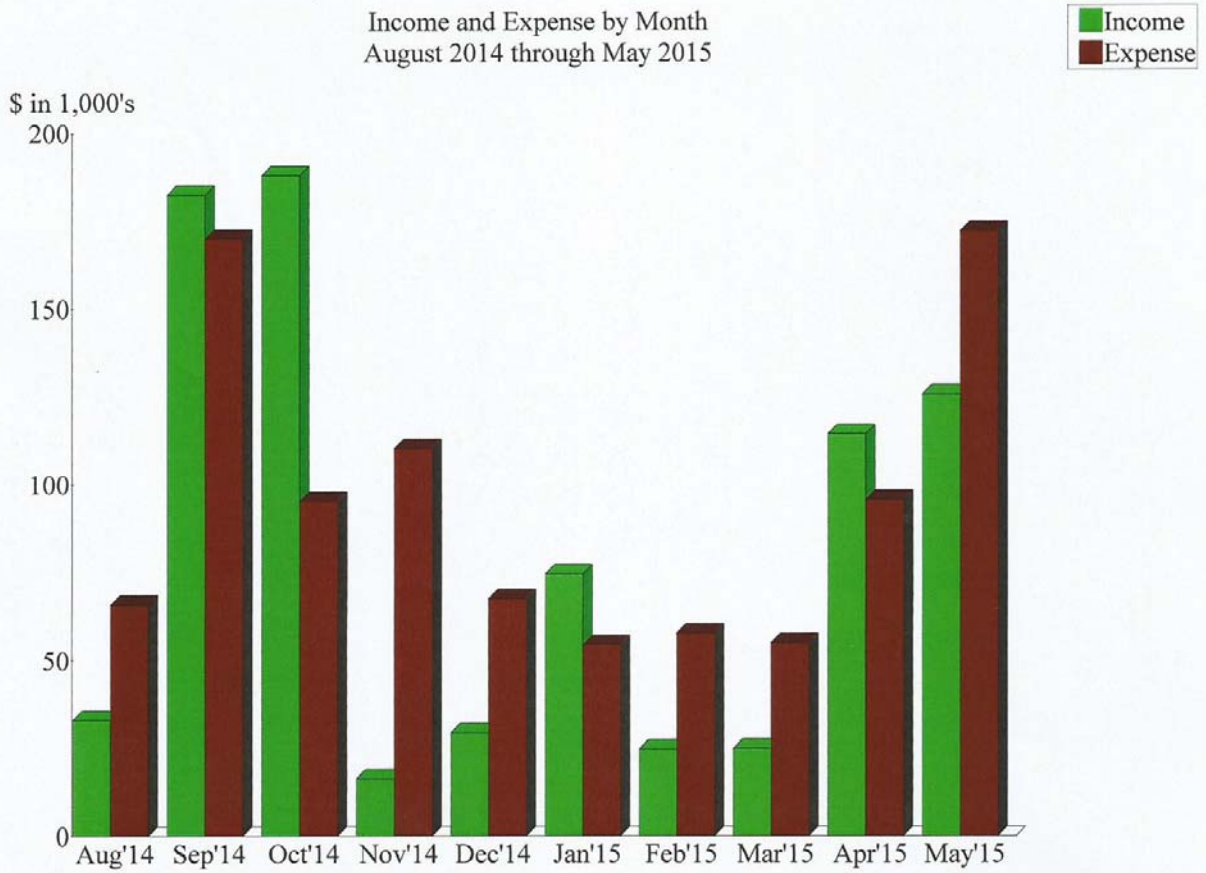
APRIL 2015 OUTFLOWS SUMMARY

Instructional	356,273.06
Administration	364,723.05
Facilities/Operations	26,298.91
General Reserve	24,967.60
Building Fund	17,421.30
School Development Fund	17,421.30
Exchange Difference	0.00
	<u><u>807,105.22</u></u>

CONSTRUCTION 2014-2015

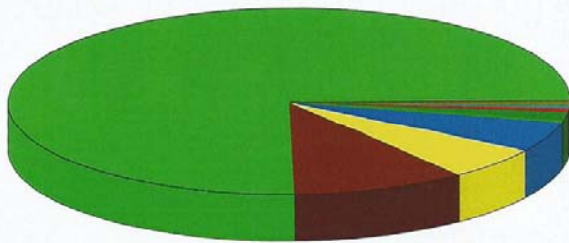
Primary Building	\$61,000.00
Library	\$4,000.00
Soft Target Grant	\$83,000.00
<i>(paid completely by Department of State Security Funds)</i>	

**ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015
BAES Income & Expense by Month**



Income Summary
August 2014 through May 2015

1040 Tuition	75.37
1065 US Govt. Security Grant	10.13
1060 US Govt. Grant	5.61
1020 School Dev Fee	5.51
1025 Student Activity Fee	2.05
1010 Application Fee	0.69
1070 Returning Student Fee	0.61
1055 Bank Interest	0.03
Total	\$813,035.63



By Account

ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015 FACILITIES

It has been a milestone year for BAES in terms of physical improvements to the campus. This year we saw the completion of two major upgrade projects:

- The construction of the new classroom building for the elementary campus consisting of three new classrooms and restroom facilities.
- The security upgrade project which included:
 - raising the height of the perimeter wall topped with concertina wire,
 - the addition of front and rear guard booths,
 - bollards,
 - closed circuit TV system,
 - a public address system,
 - new security grills
 - interior classrooms locks,
 - a photovoltaic system with battery bank to power the security lights, CCTV and PA systems.



The addition of the new classroom building made possible a domino effect of further improvements including:

- Library expansion to include a multi-media computer lab
- Addition of a teacher work room
- Elimination of the temporary divider in the science room, returning the science room to its full size.
- Middle school
- French and art classes all moved into much larger spaces, more conducive to learning.



Other improvements this year included:

- Resurfacing the basketball court
- Awning to protect the elementary students lunch area from the sun

Years of neglect in which routine preventative maintenance was not completed has left the school in the difficult position of playing “catch up”. The facilities committee prepared a three year plan to address many of these issues including such items as: floor and window replacement in the early childhood and middle school buildings, furniture and air conditioner replacement and upgrading incandescent light bulbs and fixtures with energy efficient LED options. Additionally, the school entered into a preventative maintenance agreement to ensure we maximize the life of the generator.

Finally, the facilities committee was active in completing the questionnaires and other preparations for next year’s accreditation visit.

There is still a great deal to do and we have some exciting opportunities ahead. It has been a very rewarding year – especially when I see our children benefit from the campus improvements and knowing that children will continue to benefit for years to come.

Scott Gallaway
Facilities Chair

ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015
Parents Teachers Organization

The PTO successfully organized numerous events this academic year generating funds that were reinvested into the school and were donated to charity. This year's leadership team included: Kathrin Yoneoka (President), Sandra Wang-Harris (Vice-Chair 9-12/2015, Treasurer 1-present/2015), Jennifer Greathouse (Vice-Chair 1-present/2015), and Bessy Otero-Leighton (Treasurer 9-12/2015), Leen Permentier as Teacher Liaison and Sandra Amalfi as PTO-School Board Liaison.

The PTO goal this year was to foster and create a stronger sense of community through its events and fundraisers while also closing the perceived gap in communication among the parents, teachers, and the school. The newly created and launched PTO Facebook page quickly became a valued tool to share information and pictures between parents and teachers. The PTO drafted and implemented by-laws and established a local bank account to better account for its funds.

Working in support of the school administration, the PTO set goals to use funds generated from events to support the school's unfunded needs. Some of the items procured this year include the "buddy bench" and an enhanced sound system. The buddy bench has been in high demand this year. It provides a safe place for students to sit when they are sad and allows someone to join them and cheer them up. The sound system arrived just in time for the end of year talent show. In addition, the PTO hopes to purchase supplies for PE and after school activities

One of the PTO's most successful initiatives this year was the launching of a hot school lunch program. Over 30 students and teachers regularly enjoy the benefits of a healthy lunch at a low cost.

Many of the PTO events were open to the public – an important aspect that fostered a greater and broader sense of community and extended our social network. This community involvement reinforces BAES' positive influence in The Gambia and allows us to show off our school spirit.

Other highlights from the year include the newcomer's coffee, school uniform orders, the popular bake sales, PTO dinners out for teachers and parents, Halloween event, Holiday Bazaar, Easter event, Talent Show, and Movie Night. Additionally, the PTO organized the annual school picture day. Last but not least, the PTO organized Teacher appreciation week -- a week of treats and gifts to honor the hard work of our faculty.

The PTO generated goodwill with its support to the Sinchu Orphanage by donating tickets and money for all the orphans to attend the Easter Event and donated part of the raffle to support a school near Bansang which the BAES middle school adopted as its annual community service project. That "Bansang" school was established by BAES teacher Maggie Savage when she was a Peace Corps Volunteer.

While a small core group of active volunteers were responsible for the organization and execution of most events, many BAES parents and teachers volunteered their time at the many events and donated baked goods. Thank you all for your support of PTO activities.

Kathrin Yoneoka
PTO President

ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015 Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP®)

Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP®) creates a personalized assessment experience by adapting to each student's learning level—precisely measuring student progress and growth for each individual. We have information about each student within 24-48 hours after testing so we can easily see student's strengths and areas needing improvement. We can then use the information gathered to inform our instruction and plan what areas need to be addressed for each student.

It used to be that we talked about differentiation but we didn't really provide a lot of time or resources or focus for that. MAP has given us a way to focus. Now teachers have a plan for how they use time for either intervening with students that need it, or providing enrichment to challenge those higher-level students.

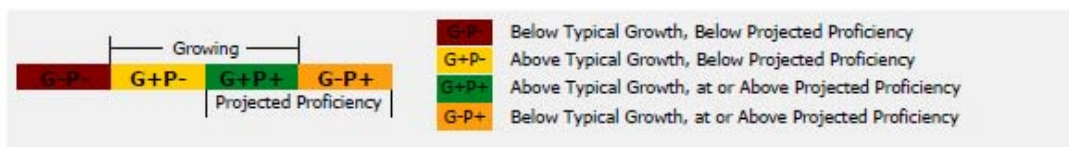
Below you can see the aggregate score for BAES students from last fall to this spring. I am very pleased at the progress that has been made.



[View District by Grade](#)
[Run this report for a different term](#)

District: Banjul American Embassy School

Roster Term: Spring 2015



	Projected Performance and Growth Distribution				Growth		Projected Performance		Median
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Fall 14 - Spring 15 Count/Percent	Spring 2015 Count/Percent	Percent	Percent	
Reading	10.6	12.8	42.6	34.0	50	54.0	57	74.0	59.6
BAES	10.6	12.8	42.6	34.0	50	54.0	57	74.0	59.6
Mathematics	17.0	6.4	59.6	17.0	51	62.7	55	73.5	61.8
BAES	17.0	6.4	59.6	17.0	51	62.7	55	73.5	61.8
Language Usage	-	16.7	55.6	27.8	36	72.2	37	81.1	70.3
BAES	-	16.7	55.6	27.8	36	72.2	37	81.1	70.3
General Science	13.3	13.3	46.7	26.7	15	60.0	15	73.3	60.0
BAES	13.3	13.3	46.7	26.7	15	60.0	15	73.3	60.0

ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015
BAES Primary Grades 1, 2&3, 4&5

Sharon Sperry began her role as BAES director in August 2014.

Joy Will (new) taught First Grade.

Vanessa Sangyang taught the combined Grades Two and Three.

Ewan Good (new) taught the combined Grades Four and Five.

Due to a medical condition, Ms Will returned to the United States during the early weeks of school. Marguerite Quirey (new to The Gambia with connection to U.S. Peace Corps) was quickly hired to replace her.

Certain supply and curriculum shipments, such as Scott Foresman/Addison Wesley Math Workbooks and Foss Science Kits, were delayed. Their arrival (late First Trimester) was well appreciated.

A beautiful new school block of three large classrooms, a four-stall/four-sink restroom, and wide porch was completed in November 2014. With ribbon-cutting fanfare the Primary Grades moved to the well-designed classrooms. Except for the Middle School Science room, all other BAES classes shifted and were rearranged to newly available spaces.

Four Toshiba laptop computers were purchased and given to each Primary Grade classroom. Although available for a variety of student uses, the first software to be employed was IXL online math practice. Each student's membership was purchased by BAES. With their own username and password, students could move through the skill levels at school or at home.

A specific initiative to fully adhere to AERO standards was directed by Sharon Sperry. Although AERO's mission is to provide standard-based education for American-supported overseas schools, the standards are very similar to U.S. Common Core standards. One effect of this was that the grade reporting system would need to change, and thus this year's trimester report cards have been the transitional bridge towards next year's completely standards-based reporting.

Grade reports have included a detailed course summary with specific reference to the AERO standards within the curriculum for each subject area. The individual reports also carry teacher comments and reflections as the evaluation and assessment of the student's efforts and accomplishments. In reporting student progress there continues to be a performance scale: AE (approaching expectations), ME (meeting expectations), EE (exceeding expectations), and NE (not yet within expectations).

Director Sharon Sperry requested the teachers to include statements of the Habits of Mind in the final General Comments section of the report card. BAES students are not only to become academically accomplished, but are also to become insightful, creative, and persevering individuals who can positively negotiate relationships and situations through these positive Habits of Mind.

During the First Trimester, the EBOLA virus seemed a serious threat to more West African nations than simply the three nations overwhelmed by illness and death. Visitors, new arrivals to The Gambia, airline availability and routes, and health advice (such as to avoid shaking hands) all changed seemingly overnight. BAES felt the impact. Students who were expected to arrive did not move back to The Gambia. However, now at nearly 6 months beyond that time, The Gambia has not had one known case of Ebola.

The final total enrollment for Grade One was 13 students, 6 girls and 7 boys.

The final total enrollment for Grade Two was 2 students, 2 girls.

The final total enrollment for Grade Three was 9 students, 2 boys and 7 girls.

The final total enrollment for Grade Four was 5 students, 2 boys and 3 girls.

The final total enrollment for Grade Five was 6 students, 4 boys and 2 girls.

Amanie Alisha Ayoub arrived to BAES as a volunteer and was placed in the First Grade classroom, however she is available for any other classroom's needs as well.

During the second trimester the Primary Grades appreciated the renovated open media center. No longer was computer class in a cramped room with ricocheting voices, but was now part of the beloved library.

Writing Across the Curriculum is a standards-based policy at BAES and in the Primary Grades. For example, science and social studies activities are appropriate and important opportunities to be studying reading, writing, and mathematics. At its best inquiry-based work, project work, student-led questions-asked and pursued are the classroom agenda.

Portfolios, large colorful three ring binders with plastic inserts and dividers, were given to the classroom teacher for each student. The ASCD Teaching Excellence website states that portfolios allow students to "become highly engaged in their own learning through the steps of selection and reflection." The student can (with this visual and physical volume of collected work and personal consideration and assessment) take ownership and responsibility for her or his learning.

The director led a service-learning afternoon devoted to understanding the benefits and management of portfolios.

As each report period ended the portfolios were shared at the teacher-parent conferences. Students lead the final parent conference (with teachers outside the room) using their portfolio as a display to discuss and reflect on their year's academic progress.

A decision was made, encouraged by both the director and some parents, for teachers to recognize students' work and behavioral performance by honoring them through a Student of the Month award. This includes Grade Four through the Middle School grades. The younger primary students are recognized weekly through a POW (Person of the Week award) and a WOW (Work of the Week award).

Many special events have taken place for BAES primary students. A literacy six-week period was devoted to opportunities to read, read, read, to listen to well-known authors, to hear stories from other African nations, to listen to stories told in students' first languages, and to parade with a favorite book handmade sandwich poster board. A morning author's tea was held outdoors and under the trees at tablecloth covered round tables in which parents could visit with students while listening to a student read their own written work.

Holiday events have been spectacular. Primary students fully engage at these events with their families. Art classes contribute heavily to every production with themed and delightful and creative displays.

Halloween (through coordination of the PTO and with the school campus as the setting) gave the students an energetic and fanciful program of games, treasure hunts, and a haunted house.

The Holiday Winter and Christmas concert was held in the domed Ebunjan Theatre. The productions were remarkably choreographed for all ages to participate and enjoy. It was artistically staged and included intermission musical ensembles. Each BAES music class prepared for this culminating 2014 song and dance theatre production. The early childhood and primary grade musical performance was a highlight, as was the main musical presentation with students from Grades Four through the upper grades.

Additional special activities included an all Saturday Easter event held on the campus and a family-movie night. A Winter Bazaar brought local artisans together and Santa Claus. Families attended, purchased Christmas gifts and ate good food while sharing time with other families.

For the first time in over a decade the well-known woman fondly known as the Chimp Lady of The Gambia, Janis Carter, spent a couple of days at BAES explaining her work and the lives of

chimpanzees. To provide support for her mission all classrooms held a fundraiser, each one different from the others. First Grade made candles out of seashells to sell, Second and Third Grade held a profitable used book fair, and Fourth and Fifth Graders held a popular afternoon of games and good food. Each class was able to contribute these funds to the rehabilitation of chimpanzees in The Gambia.

The middle school students put on a Shakespearean play for all to attend one evening. Fourth and fifth grade students auditioned and were selected as a few characters in the play.

Monthly morning assemblies highlight one class or specials class each month. This has included each of the primary grades being on stage with an intriguing presentation.

As the school year moves towards closure Math and Science Day gives students the opportunity to show off their scientific and technical activities to families. A Friday series of competitive football matches with the French school was especially exciting for those who played and watched.

The Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grade students dug, tilled, and planted a garden. They sell produce to BAES families. The proceeds go to the Village Project, a middle-school work activity in which BAES students took a three-day bus trip to the rural Gambian community of Dubong Kunda to build (along with community members) a recycled-material classroom out of plastic water bottles.

The First Grade classroom (and the Kindergarten class) went on a field trip to BEECAUSE, a local NGO with the mission of training rural farmers to keep bees. The Second and Third Grade Classroom's field trip is to the beach where they will do clean-up work. This aligns with their Social Studies and Science work studying many aspects of oceans. The Fourth and Fifth Grade classroom's field trip is to a solar-powered organization, something that these students have studied in great detail.

Newly available to BAES students is a hot lunch served by Gida's Garden Restaurant.

It has been a good year for the Primary Grades at the Banjul American Embassy School.

Primary Team 2014-2015

**ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015
BAES Middle School Team**

For the BAES middle school team, the 2014-2015 year was one of structural change and growth. We returned to a true middle school format by returning the fifth grade to the primary program, thus allowing the sixth graders to become one class, while the seventh and eighth graders comprised the older class of the middle school. This was a highly successful transition, which has allowed all of the middle school students to coalesce into a collaborative working group. Additionally, due to the new primary building, the middle school now has its own section of the campus, allowing teachers to keep an eye on the students all of the time, as well as allowing for the particular needs of the adolescent learners to be addressed. The proximity of each of the middle school core teachers to one another has also increased the amount of cross disciplinary collaboration during the week. For example, this year the middle school assembly was a debate between students and parents. Each core subject teacher helped the students prepare for this through research guidance, writing help, and assistance with oral skills.

We decided to change our schedule to accommodate the unique needs of the middle school child as well. We now have a ten minute advisory period every day during which students meet with their homeroom teachers to discuss school announcements, events, social and peer issues. This time has become an important touchstone for our middle school students—a chance to begin the day knowing that they have a safe place to discuss their concerns. Another beneficial change this year was our switch to block scheduling. Now all core courses and specials, except PE, have at least one ninety minute block each week. Humanities, a new course which combines Literature, Language Arts, and Social Studies, makes use of two 180 minute blocks during the week. These longer blocks of time make it easier for teachers to design lessons which include project based learning, cooperative group activities, and extended research using our new in class laptop computers. Core subject teachers also have more time during the 90 minute blocks to integrate the writing process into their lessons and use a writing workshop model.

The 2014-2015 school year meant the return of a Student Council to BAES. The Student Council has grown into a dynamic group who have planned and executed a Valentine's Day Dance and several spirit days. In addition, in January BAES began awarding a Student of the Month award to a student from grades 5-9 who embodies the BAES mission in body, mind, and spirit. BAES instituted an Honor Roll to recognize students each term who achieve a 3.5 average grade or above for all of their classes. Finally, the middle school with the support and involvement of our stakeholders, including the Director, the Board, our Kindergarten teacher, and the PTO, expanded the existing community service program into a Service Learning Project which was part of the Term 2 unit plans for Humanities, Math, and Science. The end result was that the students helped build a classroom for a village school located 100 miles east of Banjul out of recycled water bottles filled with plastic bags. In the process the students learned about Mandinka village life, language, and how the Mandinka interact with their environment. BAES plans to keep developing and expanding the Service Learning Program.

Middle School Team 2014-2015

**ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015
The Media Center**

The Media Center Highlights 2014/15

- Students experienced information literacy instruction and research guidance through IT teacher/librarian & classroom teachers collaboration on 18 research projects, impacting 10 academic teams
- Students used differentiated online sources as a result of the faster internet speeds and broader bandwidth of our newly installed wireless to access reliable websites supporting all collaborative research projects
- Students accessed fiction and nonfiction eBooks for recreational reading and to meet curricular needs due to improved internet access
- Use of online databases continued to grow
- Student visits increased 20% from previous year with about 50% of whole class visits focusing on instruction and research
- Newly installed wireless service is capable of transmitting 18Mbps both ways providing wireless service all over campus compared to previous 512K transmission

**Information Literacy Instruction and Research
Classes by Grade – 2014/15**

Collaboration with the librarian, IT teacher and classroom teachers resulted in 19 class blocks of information literacy instruction and research during 2014/15.

- Information literacy instruction and research was experienced most frequently by grade 6-8 students (45%)
- Information literacy instruction and research is provided to grades K-3 at least twice a week and grade 4-5 at least 3 times a week.

2014/15 Action Items:

- Initiate additional collaboration with grade 6 - 8 teachers, encouraging research projects that are conducted in the library and /or use all formats of authoritative sources

Use of Online Databases

Online databases support differentiated instruction

Grolier Online

Kids Bits

Destiny (Library system)

IXL

Scholastic SRI and Reading Counts

Computer Lab Setup

The computer/digital lab used to be contained in a small room with very little leg and elbow room up until November 2014. A major structural change occurred over the holiday in December 2014 to create the current new setup BAES now calls the Media Center. With a newly resurfaced floor, painted walls, the Media Center at BAES now enjoys a lot of space. There are two sections, one dedicated to Library/AV and the other to the computer lab. The Media center houses 13 desktops, each connected to UPS, 4 laptops, and 4 printers. All computers are fully

networked and share resources on a dedicated server. Our newly installed wireless service is capable of transmitting 18Mbps both ways providing wireless service all over campus.

The students and staff at BAES truly enjoy the improved facility which is reflected in the increased visits of different subject teachers signing up for the media center to conduct research or work on assignments.

In addition to the computers in the media center, BAES received thirty new laptops which were distributed to classrooms and specials such as Art, Science lab, and French. Five new LCD projectors were also added to further enhance our digital inventory.

Dianne Zemichael Library

During the past five years, the library has undergone many transformations. In 2010, the Library moved to a larger space in the new school building. At the time, the library had an estimated number of 3000 volumes of Fiction, Non-Fiction, and Easy Reader books, most of which were hard covers. The library was fully computerized and the books were cataloged using the Destiny Server library system. Last year, a little over 2000 fiction and non-fiction books were donated to the library from overseas sources. These books were a mix of both paper and hard cover copies. This increased the total volume of books in the library to over 5000 books. In order to process this large influx of books, many parents volunteered to help with the organization of the books. Since then, the library has continued to undergo many changes. Due to the passing away of Diane Zemichael, a Director who was instrumental in improving the BAES library, the library was formally dedicated to her in May of 2014. It is now called the Zemichael Library, in memory of her dedication to the library. This year, under the guidance of the new Director Sharon Sperry, the library has undergone yet another transition. It has been transformed into a Multi-Media Center, which is in the process of being equipped with the latest multi-media equipment. The library was extended in order to accommodate the computer lab. As a result, this has allowed students to have access to both the library and the computers at the same time. This not only enriches our students' learning capacity, but also helps to enhance and broaden the scope of information that they will have available to them while using the Media Center. Together with the computer lab, students are able to search for authors of interest, research topics that they might be working on in class, and utilize the books in more meaningful ways. The library has also recently been equipped with up-to-date student-friendly magazine articles that the school has subscribed to, and which students are able to check out through our computerized system. Parents are also welcome to check out these magazines from the library, as is also the case with the books. In addition new books have been ordered for the 2015-2016 school year through the Follett System. Many of these books will support much of the curriculum work that is ongoing in the classrooms. Students, teachers and parents are excited about all the changes that have occurred in the library during the past year.

**ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015
French K-8**

The goal of the French program at BAES is to build communicative skills in the French language, working toward Intermediate level proficiency. Additional program goals include:

- Supporting academic content area instruction
- Enhancing literacy development in French
- Promoting global awareness and cross-cultural understanding by holding an annual French Day

In the current program, elementary and middle school students learn French using the AERO standard based program for world languages. The goal of the program is to build communicative skills in the target language while making cross-curricula connections. Standard based unit plans are gradually posted online in the BAES curriculum, Dropbox. Every student in all grade levels gets portfolio items showing student and teacher reflection on selected pieces of work for each term. Students receive 45 minutes of daily instruction in French in an immersion setting. The number of weekly class increases with the grade level from 2 weekly classes in Kindergarten to daily classes in middle school.

The French program at BAES continues to be updated and enhanced with best practice strategies. There is more integration with technology and making great use of the internet to help in the learning process. To make this a successful practice, each grade has scheduled French classes in the multimedia center. The research and practice of the language continue in the classroom with the new in class laptop computer purchased this year.

This year has seen weekly meetings set aside for teachers not only for the planning of our school accreditation but also for a better communication between teachers and more cross disciplinary work. For example, middle school students wrote an essay in French about their Service Learning project using the past tenses they had learnt.

Finally, the French room moved to a more spacious air-conditioned room which is conducive to learning. The room is decorated with the students' art work and writing completed in the French language.



**ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015
ART K - HS**

During the 2014-2015 school year specialized art lessons were introduced from Kindergarten to grade 9 opposed to just specialized art lessons for the Middle School .

We moving towards more visibility of the AERO standards in planning and communication art unit plans are based on and include the AERO standards. We developed a different report system which now includes written comments for every child for art. In the art report card comments student's achievements are evaluated based on the AERO standards. The introduction of art portfolio's has proven to be successful showing the growth students have made in art over the course of the school year.

The art room moved to a bigger room with space for a reading corner which also serves as projecting area where new artists and art can be introduced in a comfortable setting with high visibility for every child. The new laptops and projector make accessibility and visibility for reference material much easier. Students have enjoyed being able to interpret works of art that were projected.

BAES celebrated one of its first art auctions. Each student from K to 9 contributed an artwork and all the classes submitted a collaborative piece of art. This event provided students with the opportunity to display their creativity and skill to the wider school community The evening took place at Ngala Lodge and was a great success. We promoted the BAES art program and managed to generate money to enhance BAES's art program with more reference material in the form of two IPAD's.

The students got to know Gambian artist Njogu Touray and his work for the community on their field trip to Mr. Touray's studio.

Where possible, art projects are integrated with other subjects such as Music, IT, LA, Math, etc, especially while working on StopMotion Movies with grades 4-9. It has been a challenging and very productive art year.



**ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015
MUSIC K - HS**

Weekly music classes for Middle and High School were added this year, creating the following schedule:

Tuesday – Grades 2/3 and 4/5 combined

Wednesday – Grades 6, 7/8, and 9 combined

Thursday – Kindy and Grade 1 combined

Following the *Music K to 8* program, as well as supplementary music resources, students worked toward AERO standards for music, designed in three tiers, to be met at the end of Grade 2, Grade 5, and Grade 8.

In addition to weekly class activities, students performed periodically at assemblies, the holiday concert in December, and the spring talent show.



The holiday concert at the Ebunjan Theater involved the entire student body, with the primary musical, “Ruby the Singing Reindeer”, and the middle school musical, “Bibbity Bobbady Boo”, as well as individual instrumental performances by several BAES students. Ticket proceeds were donated to *Doctors Without Borders* for Ebola relief efforts.

Integrating with Language Arts, some impromptu drama exercises were conducted during music class to support the Shakespeare production.

Assistance was also given in music to some of the talent show performances, such as the “Gummy Bear Dance” routine.

An after school choir session was also conducted, with a performance scheduled during the graduation ceremony.

More African drums were purchased for music class, bringing the total number to seven, which has also enhanced the after school drumming activities.



**ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015
Physical Education PreK - HS**

In 2014 BAES began use the Spark curriculum for physical education PreK through Middle School. The Spark curriculum is a research-based program designed to be inclusive, fun challenging and to build each year on the foundation of the previous year. Spark is not a one size fits all approach. The curriculum provides teachers a wide variety of instructional themes, assessment tools and teaching strategies. Differentiation opportunities are also provided. As our BAES students move from year to year they will build on skills learned from the previous year. It is interesting to note that Spark was originally developed through San Diego State University and funded by the Heart, Blood and Lung Institute. Spark is aligned with the NASPE standards.

Some interesting facts about the Middle School Program:

- Project M-SPAN (today's SPARK Middle School Physical Education Program) remains the only MS PE program available that has been proven to significantly increase student MVPA.
- The Centers for Disease Control considers SPARK the ONLY "evidence-based" MS PE program available in the U.S.
- In 2005, a study commissioned by the Cooper Institute assessed the effectiveness of dozens of physical education/physical activity programs. SPARK MS PE received the highest "Gold" ranking. The only MS PE program in the U.S. that earned this honor.

It will be interesting and exciting to watch our students grow and learn developing agility, strength, and skills in a wide range of activities as we become more familiar with the program.

