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Volume 9

Issue 2

Mission Statement

The Banjul American Embassy School is an international community providing a high quality, accredited American-Style education for students. In partnership with our community, we empower students to become enthusiastic, creative, lifelong learners who value integrity, cultural diversity and global responsibility.

Open House: Many thanks to everyone who attended Open House, we hope you learned a lot. Please remember you can make an appointment at any time with your child's teachers.

Middle School Retreat: Like many international schools we began the year with our middle school students by holding a two-day off campus retreat. Thanks so much to Ocean Bay for hosting this event. The purpose of this two-day event was multi-faceted:

- Provide last years grade 5's and new students a chance to fully assimilate
- Review Behavior Code and student handbook
- Elect the student council
- Give students a chance to get to know their teachers outside the school setting
- Set goals for the year
- Discuss bullying
- Discuss pastoral care
- Have some fun

Middle School can be a very stressful time as children's bodies undergo many physical and emotional changes. Giving our students a safe and relaxing environment to discuss critical issues helps to set the tone for the year. Thanks Mrs. Morrill, Ms. Amal, Mr. Jain, Ms Leen, Mme Joof and Mr. Wright for ensuring a great retreat for our BAES Middle School Students!!!!

First Full Week: What a great week it was. I saw so much teaching and learning going on.

After School Activities: After School Activities will begin October 5th and run for six weeks. After school activities are for students K-9. There is no cost for these activities as it is covered under student activity fees. We encourage parents to offer an activity... is there something you are passionate about: salsa dancing, cross stitch, a language, if you enjoy it chances are our students will too. For a small school such as ours we offer a wide range of activities, we are always interested in offering more, but to do so we need your help. After school activities end at 4:15, students picked up after 4:30 will be charged the late fee of D500 for every 15 minutes or portion of. We must have at least four students interested to offer an activity. Please.... parents let your students choose what they want to do because after they have chosen they have to stay with that activity for six weeks so it needs to be their choice. Also please remember 8:00-3:15 is a full day and for some K's or even grade 1's it might be best to wait until the second trimester before enrolling them in an activity. We continue to try and find a ballet teacher so if anyone knows one please let Madame Joof know.

One-Way: Please remember that the student gate road is one way. I ask everyone to please remind your drivers. We do everything possible to keep you and your children safe and we

really want to prevent a road accident on the dirt road by the student gate, slow down.... One way.

Lice: We had several cases of lice last year, so please if your child does have lice do not send them to school until they have been treated.

Fever or Sick Students: Please remember students must be fever free for 24 hours before you send them back to school. If your child is sick and running a fever please do not send them back to school until they have been fever free for twenty-four hours. In small classes like ours the germs just keep going around.

Are you going to be away? Even with older students if you are going out of the country or even if you are going up-country for a few days. PLEASE let your child's teacher know so that we can take extra care. We also need to know who is in charge of your child and we need to have the correct phone numbers.

PTO: The PTO would like to get as many people involved in the PTO so they will hold an evening meeting on September 15, 2015 @7:00pm. This meeting will be at my house. If you are coming from traffic light and heading toward Marouns Supermarket, I am located on the dirt road on the left across and just a tiny way before the Elton station. There is a big white apartment block with red trim being built on the road. Second black gate on the left. Time 7:00pm.

Have a great weekend!
Sharon

And Now a Word from the Teachers

Pre-K 1 & 2

We had a great week in Pre-K! We practiced our routines. We are learning how to greet friends and teachers. Also, we have been practicing how to share things and how to take turns. Walking in a line is a new challenge for some of us, but we are getting the hang of it. Our first unit is "All about Me." With this as our focus, we began learning all of our favorite colors, our favorite foods, and some things we like to do with our families. We have been learning the names of colors, and patterns of colors, too. We have started to count numbers of dots on dice, and also small objects as beads, toys, and cubes. Children began exploring the wonders of nature by planting basil behind our class. I am teaching them about our sense of smell and touch through this activity, as well as teaching them how plants grow and change in the earth. I am also teaching them how to be gentle with plants, and to be good stewards of the earth.

Our little group of ten has started to become like a family. Ms. Awa is as usual a huge help in the class—we couldn't learn as well without her! I look forward to getting to know children and parents better as the year progresses.

Kindergarten

Hello everyone!

Welcome/welcome back to BAES! You may have noticed that I'm "moving up in the world": just like some of my students from last year, I have graduated to Kindergarten! We

have gotten off to a great start, but we're not yet running at full steam as we're still missing almost half of our class. Hopefully in the coming weeks the roster will start to fill out and we'll be ready to roll.

In these first couple of weeks we have been working to set up our classroom routines and getting to know each other. We're off to a great start with our first math unit, Position and Sorting, focusing thus far on using the words inside, outside, above (or over), on and under to describe the location of objects. We have begun the pre-assessment segment of our Land of the Letter People (reading and language arts) curriculum and the students are familiarizing themselves with some of the RLA resources available in the classroom. Once our class size is a little more robust we will begin our Foss Science Kit unit on Fabric. I heard great things about the Foss Kits from my colleagues last year, so I am very excited to have the opportunity to use them with students this year. I think we're in for a lot of fun!

I'm looking forward to us all having a great year!

Thanks for reading,
Ms. Jen

Grade 1

Welcome families to an exciting new school year! I am excited to have moved up to Grade one! I am enjoying teaching familiar faces, but also welcoming two new students to our classroom. Grade one students are off to a running start. So far we have tackled getting to know each other, daily routines and expectations, finding out literacy groups, introducing our new math centers, starting a new science unit on paper and wood, and so much more!

I hope that everyone enjoyed Open House and gained a more detailed look into what grade one will be learning this year. I love to have open communication with all parents, so feel free to stop and talk with me before or after school.
Cheers to a great 2015-2016 school year!!

Maggie Savage
Grade One

Grade2/3

Grade 2/3 is the BIGGEST class at BAES! How exciting! With three more friends to join us soon, we will reach 17! Our large class size will allow us to have even better discussions, with different points of view. Although we often work in small groups, when we see final presentations, we will have more opportunities to be inspired. This week, we have finished individual assessments of reading abilities and will begin work in our literature circles using our Guided Readers. We have already conducted several fascinating science experiments about water and are learning routines in our new Everyday Math program that will allow us to function smoothly throughout the year. Most importantly, we have a new "Garden of Good Manners" display and a behavior chart that will help us all to stay on track. Here's to a wonderful year in Grade 2/3!

GRADE 4/5

A lovely and lively group we have and for now all members are actively engaged and appear happy to be here and to be learning!

The boys are vastly outnumbered this year but are being very dignified about it. Many students are very excited about the book we are reading, Number the Stars, which concerns a ten year old Danish girl confronted with German occupation of her country and who has a Jewish friend of her age. We are learning about Germany's occupation of Denmark and neighboring European countries and how some ordinary people were active in Resistance movements. Students are asking pertinent questions and some are making relevant contributions about their own experiences of difficult times or of personal loss.

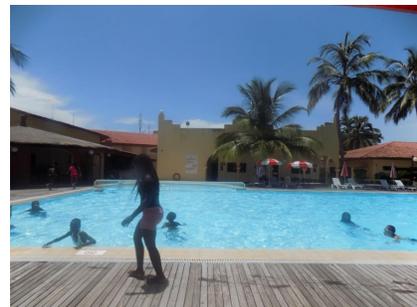
After their first written piece of work, students have begun to review or learn about sentence structure and some basic grammar: subject, direct and indirect object. All are now comfortable with these terms and we have touched upon verbs transitive and intransitive, as well as verb tenses.

We have had to spend some time intensely practicing the multiplication tables of 2-3-4, even though some students know them. We have used quizzes, rote learning, and especially games to reinforce them, as well as short equations and division, to help solidify the tables. We have looked at whole and decimal numbers and seen that they can also be represented as fractions or percentages.

In science we have begun a FOSS unit on nutrition and many students appear concerned, interested and engaged. We will be bringing in 2 guest speakers, Mrs. McKay and Mrs. Greathouse in the near future, so that they may share their expertise in nutrition. Seaweed is the current snack in vogue!

Middle School

After a two- day Middle School retreat last week, we are off and running! We know our learning styles better, we know our classmates a bit more, and we know the school rules and policies. A new Student Council for the year was elected, too. So far, Estelle (President), IK (Vice President), Daire (Treasurer), and Georges-William (Secretary) have done a fine job of helping out our new students and setting the tone for the year. In Homerooms this week, students brainstormed and discussed expectations for behavior and came up with the Essential Agreements for the year. Some of them are: "We will not leave anyone out" and "We will show respect to others, including their personal space and their property."



Humanities

The Eighth and Ninth grade class is reading George Orwell's novel *Animal Farm* and discovering the allegorical connections with the Russian Revolution. Students are coming up with other, more modern allegorical parallels as well. The elements of literature that students have learned about so far are author's point of view and satire. This group is industrious! They have already presented written work on political systems (socialism, communism,

totalitarianism and democracy) and written mini-biographies on Stalin, Lenin, Trotsky, and Marx.

The Sixth and Seventh grade class has been reading individual choice novels from our new class readers with common themes related to the plight of Asian- Americans during the 20th Century. Each student is reading a different novel and analyzing the elements of fiction in it. We share the literary elements of our separate novels in class discussions. Several students have finished one novel and moved on to another! In Grammar, we began with a review of the parts of speech and clause structures in sentences. We reviewed the conditionals and subordinate clauses and subordinating conjunctions. Our key vocabulary is from our geographical area of focus, South Asia. Students presented research on crucial geographic features of the region, such as the Khyber Pass and the Hindu Kush mountain range. We learned that one of our students has a parent who has walked through the Khyber Pass. All in all, we have had a full and productive two weeks.

Grades 6-9 Mathematics

It is a pleasure to teach your child and I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Amal Abou-Alfa. I've been teaching at BAES for many years. I'm the Grade 8-9 homeroom teacher and teach Math to grades 6 through HS. I also teach computer literacy to grades K-9.

Math has always been a challenge for many students. But with the right approach and attitude, they can begin to appreciate the importance of mathematics in today's world. Students in math classes are encouraged to show all their work to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the methodology and concepts covered. All students can be successful in math if we work collaboratively to assist and inspire students to help them see and appreciate the math in their daily lives, in potential careers and in the natural environment. My aim is to instill and inspire that culture of appreciation with your help.

Students usually enter the middle grades with computational facility with whole numbers, and varying degrees of mastery of fractions and decimals. The first strand we started to tackle this term is Number Sense & Operations for grades 6-7. Whilst the students in grade 6-7 are working on number operations and properties, the students in 8th & 9th grade have been learning more about variables, their use in transforming English phrases into mathematical expressions as well as using the order of operations to simplify expressions.

It is a pleasure to be part of a team that will help your child grow and become a successful learner. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at aalfa.baes@qanet.gm or the school to assist you in any way we can.

Science

GRADE 6/7: Physical Science

Today, a literate citizen is expected to know more than how to read, write, and do simple arithmetic. Today, literacy includes knowing how to analyze problems, ask critical questions, and explain events. A literate citizen must also be able to apply scientific knowledge and processes to new situations. BAES science allows the students to practice these skills by placing the study of science in a meaningful context.

Grade 6/7 students will be studying the nature of science to develop the attitudes and skills necessary for the successful study of science. Students become scientists as they observe and question events in their world. As they are taken step-by-step through the scientific method of

problem-solving, students begin to understand that in practice these “steps” may not occur in such orderly fashion.

Before setting out to explore the world of science, including its methods and tools, students must be made aware of the safety rules involved. From here they are taught the metric system and methods of measurement as well as an in-depth introduction to the concepts of mass, volume, and density.

Finally, the students become familiar with the basic tools of the laboratory through illustrations, discussion, and activities, and will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the scientific methods, variables, research and gather information, and draw conclusions.

Students working in groups of two or three will construct a concept map. This provides students with a format for sharing their ideas, negotiating the meaning of specific concepts and adding to the meaning presented in the research finding. Also experience that they bring to the lesson are emphasized and integrated into the concepts being developed. This will help the students to share experience in cooperating and sharing, and this provides me with the opportunity to guide and participate in their learning process.

Grade 8/9 students will begin an in-depth study of sound and light with a look at the nature of waves, how they are related to energy, and the difference between mechanical and electromagnetic waves. The characteristics of waves are explored as well as the different types of waves. Students discover how frequency and wavelength are related to wave speed, how to calculate the speed of a wave, and how various mediums can affect speed. They then go on to investigate basic wave interactions.

Electromagnetic waves will be covered in depth, and regions of the electromagnetic spectrum will be identified, along with the uses of electromagnetic waves at different frequencies. Students will discover how luminous objects produce light and investigate the question of whether light is a particle, a wave, or both.

They will be working in cooperative groups. This will help to contribute in improving their achievement and understanding of subject.

French

Bienvenue dans la salle de français!

In the French room, we are busy looking at our first units, the rubrics and assessments that will be used. Students are also placing their first work in their portfolio as well as their goals for the academic year.

In the Middle School, students have a short video done in which they talk about themselves. In February and later in May, the same topic will be repeated and recorded. By doing so, student progress and confidence will be shown. I am glad to see returning students and also new ones working cooperatively to be able to achieve our first common goal: speak in French!

In the Elementary school, students are also welcoming each other as they gradually come to BAES. It is great to see so many new students, each bringing an addition to our French sessions. Cooperative learning habits are essential as students learn more from each other as they try to express themselves in French.

At BAES, students and teachers are off to a great academic year particularly in *La salle de français*

Madame Joof French K-9

PE

We are starting the year with an array of exciting yet fitness-building activities across the school guided by the SPARKPE curriculum. This has been a new experience for many. Pre-K and Kindy are beginning to learn how to respect personal space and how to move safely within a general space accompanied by some workout musical CD's.

Elementary school is just getting started with ball handling skills: dribbling and trapping, catching and throwing and a regular 10 minutes fitness workout using stations. Middle and High School are taking the bull by the horns with a 25 to 30 minutes fitness session involving a 10-lap perimeter move and aerobics while assessing their output using fitness log entries.

ART



This month all the students have been working hard on finding out and expressing who they are as an artist. We have been trying to answer the question the question; "What is art?". In grades K-3 we used the book "Art" by Patrick McDonnell to introduce the topic while the higher grades were presented a multitude of picture of which they had to decide whether they were art or not. This resulted in some interesting discussions! The students were encouraged to express themselves and show who they are as artists.

In the next few weeks all students will be taking their pre-assessment tests for art.

We will also start our unit on our Mystery Artist. We will be using our Mystery Artist's art as an inspiration for our next art projects.



Important Dates

September 12th
September 15th
September 23rd
September 25th
September 25th
October 5th
October 12th-15th
October 13th
October 19th-30th
October 22nd-25th
October 30th
October 30th

Set Setal
PTO Meeting 7:00pm
Possibly Tabaski
Kindergarten assembly
Board Meeting
After School Activities
Writing exams(internal)
PD Noon Dismissal
MAP Testing (external)
Long weekend
Grade 1 Assembly
Board Meeting