



THE ORYX

The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School

FROM THE DIRECTOR

A Tragedy

Last weekend the whole city was shocked by a tragic accident of which I am sure you are aware. I have written to Windhoek Gymnasium to offer them our sympathy and condolences.

We have also convened meetings every day this week to review our own policies and practices regarding school trips. A number of events will be happening imminently and parents are understandably concerned.

We are therefore inviting all parents to a meeting on **Wednesday 4th September** at 6pm in the auditorium. We will discuss our current precautions and welcome questions and suggestions.

The Future of WIS

The Board of Directors invited all parents to a meeting on 12th June to deliver an end-of-year report and start a conversation about our options as we contemplate the journey the school will take over the next few years.

On 19th June all parents were sent a 1500-word summary of the meeting. (If you would like another copy, please contact the School Office.) That summary concluded with the following.

Wednesday's meeting lasted a little over two hours. The presentation made by the Board was followed by (and sometimes punctuated by) many sensible and relevant questions and observations for which the Board is grateful.

However, even in this comparatively small sample of the parental body (certainly well under 10%) many different and sometimes opposing views were expressed.

This should not be unexpected. Diversity and heterogeneity are at the heart of what makes this school unique. We have students of fifty-odd nationalities, Namibians and visitors to this country, long-term residents and those on short-term contracts, those whose fees are paid by their employer and those who do not enjoy this benefit, those who pay full fees and those who pay a reduced rate. It should hardly be surprising that differing views of the future were expressed.

Even if those who spoke on Wednesday may not always have agreed, all have legitimate and understandable interests and priorities. And all have chosen this school and want it to be the best it can be for their children and at a price that is affordable.

At any point in time, it is the Board of Directors' responsibility to try to navigate a prudent and broadly acceptable path through these many different interests. Hard though it may be, the Board must try to find consensus.

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Dates to Remember

September 2019

- **03:** PYP Parent Workshop
- **04:** Group 4 Presentations
- **04:** Parent Meeting @18:00 in the Auditorium
- **16 - 18:** School Photo Day
- **19:** Inter schools Athletics
- **22:** Grade 9 Field-Trip Depart



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Teacher Feature

Rose Githinji
Secondary Science

What is your educational background?

I hold a Bachelor's degree in Education, majoring in Biology, and a Diploma in Education for Teachers and Trainers.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Central Kenya, also popularly known as Mount Kenya region. It is home to Mt. Kenya, the second highest mountain in Africa. The snow-capped mountain surprisingly, lies really close to the equator. This means that I got to enjoy warm temperatures throughout the year.

Where were you before Namibia?

I taught Biology in different high schools at home in Kenya for 16 years. I also did career counselling mainly for students going to university after their high school education.

In 2014 I moved to Rwanda, a small Central African country. Here I continued teaching Biology at both IGCSE and IB curriculums. I was also a Dean of Students.

What motivated you to be a teacher?

Teaching was not initially my choice career...

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And, to reiterate, that is the conversation that Wednesday's meeting was intended to start.

As a next step, all WIS parents are now being invited to complete a short survey. Previous surveys have asked parents' views about their satisfaction with aspects of the school and with priorities for future development.

This survey is different. It is trying to get to the very essence of why parents value an education at WIS. Why have they chosen this school? What is special about WIS that makes parents want their children to be here?

If you had to give a neighbour or friend just one reason why you have chosen WIS, what would it be?

We will give parents two weeks to complete the survey and preliminary results will be discussed at the Board meeting on 11th September. The full results will be analysed over the second half of September with a view to publishing them for parents early in October (provisionally 2nd October).

Similar surveys will be sent to staff, older students, and other stakeholders such as embassies.

The results of these surveys will then determine where the conversation goes from there but we are starting to prepare for a school-wide meeting on Saturday 16th November at which the Board will share its thinking with the community.

Thank you for helping us to decide how the school will develop over coming years.

Peter MacKenzie

PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

MAP Testing

Monday we will begin administering the MAP Measures (*Growth of Academic Progress*) tests. The purpose of these tests is to determine your child's instructional level and measure the growth in student learning over time. The results will provide teachers with information about what students are ready to learn now. Here's an overview of the testing timeline:

| Dates | Grades | Test |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|
| September 2-6 | Grades 3-5 | Language |
| September 9-13 | Grades 1-5 | Reading |
| September 16-20 | Grades 1-5 | Mathematics |



Your child's teacher will inform you of the specific days that the tests will be taking place for the Grade level.

Teacher Feature continued

After university I worked in a bank for three years. This just did not give me the job satisfaction I expected and so I resigned. While trying to figure out what to do, my parents who are both retired teachers encouraged me to try teaching. I did and got hooked! Today there is nothing else I would rather be doing than teaching.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Seeing students transform academically, socially and personally right in front of my eyes is just magical. Knowing that I played a part in that transformation is just beyond words. It is always a pleasure to encourage students and to push them to achieve more than they thought possible.

What important qualities do you think an international teacher should have?

Open minded, accommodating, flexible and able to adapt.

A little bit about your personal life and hobbies?

I have two grown boys. They are back home in Kenya.

I love nature and I'm passionate about environmental conservation. My idea of fun is hiking, camping out in the wild, mountain climbing and basically any activity around nature. There's something about chirping birds and trees swaying in the wind that I find soothing, even therapeutic.

Taking long walks is my best form of exercise.

Your personality?

I am often described as quiet and an introvert. Maybe I am. I am comfortable in my own company. That should not be taken to mean that I don't like being around people. Often the best part of my day is when I am in school interacting with students and colleagues.

Favourite educational motto?

A teacher takes a hand, opens a mind and touches a heart.

Many of the classes have already had practice sessions with the MAP tests enabling the children to familiarise themselves with the process and the kinds of questions that are asked. All classes will have had a practice session before taking their first test.

How can you help prepare your child for the test? As with any school day, it is important that your child is well-rested, eats breakfast and arrives at school by 7:20. Please encourage your child to do his/her best on the tests and not to rush. The tests aren't timed and finishing first does not mean the child is the best or has done well on the test.

The test results will be shared with parents during the assessment conferences that are taking place, Tuesday, 1 October and Wednesday, 2 October. The Grades 1-5 homeroom teachers and Learning Support/EAL teachers will be participating in a MAP workshop at the end of September where they will be learning how to get the most out of the data. A workshop about MAP is planned for parents, Thursday evening, 26 September. More specific details are forthcoming. For more information about MAP, here's a link to the [Parent Toolkit](#). *The Family Guide to MAP Growth*, found on this site, may be of particular interest.

Back to School Night

Thank you to all the parents and guardians who attended Tuesday's Back to School Night. The feedback from parents and teachers alike, about the change in format, has been quite positive. Here's the link to [the Back to School Night feedback form](#) should you wish to offer more specific feedback.

Regards,

Beth Smith

PYP Coordinator's message

This week I want to talk about our enhancements to the PYP Written Curriculum. As you know we have elaborated on our IB PYP Written Curriculum using the Australian curriculum. These benchmarks have been used to ensure the alignment of the **Mathematics** and **Language** scope and sequence across Primary and the school.



Below are the links of reference to the Australian Curriculum that we have incorporated into our IB PYP Written curriculum:

[Australian Mathematics: Sequence of achievement](#)

[Australian Language: Sequence of achievement](#)

[Australian Mathematics: Scope and sequence content](#)

[Australian Language: Scope and sequence content](#)

You will notice these references used in our development of the Grade level Overall Outcomes and Expectations on the classroom blogs. It has also been incorporated in our Mathematics and Language Scope and Sequence.

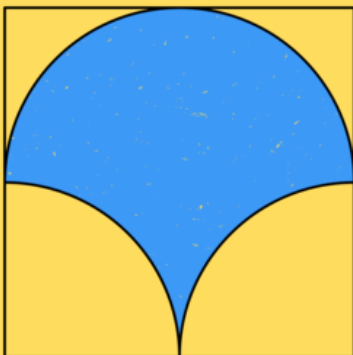
Michael Parsons (Director of Teaching and Learning) and I would like to invite you to attend next week's PYP Parent Workshop. We will further explain how the PYP Curriculum Framework and the Australian Curriculum have been merged to articulate our written curriculum.

WEEKLY PUZZLER

Tiancheng (Grade 7) solved last week's puzzler. Well done!

This week let's try some geometry.

The image below is a square containing three circular arcs with the same radius.



How does the area of the shaded region compare to the combined area of the unshaded regions? By the way, although this problem involves circular shapes it can be done without any knowledge of π

Please send solutions, or any fun and interesting puzzlers to pfarrell@wis.edu.na



Come and find out about what the new enhancements in the PYP are all about and have frequently asked questions answered.

Date: Tuesday, September 3rd, 2019

Time:

- Session option 1: 07:30 - 08:30
- Session option 2: 12:30 - 13:30 (you will only need to attend one session)

Venue: PLC Auditorium

Presenters: Michael Parsons (DT&L) & Avril van Zyl (PYP Coordinator)

[Sign up for a workshop HERE](#)

Avril van Zyl

From our PAD



Thank you to all the parents who were **PART** of **ART** at Back-to-School Night in the Art Room. You were awesome risk-takers.

Genie Albrecht

SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

Self-directed learning - SDL

A focus this year in all the new things that are happening in Secondary School is that we included SDL sessions in our schedule. It is important that students have a voice in their learning and that they learn to make sensible choices with regard to their learning. The SDL sessions on Fridays are a means to give students a voice and a choice.

Malcolm Knowles (1975) describes "self-directed learning" to be, "a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing

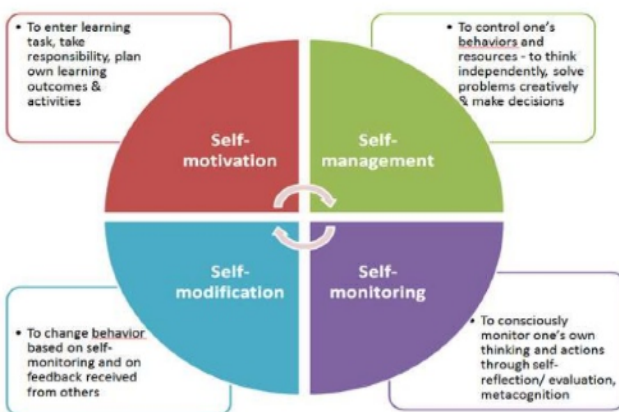
their **learning** needs, formulating their **learning** goals, identifying human and material resources for **learning**, choosing and implementing appropriate **learning** ...

Today we have our first “real” SDL sessions. Students have signed up for two sessions and planned what they will be doing during these sessions. Through the sign up sheet, teachers know who will be attending their session and what these students are planning to do in each session.

Teachers are the facilitators in these sessions, a “resource” students can use to learn. But the initiative for this process lies with the student. She/ He has to identify an area to work on and devise a plan on how to approach the session. Afterwards, the student should reflect on the process.

The sessions today might be chaotic. Students and teachers will have to work out how exactly they will spend the allocated time with each other. However, with practice and over time, these sessions should become a valuable part of the learning process and help students manage their learning, their time, available resources and themselves more effectively. The process will ensure that students are more actively engaged in their learning, which in return should result in a deeper learning experience for the student.

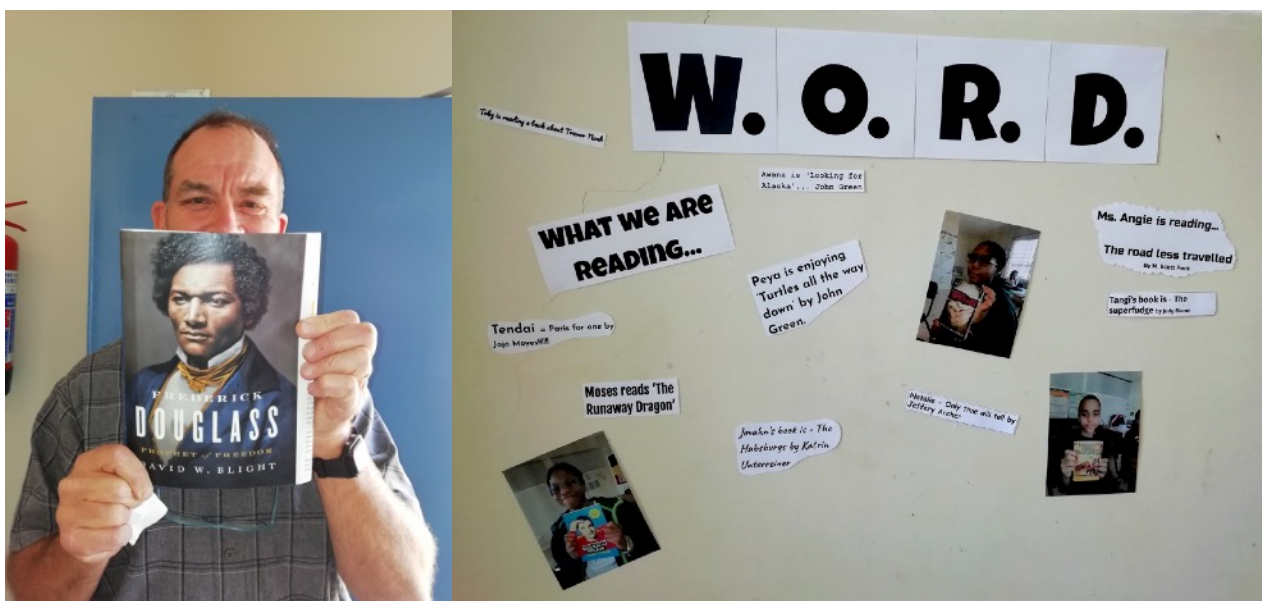
Self-directed Learning Model



Regards,
Maggie Reiff

W.O.R.D.

Guess who is also reading during our scheduled reading lessons...



Take part in an International **On-Line** Math Contest



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3 through 12
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Thank you to the Namibian community who continue to support the CHICA Trust. Spray A Thon 2019 raised N\$ 206 000.

During 2018 the CHICA Fund supported childhood cancer patients with N\$215,616. These amounts exclude the accommodation support at the House Acacia Interim Home and the CHICA Interim Home, as well as the construction costs to build the new wing at House Acacia.

The Cancer Association of Namibia value your efforts and commitment to assist child cancer patients in Namibia.

