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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.

Drop off and Pick Up: For the safety of everyone, please park when dropping off and picking up students. Do not just stop in the road in front of the gate and let students off. We remind students to walk behind the bollards.

Hats and water bottles: Please send your child with a hat and water bottle every day. We do not have plastic cups we give out if someone forgets their water bottle. The heat is really brutal and we do not want to be responsible for someone getting skin cancer 10-20 years down the road. I once had someone tell me in Sierra Leone that Africans do not get skin cancer. However the skin cancer organization tells us:

MONA GOHARA, MD, AND MARITZA PEREZ, MD

“Caucasians are the primary victims of skin cancer. However, everyone, regardless of skin color, can fall prey to it. Unfortunately, many patients and even some physicians are under the impression that non-Caucasian people are immune to this disease. That is one reason people of color are diagnosed with skin cancer at later stages. These delays mean that skin cancers are often advanced and potentially fatal, whereas most skin cancers are curable if caught and treated in a timely manner. Tragically, this is what happened to legendary reggae musician Bob Marley: What was dismissed as a soccer injury under his toenail turned out to be an aggressive form of melanoma that ultimately caused his death at 36. Mr. Marley’s story reminds us why both medical providers and the public need to be educated about skin cancer and skin of color.”

Tobaski: The 24th was declared a holiday in recognition of Tobaski (Eid Al-Adha) according to the Islamic Council. The 25th was a declared a national holiday by President Jammeh. Also just an FYI it is the day autumn begins in the USA and also the day Yom Kippur begins.

Library: It was very disappointing that no one showed up for library training last Friday. We had such dedicated parents last year. We have about 80 brand new books to be scanned into the system. They cannot be checked out by your children until they are. Amal is willing to train parents at 10:00 on a Friday.

“Best Practices in Education” Conference: On November 21st BAES will be presenting and hosting an education conference. This is a first for BAES and an exciting event. We are asking Peace Corps Education volunteers to identify to teachers they are working with that they believe will benefit from this very hands on conference. In addition to our faculty (who will all present) we will be hosting almost 30 PCV’s and 60+ Gambian counterparts. Unlike in the USA and other parts of the world where you pay to go to a conference in The Gambia because teachers make so very little we need to support them with transport and per diem help. This is an amazing opportunity for our faculty to practice the “teachers, teaching teachers model”, it is a wonderful way to give back to our community, and will be “capacity building” in the truest sense of the word. I believe so strongly in the opportunities that this will present for BAES and the larger community I am prepared to make a personal monetary commitment of \$500. I am hoping that all BAES parents and/or their organizations will also be willing to make a contribution as small or as large as you feel able so that we can ensure a great conference.. The office will be collecting donations.

Major Activities: This year I have asked the PTO to tone down the number and size of events. This is an accreditation year and it will be very demanding on all of us. Activities will be done on a smaller scale and most of the events will be for BAES students only. Please when we say the BAES Learning Community only it means BAES students and siblings, please do not ask, "Can cousins come, can I bring a friend?" I will have to say no.

Accreditation:

As parents you are paying for your child/ren to attend the only fully accredited school in The Gambia. We are spending two years working on our self-study and in April a team of four people will come and look at all aspects of BAES. They will then write a 100 page plus report. Here is what the MSA (Middle States Association of School and Colleges says about accreditation:

What Is Accreditation

Since the turn of the 20th century, accreditation has had a major impact on American education, with Middle States Association among the pioneers in the field. Today it is a concept that few people understand and yet one from which many could benefit.

At its inception, accreditation responded to the public demand for improved quality and greater accountability for schools serving society's needs. The U.S. Department of Education- describes approved accrediting organizations such as Middle States as a "reliable authority as to the quality of education." Accreditation is an external, objective validation of school quality and student achievement that fosters continuous school improvement.

Profile of A Middle States-Accredited Institution:

- Adheres to the Middle States Standards for Accreditation;
- Uses its mission, beliefs, and goals as the basis for daily decision-making;
- Operates in the public interest and in accordance with ethical practice;
- Accepts responsibility for the level of performance of its students;
- Remains committed to continuous improvement in student learning and to its capacity to produce the levels of learning desired and expected by its community;
- Operates in a collegial and collaborative way with all of its stakeholders;
- Sustains its focus on implementing recommendations, addressing monitoring issues and correcting stipulations that may be part of its notification of accreditation and
- Fulfills its maintenance requirements to the Commission.

This year as we prepare for the visit by the end of April, we will be writing volumes and insuring that we have evidence to prove that we are doing what we say we are doing. This will be our third re-accreditation visit. This holds all of us accountable to standards. We want to be ready, prepared and focused at the same time ensuring we are delivering a quality education to your children. So although the number and scale of the activities may be a bit smaller than in previous years, I am excited to be working with a committed and dedicated PTO. I hope all of you will help with several of the activities that are planned as they do provide a great time for your children. THANKS PTO!!!!

Have a great weekend!!

A Letter from the BAES Board

Dear Parents,

As many of you will know, during the 2013/4 academic year, the board undertook a personnel search to replace Raymond Lemoine, the previous BAES Director. We were fortunate enough to find Sharon and Sharon signed on in preparation for the 2014/5 academic year on a two year contract with the option to extend. As such, her current contract expires at the end of this academic year, 2015/6.

During this last year, the school has made significant progress across a number of areas; from infrastructure development and security, to policy coherence and curriculum strengthening. We must be thankful to Sharon for her leadership, persistence and drive in achieving so much in such a short period. Further, we have an important year ahead with accreditation which will require further efforts from all of us in driving for excellence in standards at the school for the benefit of our children. I have no doubt that Sharon will continue to be a significant driver of change over the next year.

It is therefore with sadness that in my capacity as acting Board Chair, I announce that Sharon has decided not to extend her contract beyond the current academic year 2015/6. She will complete this academic year recently started, but come September 2016, we will need to have her replacement in place. I understand that she has a number of personal issues that are pulling her back to Maine and not a reflection of how we may have misbehaved as a board, faculty or parents (I hope). As such, an additional board duty this year will be to drive the recruitment of her replacement to continue the good work that has been completed last year that will continue this. The active participation of parents in the governance structures of the school in order to ensure continuity and cohesion for our students cannot be emphasized enough.

Of course, we are not saying goodbye just yet - still a long year ahead of us - just ensuring clear communication to parents on this issue which affects school life.

Regards
Rupert Leighton
Acting Board Chair



Important Dates

September 24 & 25 th	Tobaski (<i>Eid Al Adha</i>) & national holiday
September 25 th	Board Meeting
October 2 nd	Kindergarten assembly
October 5 th	After School Activities
October 12 th -15 th	Writing exams(internal)
October 13 th	PD Noon Dismissal
October 19 th -30 th	MAP Testing (external)
October 22 nd -25 th	Long weekend
October 30 th	Grade 1 Assembly
October 30 th	Board Meeting
November 9 th	Last Monday after school
November 19 th	Last Thursday after school
November 20	Grade 2/3 Assembly
November 20 th	Board Meeting
November 21 st	“Best Practices in Education”