



## Dear Parents,

The last month has been particularly busy at AISB. It was a pleasure to see so many of you at the Halloween Carnival at the end of October.

Last week marked an important milestone for AISB. We had a visiting team of five educators from international schools in Africa come to visit. This marked the last stage in the re-accreditation process. Many international schools choose to be accredited by a recognized body from the US (or elsewhere) to ensure that high standards of all aspects of school operation are maintained and that there is a built in process of reflection and school improvement. The re-accreditation process started last year with the school community completing a variety of surveys to collect data. In addition to this, staff and some parents were involved in committee work to rate AISB on standards relating to all aspects of the school's operations including; governance, finance, curriculum, assessment, facilities and student life. The faculty, staff a group of parents and students wrote a lengthy report which included a variety of recommendations and four action plans (curriculum, math, language arts and assessment) to improve our programs. The complete report was sent to the re-accreditation body, Middle States Association (MSA).

During last week's visit the team met with teachers, parents, students and Board members as well as spending time observing classes. I am very pleased to inform you that the team is recommending to MSA that AISB should be re-accredited. They reinforced some major recommendations that we had already identified ourselves:

1. "The Board of Directors and administration invest time and energy in strategic planning in all aspects of the school: the education program and student performance; facilities and finance leverage."
2. "Although there is much evidence of effective teaching and learning throughout the school, the Validation Team recommends that curriculum development take priority over other Action Plans. Curriculum development should establish a shared understanding of curriculum in its broadest sense, provide a cohesive written document and articulate standards and benchmarks appropriate to the learning needs of AISB students."
3. The action plan for assessment be integrated into the action plan for curriculum development. It is essential that the school meet their stated objectives of :-
  - i. Developing a clearly defined admission policy;
  - ii. Develop a system for data collection to promote accurate analysis of student performance from summative assessments and to ensure sound decision making, and
  - iii. Develop a school wide assessment policy that requires the use of well-designed formative assessment practices to ensure student achievement is measured in multiple ways.

We will receive a full report from MSA with other recommendations in a few months time. When we receive this, I will share it with the AISB community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Calley Connelly and Randy Neen, the internal coordinators for the visit, for all the hard work and leadership that they provided during the self-study process and the visit. Many thanks to all the board members and parents who volunteered their time last week to meet with the visiting team. In the coming months I will share the action plans that the staff will be working on with you.

## My First 90 Days at AISB

In my first two months at AISB I invited staff, parents, board members and students to meet with me to share their thoughts about AISB. I had about 30 formal interviews and many more informal conversations where I explored the following questions.

### What do you value about the school?

- The sense of community
- Diversity
- The strong relationships between students and teachers
- Commitment of the teachers

“This is the best place I have been as a new kid.” 10th grade student.

“The people – students and staff, they are very kind to each other”. 11th grade student

### From the AISB Mission and Beliefs statement what do you understand to be the school's purpose?

- Holistic education
- Students should become independent life- long learners
- Develop responsible global citizens
- Student centered
- Celebrate and meet the needs of our diverse student body
- Challenge students in all aspects of their education

### What do you think could be improved and how?

- Curriculum development – ensure that it is well articulated vertically and horizontally
- Continue to develop differentiation skills
- More integration between subjects
- Ensure a good supply of quality learning materials
- Develop the learning support program
- Infrastructure: IT, outside areas, shade, secondary school lunch
- Tighten up admissions procedures
- Reaching out to the local community more and using this and our own diverse student body to greater effect
- Develop systems – systematic replacement of equipment, depreciation, admissions, buses, ordering etcetera.
- Develop a sense of community at the new campus
- Provide our support staff with more training

### How can I support you? (Question to teachers and staff)

- Provide guidance and leadership
- Spend time in the classroom

- Give feedback
- Ensure open communication
- Work collaboratively and help develop productive and positive teams
- Develop transparent systems

### What should I be focusing my attention on?

- Ironing out the kinks in the new building
- Have high expectations of students and teachers
- Treat everyone fairly and equitably
- Look for new sources of enrollments
- Open communication

The answers (the bullet points below the questions in bold) to the first two questions were remarkably consistent. It seems clear to me that the community has a clear sense of AISB as a community school and a school that is committed to educating the whole child and preparing them for life ahead – not just the next grade level.

The ideas of ways that AISB can be improved are largely consistent with my own observations and experiences since arriving here. They also are consistent with the re-accreditation self-study that was completed last year and the report we will receive in a few months time. Thank-you to all of you who shared your ideas with me so openly. I appreciate your honesty and look forward to working with you all to continue to improve AISB.

Best regards,  
Caroline Jacoby  
Director

### Working Bee to Assemble Playground Equipment



As many of you know, Henri Astrie, one of our parents, has been working very hard to assemble the new playground equipment. This is a very big project and a number of you have offered to help. As most of you will be coming to school on Friday (tomorrow) for parent teacher conferences, if you would like to combine this by offering some of your time to help Henri, please let me know. With some extra hands to help, we can hopefully install the equipment more quickly so that your children can enjoy.

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## COUNSELOR'S CORNER



### NO MORE HOMEWORK BATTLES

*Six Tips For Helping Kids Fall in Love With Learning By Dr. Charles Fay, 2001*

Battles over reading, writing, and arithmetic too often drive a wedge between parents and their kids. Many times these ongoing conflicts give youngsters a distaste for learning and send parents to bed at night wondering, "What are we doing wrong with this kid?"

The following tips are dedicated to creating happier homes, where children are free to fall in love with learning and parents no longer dread homework hassles:

#### **Tip #1: Each evening, set aside a time for family learning.**

This is a time for your children to do their homework and for you to model the value of learning by enjoying a book. The best way to create a love of learning in your kids is to show them how much you enjoy it.

#### **Tip #2: Avoid battles by offering choices.**

Research shows children are more likely to do their homework if they are given many small choices. For example:

*Would you rather do your homework right after school or wait until four o'clock? Are you going to do your homework in your room or at the kitchen table?*

*Are you going to do all your homework right now, or are you going to do half now and the rest after dinner?*

#### **Tip #3: Help only when your child really wants it.**

There is nothing that creates more homework battles than parents who "help" when help is not wanted. Try asking:

*Would you like some ideas on that, or would you like me to leave you alone?*

Your child's desire to do it alone is a very healthy sign of independence and responsibility.

#### **Tip #4: Spend most of your time noticing what they do well.**

DO NOT focus on what your child does wrong! Allow your child to get help in those areas from their teachers. Successful parents spend 99 percent of their energy noticing what their kids do well. They say things like:

- *Show me the very best letter you made today. You really worked hard on that!*
- *Look at that math problem. You got it right!*

#### **Tip #5: Help only as long as it's enjoyable for both of you.**

Too frequently, homework help turns into a homework battle. Smart parents back out of the helper role as soon as they sense conflict brewing. Try hugging your child and saying:

*I love you too much to help if it means we are going to argue. I know this is really hard. Good luck.*

#### **Tip #6: Help only as long as your child is doing most of the work.** Say the following to yourself over and over again: *This is my child's homework. Not mine!*

There is nothing more destructive than stealing the struggle of learning by doing too much for your child. Each time they achieve something difficult on their own, their self-esteem soars and they are better prepared for the real world. Give these Love and Logic® tips a try, and join thousands of parents who now have much happier, more responsible kids!

*Dr. Charles Fay is a nationally known speaker, parent, and school psychologist with The Love and Logic® Institute in Golden, Colo.*  
[www.loveandlogic.com](http://www.loveandlogic.com)

### **"AISB" has a New Name! - Kambé**



The school cat who never had a real name, (she was just referred to as AISB) has a new name. Many thanks to all of you who offered suggestions for her name. The office staff voted on all the

suggestions and the winner is.....

Mrs. Gregersen with her suggestion of, "Kambé"

"Often when I come to school in the morning the cat is happily sitting on the wall beside the maze outside kindergarten. Depending on the time I leave, it is often there in the evening too.

In Bambara people say "Kambé". See you! I have started saying it to the cat too. I suggest we call the cat, "Kambé" as we seem to leave it in school and find it faithfully there the next day!

## It Was A Long Night! - (The Middle School Kangaba Trip), by Annabelle G. Nshuti

The Middle School Student Council had organized a night-long trip to Kangaba for the middle school on Friday the 17th of September. Almost all of the middle school students were going, including Mr. Yattara, Mrs. Shabica, Ms. Freya, and Ms. Fury, so it was bound to be a good trip! We left around break time on Friday, using two school buses. After hustling and fighting over seats, we were on our way, but got into a slight confusion with a different Kangaba. We finally arrived at our destination at around 12:30pm.

After getting out of the bus, stretching, walking around, and gathering our stuff, we finally went to our tents; which were separated for boys and girls. The girls had a whole room to themselves, while the boys had four tents outside near the soccer field. We choose our beds, then had about two hours of free time. We were spread out around the camping site, and we played, swam, talked, and ate our lunch.

After the two hours had passed, Mr. Yattara and the teachers had organized two games that helped to get to know each other more, as we had lots of new students. The games were kind of redundant to the "old" students, but we still tried to have fun. Afterwards, we either had a choice to stay the camp and rest, hike, or cycle. Most people stayed at the camp, and only few hiked and cycled. But all choices were fun, especially cycling, as we went far beyond the camping site; eventually getting lost for an hour! But it was worth it!

Dinnertime was around 7, and after we had another three hours of free time; with most going back to the pool to have a last good swim. At around 10, we were all required to go back to our rooms, and get ready for bed; but we could still talk for another two hours. The girls' were still awake after midnight, talking, doing their hair, and listening to music. But we all woke up at around 6am, and packed up for the trip back to school. At around 8, we headed for breakfast, which was bread, jam and butter, and tea. Simple, but filling and delicious! We hung out, swam, played sport, and chatted until at around 10am, when we all went inside the bus to return back to AISB.

The thing about the trip that I enjoyed was that we all bonded through talking. I got to know everyone in my class better, and even some of the new students or students that I never bothered to know! For this in order to happen, I would like to thank the Middle School Student Council for organizing and supporting this trip; Mr. Yattara, Mrs. Shabica, Ms. Freya, and Ms. Fury for accompanying us; Mr. Neen and Ms. Jacoby for allowing and supporting the idea; and of course, the students who went! If can guarantee that if you ask any middle schooler if they want to go to Kangaba again, they'll say yes!

### Visiting Author



We are fortunate to have Stephen Davies, a children's author, visiting AISB later in the month. Stephen will be presenting to students and working with them during his visiting on Monday 28th and Tuesday 29th November. There will be a parent evening with Stephen on Monday 28th. Mark your calendars!

Salaam aleykum! My name is Stephen Davies and I am a children's author.

When I was younger I enjoyed reading adventure stories set in Africa – two of my favourites were *King Solomon's Mines* by Rider Haggard and *Sahara Adventure* by Willard Price. I dreamed of visiting Africa myself one day, and maybe even writing my own African adventure novel.

Those dreams came true. My family and I now live in Burkina Faso, where for the last five years I have been writing picture books, chapter books and young adult novels. A couple of my books – the *Goggle-Eyed Goats* and *Hacking Timbuktu* – are set in Mali.

I am grateful for the invitation to visit your school in Bamako later this month. I look forward to meeting you in the classroom and to working with you on your own story ideas!

# Help Your Child Achieve in Math

Compiled by Ms Calley Connelly, HS Math Teacher

<http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Math/mathachieve.html>

## Set high standards for your child in math.

Make sure your child is mathematically challenged and encourage his or her interest and pursuit of math. By the end of the 10th grade, your child should be expected to have studied algebra and geometry.

## Help children see that math is very much a part of everyday life.

From statistics in sports to the sale price of clothing, from the calories in food to the amount of gas needed to travel from one city to another, math is important to us every day. Help your child make these connections to math.

## Find ways to show that many jobs require math.

From the scientist to the doctor, from the plant manager to the newspaper salesman, from the computer programmer to the hardware store owner, many jobs require a strong foundation in math. Help your child see that math leads to many exciting career opportunities.

## Stimulate your child's interest in technology.

Encourage your child to use calculators and computers to further learning, not only social networking.

## Play games that help children develop decision-making and mental math skills.

There are many games, such as board games, that involve patterns and probability. Play games from your own family traditions such as counting games and games that keep score. Try schoolyard games such as jump rope, hopscotch, and jacks. Games require children to use strategies to make decisions, solve problems, and develop an understanding about numbers and how to use them (number sense) and computational skills.

## Positive attitudes about math will reinforce encouragement.

Your feelings will have an impact on how your children think about math and themselves as

mathematicians. Positive attitudes about math are important in encouraging your child to think mathematically. Don't fall into the "I wasn't good at math either" trap.



## Pico Fermi Bagel - A Math Guessing Game

*Taken from: Family Math by Jean Kerr Stenmark, Virginia Thompson, and Ruth Cossey.*

*Published by: Lawrence Hall of Science, 1986*

Try this math game with kids aged 8 and up. After playing a few times, you will all have developed some strategies. Discuss your strategies, then play a few more times, and discuss again. Have fun!

### GAME INSTRUCTIONS: PICO, FERMI, BAGELS

Goal of the game: Guess the leader's secret 3-digit number.

Choose a leader; the leader picks a secret 3-digit number, whose digits are all different (for example 121, 442, 666 are not allowed). The leader writes the secret number on a slip of paper to refer to as the game progresses.

Players take turns making guesses; for each guess, the leader responds with the following clues:

BAGELS means none of the digits is correct

PICO means one of the digits is correct, but it is in the wrong place

FERMI means one of the digits is correct and in the correct place

Note that two or more correct digits requires several words:

"PICO PICO" means 2 digits are correct but neither is in the correct place.

"FERMI FERMI FERMI" means you have guessed the secret number.

Choose a new leader and play again.

**Brain buster: What do Pico, Fermi, and Bagel mean?**



## Sun Safety, by Ms Cissé Sissoko, AISB Nurse

Welcome to my Wellness Center!. This month's topic is about Safety in the Sun.

The sun and heat in Mali can sometimes be extremely dangerous; this can cause rapid dehydration and sunburn. Since children spend a lot of time outside, they need to be protected from the sun's rays, no matter how old they are. By teaching your children Sun Sense while they are young, you will be both protecting them now, and reducing their risk of developing skin cancer in the future.

Ultraviolet (UV) rays pass through air and clouds and penetrate the skin. When our skin has been exposed to too many of these rays, we get what is known as sunburn

Some people get sunburned faster than others because of their coloring. If you have light-colored skin, you will tend to get sunburned more quickly than someone with dark skin, because you have less melanin. Melanin is a chemical in the skin that protects it from sun damage by reflecting and absorbing UV rays. People with darker skin have more melanin, but they can still get sunburn. It will just take a little longer.

Sunburn looks bad and feels worse. It can cause blisters on the skin and can lead to skin cancer.

Much of the sun exposure that causes skin damage occurs during childhood and adolescence. By the age of 15, many children have developed irreversible skin damage from exposure to the sun.

We don't need to hide from the sun completely to protect ourselves. But we should take the following precautions:

1. Always apply sunscreen with an SPF 15 or higher to your children at least 20 minutes before they go outside. Reapply often and don't forget their nose, ears, cheeks, necks and

tops of their feet. Apply before they go to school each day,

2. Let them wear a large T-Shirt and a hat especially during sport,
3. Don't use baby oil as a moisturizer before your child goes outside. The oil will make the effect of the sun stronger and could cause your child to burn faster,
4. Educate your children about the necessity to drink plenty of water as this will prevent dehydration,
5. Don't forget that our eyes need protection from ultraviolet rays, too. Always wear sunglasses in the bright sun, and make sure they have a label saying that they block UV rays.

Children get heat exhaustion when their bodies cannot cool themselves fast enough. A child with heat exhaustion might feel overheated, tired, and weak.

By practicing sun safety at home, parents and caregivers can help children stay healthy and appreciate the importance of sun protection throughout their life

Drinking water is an important part of staying healthy also, especially when it's hot outside. When we're sweating, we lose water that our body needs to work properly. And if we're playing a sport or running around in the sun, we lose even more water, because we sweat that much more.

### **So drink up and don't wait until you're thirsty.**

By the end of November until January, we will experience some changes in the weather. The alize wind blows cooler air with dust from the northeast keeping daytime temperature in the 30s (86°F). This is our cold season in Mali. Keep your children nose and skin moist to prevent nosebleed and skin damage.