



# AISB Strives to Fulfill Its New Mission



## From the Director

Dear AISB Community,

Last Tuesday night, the School Board of Directors passed the final version of the revised AISB Mission and Philosophy statement. The process of revising the school's mission and philosophy began last year. With the accreditation of our 10th-12th grades in late 2007 and the construction process we decided to undertake, there was one piece of the puzzle not yet being addressed. That piece was making sure we affirmed the type of school we are and should be, plus what we believe about education.

This past fall, the faculty produced a draft mission and philosophy statement based on AISB's former statement. This included the mission, philosophy, school beliefs and personal growth outcomes. From there, an ad-hoc committee was formed that reflected the larger school community. This group of stakeholders ranged from students, teachers, parents and board members. They surveyed all the families and produced a draft reflecting everyone's combined work. The ad-committee, facilitated by Ms. Lynn Robinson, presented their document to the Board Policy Committee the end of December. The policy committee recommended the final version to the full board last January. The full Board then had two readings and passed the revised Mission and Philosophy statement last Tuesday.

The complete document is three pages and will be Section One of the school board policy manual. Built of many parts, it includes a succinct statement that is our mission, a philosophy statement, school beliefs, and finally, Expected Student Personal Outcomes (EPGOs) and how we achieve them. The EPGOs are the character traits AISB strives to help our students develop while at AISB and keep as adults.

A school's mission statement affirms who we are as a school and what we strive to be. AISB's mission

statement is as follows: *The American International School of Bamako is committed to providing a challenging, enriching, English-language American-based educational program which encompasses holistic student development in a nurturing, student-centered, multi-cultural environment.*

Congratulations to the AISB community for its involvement in this important process. As an organization, we must now make sure we fulfill our new mission.

Sincerely,

David G. Henry,  
Director

## Favorite Book Character Parade Friday February 27th

Join us for the Elementary Favorite Book Character Parade on Friday February 27th at 7:45am.

## Performance



American Hip Hop group, the Vice Verse All Stars will be performing at AISB this Friday Feb 27 from 10:00 am till lunch (11:10 am) in the MPR.

Please be prompt (9:55am or a bit earlier) and realize that it will be a tight squeeze in the MPR.

## Board News

The AISB Board of Trustees met for a regular meeting on February 24, 2009. In addition to the passing of the revised Mission and Philosophy statement and the Finance Committee, Teachers' and Director's reports; several items were discussed and approved. All regular board meeting information is always available to the public in the office. Some of the highlights are as follows:

### Short Term Loan Approved on Sotuba Project

The board approved a short term loan for the foundation phases on the Sotuba project. This short term loan will bridge AISB between now and the final approval of long term financing while keeping the school on track with its construction timeline. Both the Facilities and Finance Committees presented information supporting the continued pursuit of the project and how funds will be paid back under various scenarios. The Finance Committee has developed a short term financial plan to pay off the approved loan.

### Admission Priority Policy Approved

The board approved a new Admission Priority policy that delineates how a waiting list would be formed and maintained.

### Draft Bilateral Agreement Approved

On behalf of AISB, the U.S. Embassy has drafted a bilateral agreement document that would help further define AISB's status here in Mali. AISB is a non-profit educational organization owned by the AISB association; the parents and professional staff at the school. AISB also has a state-side not-for-profit foundation dedicated to the benefit of the school and its needs. Both of these organizations would not change as a result of the signing of such an agreement.

### Non-American Board Position Opens and Board Elections in May

The AISB Board is made up of seven voting members, four Americans and three non-Americans. One non-American position opened up when Nico Barning resigned as a result of last Tuesday's meeting. He did not want the Sotuba project to be continued without assured financing for its full completion. The board will appoint an interested parent to this position for the last two meetings. Board elections will take place on May 12th for the next academic year. Many board members will be moving from Mali this year, please contact Rob van Doeselaar or David Henry if you are interested in serving now or in the future.

## Upcoming Events

February	Literacy Month
February 24	Regular School Board Meeting, 7pm, Library
Feb. 25	Progress Reports Go Home This Week
Feb. 27	Elem. Favorite Book Character Parade, 7:45am
Feb. 27	Vice-Verse All-Stars Hip-Hop Concert, 10am, MPR
Mar. 9	Mawloud Holiday - No School
Mar. 12-15	Gr. 7-8 Study Trip to Teriyabougou
Mar. 17-20	Francophone Week
Mar. 20-22	MS Soccer Tournament in Burkina Faso
Mar. 23-26	Science Fair Week
Mar. 27	End of 3rd Quarter
Mar. 28	PTO's International Festival
Apr. 4-13	Spring Break Holiday
Apr. 14	School Resumes

## AIR FRANCE



### PTO International Festival Raffle

This Year's Raffle Grand Prize is:

**A FREE TICKET FROM AIR  
FRANCE!  
BKO - USA - BKO**

Raffle Tickets Will be Available Soon

When: **INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL**

Where: **AISB's Main Campus**

## Secondary School Honor Roll

Congratulations to all the Secondary students on their academic success in the first semester. Below are the students that received Honor Roll recognition:

### Principal's Honor Roll (GPA 4.0)

Marc Loffel – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

### Honor Roll (GPA 3.50 to 3.99)

Olaf	Barning	6
Matthieu	Durand	6
Ame	Fall	8
Vincent	Follea	7
Danyka	Guay	8
Todd David Jr.	League	12
Nana	Maiga	9
Cloe	Mugabe	7
Nazirou	Munstege	8
Nicola	Newton	9
Jennifer	Provost	11
Katherine	Provost	10
Carla	Rattunde	6
Mico	Rudasingwa	8
Robyn	Some	9
Max	Weymann	7
Lucas	Zeller	8
Daniel	Zeller	10

### Honorable Mention (GPA 3.25-3.49)

Tijani	Gavian Marou	7
Yilong	Lui	7
Leah	Rattunde	9
Abdoul-Aziz	Saidou	10
Tristan	Some	6
Hadidiatou	Toure	9
Paul	Wennink	7

## Model UN trip to Ghana, by Urska Manners

On January 28-31, the High School Model United Nations team traveled to Accra, Ghana, to participate in the fifth annual Lincoln Community School Model United Nations (LCSMUN). Model United Nations is a conference where students gather and simulate the proceedings of the United Nations as delegates representing an assigned country. At the conference, they debate current issues and attempt to reach a resolution to global conflicts. Over 400 Model UN conferences occur world-wide each year and this is AISB's second year participating (last year's team traveled to Princeton, New Jersey).

A total of 13 international schools participated in the LCSMUN, including schools from Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso, as well as schools from as far away as Germany, Lebanon, and Mozambique. As one of the smallest schools to participate, AISB only sent three students: Indiana Diarra, Nana Maiga, and Daniel Zeller, who represented the countries of Egypt and Spain at the conference. Despite being newcomers to the Model UN scene, all three were active participants in their committees. The theme of this year's conference was the globalization of human rights through education in development, in honor of the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We look forward to learning from our experiences from this year and returning next year with a bigger and stronger team.

## From the ELC, by Dana Starkey

Kindergarten had a very festive 100 Day celebration. They not only impressed all of the Pre-K students by counting from 1 to 100, but also went and presented in front of the entire Elementary School.

This month Pre-K was busy participating in the Literacy Month activities. We made bookmarks, and wrote group stories, exchanged books in the book swap, pranced around in pajamas and introduced our favorite stuffed animals to each other. We also visited the Kindergarten class for reading buddies, re-organized our own library and mended our worn out books. A big thank you to all the parents who have been guest readers this month. The Pre-K students have loved the fresh faces and selection of books. We are also looking forward to participating in the upcoming Dr. Seuss celebrations.

## The French Connection, by Abdel Yattara

The AISB Department of French is pleased to announce that many of our Secondary School students are currently exchanging letters with young people in Mali and Canada. The French teachers of AISB have been looking for ways to open the door that separates classroom language learning from authentic use of the language in real life-situations. As the point of learning a (second) language is to interact and to communicate with people of a variety of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, we have been seeking ways to foster student contact with individuals from the local community and other parts of the world.

As a result, we initiated contact with École Liberté, the French International School of Bamako and Mulgrave School in Vancouver, Canada. Students from AISB were paired with students from the corresponding schools based on age and grade level, and the first letters have been exchanged. As the letters are written in French, our students benefit from the opportunity to practice their language skills.

Furthermore, during the Francophone Week (March 17-21, AISB students will be visiting their pen pals at École Liberté, where they will be immersed in French for the school day and will be engaged in various fun activities. We hope to continue to provide opportunities for our students to have such experiences.

## Thank you....



to the U.S. Embassy for helping with the roads in front of AISB.

## Valentine's Day Dinner, by TJ League

A special event took place on the night of February 14th this year. A Valentine's Dinner was held to raise money for the Student Council's new project: the school in Siby. Many of the Student Council members showed their enthusiasm and commitment by serving as waiters and waitresses, while others spent the evening in the MPR (our acting kitchen). The only individual who didn't fall into either of these categories was Jennifer Provost, who took the initiative to act as the restaurant manager and to organize what each person needed to accomplish in order to make the night run as smoothly as it did. The event was a success not only because of our Student Council, but also because of the wonderful people who came. Our thanks go to everyone who participated in this event. We appreciate your support and loving dedication.

As a collective body, the Student Council has seen a need for school supplies and other components of a good education at the school in Siby. When we were in the process of choosing the best fundraising project several ideas came to mind. However, the thought of our school helping another school came about, it stuck. We realized that this would be a good way to start building AISB into the greater educational community from a different approach that was student oriented. We may not be able to change the world, but we definitely won't hurt it.

Thank you once again to everyone who was involved with the Valentine's Dinner.

## March 2nd

Dr. Suess Birthday Celebration during Elementary Assembly.

Grades Pre-K through 2nd are performing Dr. Seuss poems to end Literacy Month.

## Grades 4 & 5 Siby Trip, by Joost Guttinger

After weeks of excitement and talking about the field trip, we finally left for our camping trip to Siby on Friday, February 13th. On the first day, students were involved in various group activities and games. In the morning they did a treasure hunt, life under the mango tree, basic first aid skills, and practiced rock climbing skills like tying knots, getting in, sitting, and hanging in a rock-climbing harness.

We visited the arch of Kamadjan in the afternoon. Students got their first experience of rock climbing on a site with easy climbing routes just behind the arch.

The last group activity was presenting a skit after dinner. Students worked throughout the day getting their skits ready. Groups could earn points if their skit met certain requirements, like having an animal name for the group, including a dance and a song, mentioning the names AISB and Ms. Mortelette, one character needed to be a mango tree, and much more. All skits were great to watch and all students did a great job presenting their group work.

On Saturday morning we packed up the tents, ate breakfast and left to go the rock climbing site. There were several easy to intermediate routes for the students to choose. After a first easy route most students started hitting the harder routes trying to make it all the way up.

Students and chaperons had a great time in Siby. Many thanks to the teachers and chaperons who helped making this trip such a great experience for our students.

### 4th & 5th Grades Field Trip to



### Mawloud & Prophet's Baptism Holiday Date Changes

Mawloud will be on Monday, March 6th. There will be no school on this day. The Prophet's Baptism falls on a Sunday, therefore, Monday March 15th will be a regular school day. Monday April 13th will now be a holiday. There will be no school on April 13th.

## Highlights from Literacy Month, by Rachel Strozeski

Many exciting things have been taking place during AISB's Literacy Month this year. We have continued with traditional events like the Spelling Bee, Guest Readers, and D.E.A.R. Day. On D.E.A.R. Day many of you saw us wearing pajamas and reading in or near the Continuous Reading Chair. New this year was a successful book swap run by our highly capable fifth graders. We also challenged ourselves to a Read-a-Thon - "Pilot the Pirogue Down the Niger River." Will we make it to the end of the Niger River? Come to our morning assembly on March 2 to find out!

### Spelling Bee Participants 2009

#### Grade 1

Andrew Cherif  
Jayden Da  
Mahmoud Nimaga  
Pauline Verstraeten

#### Grade 2

Madou N'diaye  
Malena Ramnath (\*K—2 Winner)  
Dane Tiffany (\*K-2 Runner-Up)  
Emma Senanu

#### Grade 3

Maja Erbs-Jorgensen  
Adam Gavian Marou  
Taila Senanu (\*3-5 Runner-Up)  
Charlotte Waslander

#### Grade 4

Sela Lutterbeck  
Rae Robinson Zeller (\*3-5 Winner)  
Jimmy Sana  
Hamed Traore

#### Grade 5

Simon Newton  
Annabelle N'shuti  
Maguiña Ramilo Henry  
Lexi Tiffany



## ESOL Is Cooking, by Susana Inadomi Gueye

Middle school ESOL students are involved in a 'hands on' English project. They are cooking! This project helps them to expand and practice their English, gain useful skills in cooking and also learn to plan, organize and realize a project.

It began with an idea for a cooking class and the students were challenged to figure out how to take the idea and make it happen. They made a list of what they wanted to cook and brought money to buy the ingredients. On the day of cooking they joined in to prepare the food and clean up. So far they have learned to make fruit salad and French fries! They are in agreement that the results are delicious and a great learning experience. Congratulations for taking initiative to make an idea come true. In the words of one of the students, it is a very good and delicious and smart idea.

## le Pays Dogon, by Allison Holsten

On the High School Field Trip to Dogon and Mopti, students took comprehensive “field notes.” Upon their return, all students were required to create a visual document that shared their personal thoughts and impressions. Here is one such example, written by senior Marc Löffel.

### Primitive? No, Pure

Desert sky  
 Dream beneath the desert sky  
 The rivers run but soon run dry  
 We need new dreams tonight

Desert rose  
 Dreamed I saw a desert rose  
 Dress torn in ribbons and in bows  
 Like a siren she calls to me

Sleep comes like a drug  
 In God's Country  
 Sad eyes, crooked crosses  
 In God's Country

Yeah...yeah...

Set me alight  
 We'll punch a hole right through the r  
 Everyday the dreamers die  
 See what's on the other side

(U2 In God's Country)



In a sense it feels like you're going back to Biblical times—a rare feeling in the contemporary epoch. You enter a world un-blighted by human induced modifications; one can enjoy the pure beauty of nature. In today's world where everything is centred on gaining more and more wealth with no respect to our environment it is easy to forget that everyone once began on the same page—living without outside influence. Every community had their own distinct traits and characteristics as well as their own view of the world. There was no effluence and we attempted to adjust to the environment rather than corner it until demolition. Over the past centuries humans have arrogantly begun to believe that they are mightier than nature, but we must not forget that nature is our spine and if wounded it can cause us major limitations in movement.

Entering *le pays Dogon* you get the sense of being drawn back to your origins. No cell phone coverage, no electricity, and no purchased means of entertainment—you are completely reliant on the environment. You rest when the sun goes down and wake when the first rays of light strike the cliff. Everyone in society has a distinct role, and everyone plays his or her part in running the cycle of village life. Dogon is one of the rare last places on this earth that hasn't completely been scarred by pop culture. How long will this last? Over centuries the Dogon have practiced their culture, but with tourists entering their space and surveying them one ponders to know how long they can maintain their uniqueness. We can easily see the infectious disease spread over to the younger generation, commencing the grappling process of wanting to explore the unknown—stepping out of a designated caste and building ones own status from nought. Dogon villages have already shifted down from the cliffs to the lower land, and in the process provoke the question. How long will the Dogon be able to encourage their younger cohorts to convey their customs and practices? With improving mass media and communication one must doubt they can sustain it for the long term. Once cell phone nets strike, little by little, with each SMS sent, an aspect of culture will fade with it. Primitive? No, Pure.