



# BAES Buzz

September 9, 2016

Volume 10

Issue 1

## **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.**

## **Message from the Director**

Dear BAES Community,

I'm pleased to present our first edition of *BAES Buzz* for the 2016-17 school year. In these first days of school, it's been a great joy for me to get to know all of our magnificent students from pre-K through high school, and to observe dynamic, meaningful learning activities facilitated by our splendid teachers of all subjects and grade levels. By now you have had the opportunity to meet our teachers at Open House and learn about the phenomenal educational programs your children are engaged in.

We are proud to continue many of the wonderful traditions that were initiated by BAES teachers and directors in the past, and also to introduce new traditions this year as we continue moving BAES forward.

In this issue you will read about old and new BAES traditions and events that we have already enjoyed or that will take place soon, including our Middle and High School Retreat, the BAES Community BBQ, and Friday Celebrations of Learning. Of course, the *BAES Buzz* is itself a school tradition that I am proud to continue. This year the *BAES Buzz* will come out on the second and fourth Friday of every month. I will also be sending you communications via email, and I invite you to contact me at [BAESDirector@gmail.com](mailto:BAESDirector@gmail.com) any time you need to communicate with me.

Thank you all for helping to make BAES a dynamic and welcoming community of learners.

Caleb Steindam, Director



## Clothing Policy

We no longer have a mandatory uniform policy this year. It is wonderful to see many students continue to proudly wear their BAES shirts to school, but you are also welcome to wear any other appropriate clothing you choose.

Here are some suggestions for good choices of clothing for our weather and school environment:

- Protect yourself from the sun. Cover your shoulders, bring a hat for outside times, and put on sunscreen.
- In rainy season, bring a rain coat or umbrella just in case.
- Wear close-toed shoes to protect your feet.
- Shorts or skirts should go past your fingers when you stand straight with arms at your sides.
- Please make sure your stomach is covered.
- Wear clothing that is comfortable and durable for a variety of activities.



BAES students get plenty of exercise and fun in outdoor PE classes!

### Celebrations of Learning

Celebrations of Learning are a new BAES tradition we are very excited to be introducing this year. As soon as we have the canopy installed to provide shade to the basketball court—which we expect to happen by the week of September 26—Celebrations of Learning will happen every Friday to close out the week, with the whole school community invited. Celebrations of Learning will be authentic demonstrations of students' efforts, interests, personalities, and abilities. Families should not feel obligated to attend every time, but it will be a treat if you are able to attend when your own child is presenting.

The first Celebration of Learning open to the whole school community will be next Friday, September 16th, under the Embassy tent (which we will also use the following day for the Community BBQ!). Middle School will lead the Celebration, which will include the inauguration of BAES's 2016-17 Student Council!

Ms. York integrates technology into her instruction during this 4th and 5th grade English Language Arts lesson.



### Student Council

BAES students will once again be represented by a Student Council this year. All Middle and High School Students are eligible to run for Student Council Positions, and there will also be representatives from the 4th and 5th grade class. The Student Council plays many important roles as it represents the rest of the student body as it helps guide decisions of the director and teachers. Student Council also plans Spirit Days and other fun schoolwide events.

Today (Friday, September 9th), the whole school has gathered to hear about Student Council from the Middle and High School students themselves. Your Student Council will be formally introduced to the whole school community during next Friday's Celebration of Learning (see the "Celebration of Learning" article), and we will also include an announcement in the next issue of BAES Buzz, which you will receive on Friday, September 23rd.



Mrs. Sanyang's 2nd and 3rd graders learn about newspapers and write their own newspaper articles based on the book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.



BAES students express themselves in many creative ways in Ms. Leah's Art classes.

## Community BBQ

Mark your calendars! We will have a Community BBQ on Saturday, September 17th, from 12:00 to 2:30pm. All students and their families are invited to the BBQ for food, fun, and community-building.

The US Embassy is generously lending us their tent to provide us all with shade for this event. We are grateful to our incredible PTO for their help in planning the event and providing the hot dogs!

## MAP Testing



We will once again administer Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments this year for all students from Kindergarten through Grade 9. MAP is a widely recognized assessment system from the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) that is used in many schools throughout the US and the world. We assess Kindergarten through 5th grade in Math, Reading, and Language Arts, and 6th through 9th grade in Math, Reading, Language Arts, and Science.

These assessments will begin next Thursday, September 15th, and will be completed by Wednesday, September 28th. We have chosen to conduct the first rounds of assessments earlier than in previous years, because these tests are intended to generate baseline data about our students that we want to have as early as possible. Another round of the tests will be administered late in spring to see how our students have progressed over the course of the year.

MAP is an *adaptive* testing program, which means that the test adapts to the individual level of the student as they submit their answers on the computer. At BAES we appreciate that each student develops at their own distinct pace and that each has unique strengths to be nurtured and celebrated. The MAP test is a tool to help us identify the areas where our students need the most support so we can help every student reach their highest potential. MAP tests will be proctored by our dedicated and talented IT Coordinator, Ms. Amal.

We are still finalizing the testing schedule and will provide notice by email so you know at least a few days in advance of when your children will be taking the test. Here is the schedule for Thursday, September 15th, and Friday, September 16th:

**Thursday:**

1st and 2nd periods: 4th/5th Reading  
3rd and 4th periods: 2nd/3rd Reading

**Friday:**

1st and 2nd periods: 2nd/3rd Language Usage  
3rd and 4th periods: 4th/5th Language Usage

## Middle & High School Retreat

Continuing the tradition from last year, our Middle and High School kicked off their school year with a special time of community-building and learning with the Middle and High School Retreat, which we held at Ocean Bay Hotel & Resort on Monday, September 5th and Tuesday, September 6th.

The core Middle/High School teaching team of Ms. Amal Abou-Alfa (Math & IT, 8th-9th grade homeroom), Mr. Scott Hemsey (Humanities, 6th-7th grade homeroom), and Mr. Sang Jain (Science) was at the retreat with the middle and high school students for all activities throughout the two days. Mr. Diantrec Edward Badjie (French), Mr. Daniel Twum (Music), Ms. Leah Woldman (Art), Mr. Stephen Wright (PE), and Mr. Caleb Steindam (Director) also led activities at the retreat. Of course the students also took time to enjoy Ocean Bay's beautiful swimming pool and delicious food.

There were too many activities and way too much fun at the Retreat to include it all in this short article. To learn more, ask a Middle School or High School student to tell you all about it. And check out these great photos!



## Message from the PTO

The PTO welcomes all our new and returning students and families to an exciting school year. Before the end of the 15-16 school year, the PTO voted on this year's executive committee:

Co-chairs: Sandra Wang-Harris and Cassie Banna

Vice Chair: Sandra Amalfi

Secretary/Treasurer: Barbara Banda

Please feel free to contact any of us and introduce yourself to us if we don't already know you. We hope to meet most of the new families at the upcoming community barbecue.

Also, join us on Facebook under BAES PTO.

# BAES BIRTHDAYS SEPTEMBER 2016

### Students

Joelle (Grade 1) – September 2

Jessie (Grade 1) – September 3

Estelle-Erika (Grade 10) – September 8

Carlyon (Grade 5) – September 14

Nayan (Grade 2) – September 18

Oghenerukevwe (Ruke) (Grade 1) – September 20

George (PreK 1) – September 21

### Staff

Joseph Jarju (Security) – September 6

Leah John (Business Manager) – September 7

## Tobaski Holiday

It looks like this will be a long weekend! Word has reached us that Monday and Tuesday are expected to be public holidays for the celebration of Tobaski. BAES observes all of The Gambia's public holidays. We will use the phone tree to inform you when we have confirmation.