



THE ORYX

The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Water

Work has already started to divide the school's water supply into four self-contained sections. A leak in one area, therefore, may be contained and should not inconvenience the rest of the campus.

Fire Drill

Yesterday we had our first fire drill of the school year. As always, our students assembled quickly and (mostly) quietly. We hope we will never have to evacuate the school for real but it is important that we know we can. Further drills will follow.

27th November

It has been announced that 27th November (a Wednesday) will be a public holiday. It is the day of general elections. The school will therefore be closed.

Strategic Plan Roadmap

In the first half of September WIS parents (and other stakeholders) will be invited to complete surveys asking what they value most about WIS. The results should be ready by the first week of October and will be presented to the community. Further input may then be requested from stakeholders prior to an open meeting of all interested parties in mid-November. All of this input will help the Board as it creates a Strategic Plan to take the school forward.

Peter MacKenzie

PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

Back to School Night - Tuesday, 27 August 17:00-19:00

This year the Primary Back to School Night will be taking a different format to be more of, "A day in the life of your child." Rather than sitting in the auditorium and the classrooms listening to presentations, you will have the opportunity to experience various aspects of your child's day. The evening is going to be interactive as you participate in a sampling of the kind of "stations" or centres that the children have been, or will be, introduced to this year. In so doing, it is hoped that you will have a better understanding of our approaches to teaching and learning. In addition, it will give you some insight into the types of activities that your child engages in during the day.



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Dates to Remember

August 2019

- **26:** Heroes Day: Public Holiday
- **27:** AA Start
- **27:** Back-to-School: Primary

September 2019

- **02:** PYP Workshop
- **04:** Group 4 Presentations
- **16 - 18:** School Photo Day
- **19:** Inter schools Athletics
- **22:** Grade 9 Field-Trip Depart



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Teacher Feature

Jeff Bonazzo
Secondary Science

What is your educational background?

- Bachelor of Education with a specialisation in Junior/Intermediate Mathematics and Science
- Bachelor of Science majoring in Mathematics
- Bachelor of Science majoring in Natural Science

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in a small city in northwestern Ontario, Canada called Thunder Bay. It is a beautiful place with wonderful summers filled with swimming and water skiing at the lake and freezing cold winters playing in the snow and ice.

Where were you before Namibia?

I left Canada on August 13th, 1997 to head to New Zealand where I lived for 14 years. I taught Intermediate School Mathematics and Food & BioTechnology at a few different schools and coached ice hockey with the New Zealand National Men's Team.

In 2011, I moved to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; where I lived for seven years. I taught Maths and Science at two different international schools and was a Middle School Principal for more than two years.

What motivated you to be a teacher?

In my first year at university, over our Christmas break we were invited back to our high school to talk with the students that were competing their final year about our experiences. I got to talking with a couple of my old teachers and my Maths teacher, Mr. Ellis, asked me why I hadn't considered going in to be a maths teacher. [Continues on page 3](#)

The teachers have created slide presentations with information, routines and expectations for the specific Grade level. These will be shared with you today. Included at the end of the presentation is information for where you can post your burning questions. Your questions will then be answered via a Frequently Asked Questions document that will be posted on the blog.

Here's the schedule for Tuesday evening:

17:00-18:00	EY1-Grade 2 Parents visit the homeroom
	Grades 3-5 Parents visit the specialist classrooms (Art, Drama, French/Portuguese, Library, Music, P.E., Learning Support/EAL)
18:00-19:00	EY1-Grade 2 Parents visit the specialist classrooms (Art, Drama, French/Portuguese, Library, Music, P.E., Learning Support/EAL)
	Grades 3-5 Parents visit the homeroom

A friendly reminder - the Back to School Night is only for parents/guardians. This evening is not the time to ask about the progress of your child. We will be having assessment conferences Tuesday afternoon 2 October and all day Wednesday, 3 October (No school for children). If you would like to know more about your child's progress between now and the assessment conferences, please make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher.

I hope you find the Back to School Night to be positive and informative. Your feedback following the event will be appreciated.

Regards,
Beth Smith

PYP Coordinator Message

This year is a focus on building better ways to communicate with you. We want you as parents and guardians to feel connected and part of your child's learning journey in the PYP.

Some changes to note to help make that happen include the adaptation to the classroom blogs. We have now added a tab section for curriculum and newsletters - so you can be better informed about our curriculum and programme. Uploaded currently to the curriculum tab is the: **WIS PYP Curriculum: Overall Outcomes and Expectations**. You can click on this tab to see the overall outcomes and expectations for each relevant Grade level and find out more about what your child will be learning. This will give you an overview of what your child will be learning and is expected to have an understanding of, by the end of this school year. Our curriculum is based on the PYP developmental continuum and our benchmarks provide the scope and sequence of concepts and skills for the particular Grade.



Teacher Feature continued

He said that in our class the year before, I taught more kids how to do Mathematics than he did! I was blown away at this because I respected him so much and enjoyed his classes and his teaching style. I went back to uni and changed majors as soon as I could.

What do you enjoy most about your job ? / What makes you passionate about your job?

Helping students find their passion and joy for education. I love showing children that yes, indeed they can learn Mathematics.

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

An open mind and open heart. An unequivocal belief that all students can learn and grow.

Can you tell us a little bit about your personal life?

I am recently married to a Vietnamese lady named Mint. She is the love of my life. We have a small dog with us now, named Ny, and he is the greatest joy in my life. No matter how hard a day I have, coming home to play with him brings a smile to my face.

Can you tell us a little bit about your hobbies?

I love travelling and food. Often these things go together. I have been lucky enough to have been to more than 60 countries on 5 continents! I am a sports nut. I love to play just about anything and am interested in playing touch, squash, tennis, basketball, volleyball and inline hockey while I am here in Namibia.

How would you describe your personality?

I think people may describe me as intense and serious when they first meet me. I think that is because I am not an overly smiley person. That's just the way I am. It doesn't mean I'm mad or not happy. It's just me. In time I think people get to see the real me: fun loving and joking and always up for a new experience, passionate about all I do.

What is your favourite educational motto that you use with students?

"Every kid needs a Champion." Rita Peirson. Watch her TEDTalk. Truer words have never been spoken.

It is our belief that students learn best through active inquiry and investigation. Our learning and teaching approach is concept-driven, striking a balance between the deeper understanding they need to develop and the skills the students need to know.

On a termly or six-weekly basis you will receive Unit PYP Newsletters from the Grade level and specialist teachers to inform you of your child's learning journey. I am looking forward to seeing you all at our back to school night on **August the 27th**. I will follow this with a PYP Parent workshop on **September the 3rd**.

Please feel free to come and see me at the Thursday morning PTA coffee morning if you have any questions or queries. I will be there from 07:20 am until 08:30 am. Looking forward to seeing you all.

Kind regards

Avril van Zyl

SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

Mindful of ourselves and our environment

In our new course in the Middle School - ATLi - Approaches to Life - our first session addresses Mindfulness and how we take care of ourselves and make the most of the opportunities we are given in life. We discussed how we can make sure we become the best ME we can possibly be and that we use the mistakes we make to learn.

As Denzel Washington says in [this clip](#), we need to make sure that we don't have the ghosts of missed opportunities stand next to our deathbed and have to leave with us, but that we make the most of all the opportunities we are given in life. If we fall, we should FALL FORWARD so that we can see what we are hitting.

In our daily lives we are often under pressure to perform, expectations are high and we need to find ways to be mindful of ourselves and our strengths. It helps to take a few minutes each day to centre yourself and focus on your own wellbeing so that you can make the most of the opportunities and chances that are coming your way. When you feel [under pressure](#), you should consciously embark on exercises that relax you and help you get through difficult situations.

Students in Grade 8 prepared a presentation showing "The Perfect ME" - how would that look like if I were to make the most of all the opportunities, talents, treasures and gifts I am given?

Here are a few Perfect MEs from our students:

- Zahra Ayoub (Image on right)
- [Franz Hangula](#)
- [Jordan Bester](#)
- [Sylvain Dia](#)



WEEKLY PUZZLER

Tiancheng (Grade 7) and Eden (Grade 4) started this year where they left off last year, as keen puzzle solvers. Well done! From the rather cryptic speech of Alice and Bob, they deduced that Bob must have the number 5.

This week we have something called a word-sum. In this word-sum, each letter stands for one of the digits 0-9, and stands for the same digit each time it appears. Different letters stand for different digits. No number starts with 0.

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{JMO} \\ \text{JMO} \\ + \text{JMO} \\ \hline \text{IMO} \end{array}$$

Find all the possible solutions of the word-sum shown above.

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



They then did a mindfulness exercise with the class. It was great to see the effort students put into these exercises and the reflections on the mindfulness session are interesting.



The Grade 8s will now start their next session on "Self Management".

On Thursday, 29 August 2019, we will have our first parent information session for this year. This session is intended as an information session for all parents in Secondary School. It will take parents through different Edmodo features that will be useful sources of information on your child's progress as well as a tool to communicate with teachers. In the session, we will also address our new schedule and the new, hopefully improved reporting procedures. We will be moving away from reports as they were in the past to a more current, informative reporting process that will involve students and parents in the reporting process.

*Regards,
Maggie Reiff*

PLEASE NOTE:
In last week's Oryx's we incorrectly dated The Secondary parent evening for 28 August, it should be 29 August.

NamBTS Blood Drive at WIS
28 August, from 8:30 to 14:00
WIS Auditorium Foyer

WIS SECONDARY PARENT INFO SESSION

**Thursday August 29
@WIS Staffroom
18:00 - 19:00**

- Edmodo - How to manage?
 - New Schedule
 - Reporting 2019-2020

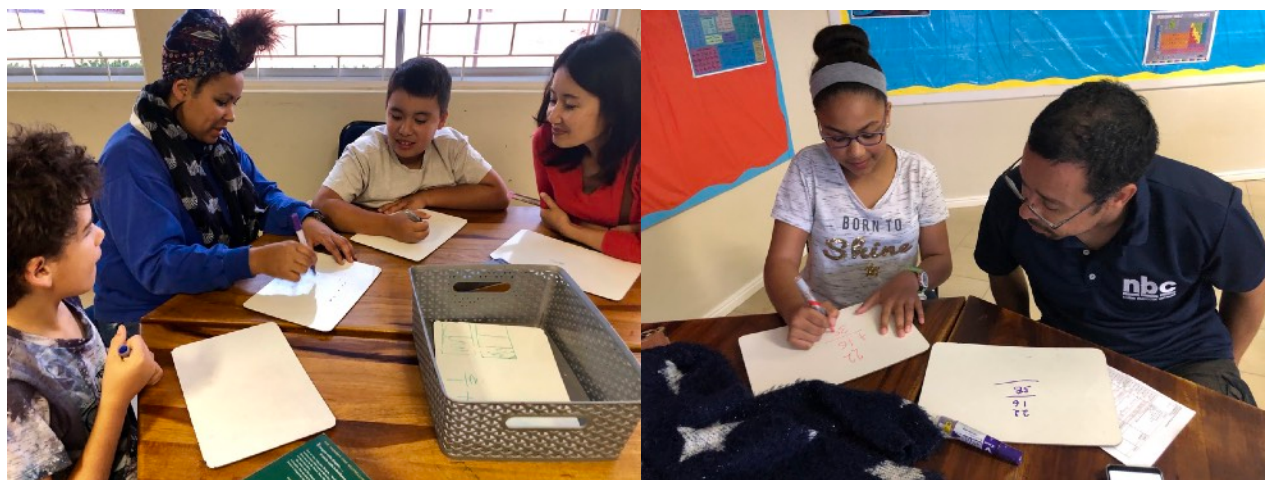
SNACKS WILL BE PROVIDED

W I S
WINDHOEK INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

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Back to School Fair 2019-2020

New new new! That's the buzz around WIS Secondary! Lots of new initiatives and energy are fuelling the start of this new school year. One of the new things to hit Secondary was the *Back to School* Fair hosted on Thursday evening. The night was a huge success. Over 120 parents, students and teachers attended the evening. The Auditorium was full and the vibe felt around the campus was one of community.

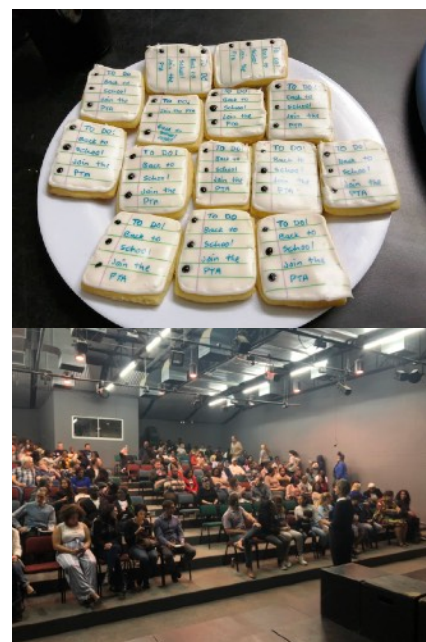


This evening would not have been so special without the wonderful group of Student Guides from the different homerooms. The student guides expertly led the parents of their homerooms around the campus and helped keep the teachers and parents on time! They did an amazing job - informing teachers and parents of the schedule, where to go next and helping parents see how the new schedule works. One parent commented on

how nice it was to witness the interactions between the students and teachers and how the teachers responded so openly to the students “reminding” them of the schedule.

The parents visited each of their child’s subject classrooms in the order of the new ABCDEFGH schedule rotation. Parents had an opportunity to meet all their child’s teachers, see the classroom environment, get some information on the teachers themselves, the courses and expectations. Parents got to see and feel the positive and encouraging atmosphere in the classrooms.

Teachers engaged parents in different class activities and it was great to see the students helping their parents complete some of the activities. In the sciences, Ms. Urte had a lively discussion on unit planning and encouraged parents to help develop the “Live Local, Think Global” section of our planners. Parents were excited to have the opportunity to contribute their own knowledge and expertise to help our learners connect to the real world.



Parent feedback was extremely positive. One parent wrote: *“The WIS impression was really really good. Major improvement! A lot of changes, almost felt like a new school. Teachers made a good impression, the open door for communication was amazing throughout. Everything, although very time limited, seemed personal. And I think tonight was proof that WIS is building up community again. We are all growing closer again. I also liked the teacher’s way of presenting. It felt like a team rather than the old traditional “from above”.*

I personally would like to thank the teachers for the willingness to try something new. Without such an effort the night would not have been such a success!

Finally, thank you to the PTA for helping us wrap up the evening with snacks and drinks. It truly was a community effort. Go African Fish Eagles!



Michael Parsons

News from the PTA

Welcome, to the PTA Minute,

We hope you and your families have had a great week! I am hearing lots of positive grunts from my kids after school.

We have had our first PTA meeting of the year and are hoping to have our first AGM on the 26th September. Sometimes (more frequently than less frequently these days), life has been making a habit of getting in the way. So we extend our apologies as the AGM (Annual General Meeting) should normally take place before 30 August. Since we are a new PTA we would like to be a little more organised on the first run through. We hope you will come and join us at the AGM (once it's scheduled).

On another note (but still this note), we have new hats and t-shirts on order (yay) and they should be arriving within the week (double yay!!). As soon as we unbox them we'll let you know, so you can buy them...all.

Due to an increase in production costs (boo), the new price of the school t-shirts has been increased to N\$150 per shirt.

We are beginning to organise our annual raffle and are seeking your assistance on securing some fantastic prizes. We would love to be offering some great prizes for some lucky families, however that can only happen with your help. Please contact the PTA on pta@wis.edu.na if you would like to donate a prize, no matter how large or small every gift is valuable, or if you know of a company we can approach we would be eternally grateful.

The PTA raffle is the largest fundraising event of the year and helps us to increase our ability to assist the WIS students, teachers and parents in their various activities and events. In the past we have used the funds to offer social and cultural events, sponsor sports kits, buy outdoor seating and shade net for the outdoor learning spaces, along with a host of other projects you have aided us in completing through this raffle.

We are looking for some of you parents to volunteer as Parent Class Representatives. Parent Class Representatives work with us (the PTA) in easing the transition of new families into the larger WIS community. PCRs also act as a liaison between teachers and parents when necessary to support functions and projects. Please think about whether you would like to volunteer to be a Parent Class Representative and help our wonderful community become even better.

We look forward to seeing and hearing from you soon, any morning, but especially on Thursdays during our weekly coffee mornings, at the PTA Community Centre.

Ok so that was more than a minute.

Enjoy the long weekend

Warmly The PTA

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