

HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

In January of 1984, a small group of American parents formed the Banjul American Embassy School (BAES) because of a desire to establish a school for their children with an American-based curriculum. Parents voted unanimously on the Articles of Association and By-laws in February 1984. The first director, John Kotula, and his wife, Marcella, were hired in April 1984 and the Director's Residence and School (Building A) were obtained in June.

September 10, John Kotula, Director

1984 Started with 30 students from 10 countries, five teachers, with combined classes K/1, 2/3/4, and 5/6/7 team teaching, Calvert system used, two computers, limited software, no official library or science lab; no French, PE, music or art.

January 1985 Ross Crowell, Interim Director

1985 – 88 Mike Adams, Director

63 students, PK-Gr. 8; French, art and PE offered

1986 Building B acquired. 1987 Music, included; generator donated

1988-91 John Higgs, Director

Computer teacher hired, acquired Building C and building across the street; begin Accreditation, and work on curriculum development, Accreditation granted in 1991

1991 – 94 Stephen Plisinski, Director

100 students, 15 faculty members; fewer combination classes; 10 Apple Mac computers

1994-96 Stephen O'Donnell, Director

July 1994 coup, enrollment drops to 37, USAID closes; BAES registered as private company limited

1996-2001 James Swetz, Director

Steady growth in enrollment, Jan. 1997 PK for 3 year-olds started. 1998 nursery class initiated;

a number of special events implemented, Internet capabilities, 80 students, re-accreditation begins

2001-2007 Earl Ballard, Director

Land acquired in Brusubi and plans for building a new school facility begin; fence and maintenance facility built; first two overseas hire teachers are hired to begin September 2004; mid-term Accreditation visit.

2007-2010 Dianne Zemichael, Director

Five overseas hire teachers; loan for building school researched and postponed due to funds; curriculum revision, consultants invited for curriculum and library;

new classroom furniture, library shelves, computers and computer furniture purchased along with upgraded textbooks and materials; numerous academic activity days and special events implemented; re-accreditation received 2009-2016.

- 2010-2012 Raymond Lemoine, Director
Community building - Introduction of weekly community (children and parents) assemblies which enabled us to celebrate our successes; implemented a comprehensive and sequential school wide conflict resolution and anti-bullying program (Safe & Caring School program); re-introduced and support PTO.
- 2014-2016 Sharon Sperry, Director
Completion of new primary building and \$85,000 in security upgrades; commitment to inquiry based learning and AERO Standards; introduction of Pastoral Care and morning and closing circles; moved the technology plan forward by adding 30 laptops, five LCD projectors, the first year and two Smartboards, 20 laptops, document cameras, iPads, four economical wireless printers and upgraded internet capabilities to the fastest available in the country the second year; implemented standard based report cards; initiated curriculum wall and unit plans based on AERO standards; re-accreditation visit spring 2016.
- 2016-2019 Caleb Steindam, Director
2016-2017 Gambian political impasse; name change (BAES to BAIS); Child Protection policy; Gambia Teachers Institutes (May 2017, Nov 2018, Apr 2019); security upgrades (gates, safe havens, CCTV); *Understanding by Design* curriculum framework; Atlas curriculum planning system; Celebration of Learning; Character Education; Monday morning announcements; Middle School overnight trips & retreats; community partnerships; Service Learning projects; Pre-K Afternoon Enrichment; BAIS Olympics; directed *Seussical Kids* musical.
- 2019-2022 Myna Anderson, Director
35th year anniversary of BAIS. Restart of MSA Accreditation plan, Eureka math program adopted and storage rooms cleaned out. Much more to come!