



# THE ORYX

*The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School*

## FROM THE BOD

### A Message from the Chairperson of the Board of Directors

Dear WIS community

Globally, 2020/2021 has been marked by turbulence and a change in our narrative to include words such as Covid-19 pandemic, lockdown, social distancing, virtual hugs and remote learning. We were forced to make big strides in keeping up with the "new normal" or be left behind. Unfortunately, the devastating effect on the social, emotional, educational, physical, and financial consequences of 2020/2021 will linger for quite some time.

Here at WIS, we faced many challenges in the past year, but thankfully we can look back at the 2020/2021 academic year with a sense of pride and accomplishment. We welcomed many new families and did not omit any school days due to our pro-active approach to remote learning. We learned from mistakes and continued to focus on the socio-emotional and academic growth of our students. The true heroes of the pandemic are not only the frontline workers, but also our children, teachers, and parents.

WIS is a Section 21, not for profit company, registered in Namibia and governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. During the first quarter of 2021, the Board has seen many new faces consisting of 11 voting members as well as 3 ex-officio members (Educational Director, Primary Principal and Secondary Principal). The Board also includes a member of staff and an American Embassy Representative, both with full voting rights. Board members serve two-year terms but may be re-elected or re-appointed.

The 2021 Board includes Members from Namibia, South Africa, Poland, USA and Zimbabwe. All voting members are WIS parents.

#### Directors

- Albun ARMSTRONG
- Belinda BRUWER (Chair)
- Vincent BRIDGENS
- John CHADYIWA (Vice-Chair)
- James DAMON (Treasurer)
- Tura MURDOCK (American Embassy)
- Vengesai MUZENDA
- Edmund NEL
- Beata STEPHANUS (Staff representative)
- Liezel SWART
- Charmaine van der WESTHUIZEN

## Contents

- From the BOD p. 1 - 3
- Primary News p. 3 - 5
- Secondary News p. 6 - 9

## Dates to Remember

### May 2021

- **04:** Cassinga Day - Public Holiday
- **13:** Ascension Day - Public Holiday
- **25:** Africa Day - Public Holiday

### June 2021

- **17:** End of term 4
- **18:** Staff work day

### August 2021

- **02 - 06:** Staff work week
- **09:** Start of New Year 2021-22



The Board's role is to develop policies, financial guidelines, and long-term strategic planning for the school. Leadership and management or operational-related issues are entrusted to the Director and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), who works closely with the staff to implement the best educational programs. We have embraced this challenge of serving on the school Board with enthusiasm and passion with a collective aim of making decisions that are in the best interest of the school community.

The Board has various sub-committees who have been hard at work behind the scenes. The sub-committees consist of the Policy Committee, Business Development Committee, Scholarship Panel, Nominations Committee and Finance Committee. Parents are encouraged to become involved at sub-committee level. Future Oryx articles will highlight matters discussed at sub-committee meetings.

One of the biggest challenges that we face as a Board is to assist with a smooth transition in August 2021 when Ethan van Drunen and Marcelle van Leenen join the WIS community as the new Educational Director and Primary Principal, respectively. We'd like to assure you that the Board and SLT are doing our best to ensure a smooth transition. Both Ethan and Marcelle are looking forward to meeting the WIS community, to listen, learn and improve on the educational curriculum.

Finally, we are also accelerating the process of inclusivity and zero tolerance to all forms of discrimination in the WIS community as we believe that we can and should be the forerunners in Namibia as we celebrate diversity and respect within our community.

If you have any Board-related questions or would like to become involved at sub-committee level, please send a mail to [chairbod@wis.edu.na](mailto:chairbod@wis.edu.na).

Yours sincerely,



**Dr. Belinda Bruwer - Chair of the Board of Directors**

## Starting the Conversation With Ethan Van Drunen:

### Part 1: Listen and Learn - "What makes the WIS Fish Eagles Soar?"

Dear Community,

I look forward to meeting each of you in person in just three short months! The Board, Peter MacKenzie, and the leadership team have already been very generous with their time inducting me into Windhoek International School. As the incoming Educational Director, I wish, first and foremost, to gain a shared sense of what we value as a school: Why do we exist? What do we believe? What are we trying to accomplish? What is at the distinctive core of a WIS education?

To clarify these questions, I would like to propose that we begin a community-wide initiative called "Soar-25." The WIS mascot is the fish eagle, and a group of fish eagles is called a Soar. So where do we individually and collectively want to soar to the year 2025?

Let's start by listening with empathy.

During these noisy and impatient times, it is often tempting to listen just to have the opportunity for a reply. As the incoming Educational Director, I will begin by listening in order to understand. If we are to grow as a community, we must be patient when listening to one another's hopes, concerns, and stories.

An education which is characterised by a spirit of inquiry is less like filling up a bucket and more like lighting a fire. It's clear to me that the WIS Community already burns brightly and holds within itself the ability to bring

about transformative positive change at the individual, local, and global levels. Towards that end, the leadership team and the Board are organising a series of initial virtual conversations:

- Staff meeting - Primary: 12 May 14:00 - 15:00
- Staff meeting - Secondary: 19 May 14:00 - 15:00
- Parent meeting - Primary: 19 May 17:30 - 18:30
- Parent meeting - Secondary: 20 May 17:30 - 18:30
- Student, admin staff, and wider community meetings will take place in person, in early August.

Please don't worry if you are already busy during these times. It will be possible for everyone to contribute to these conversations both synchronously and asynchronously. Next week's Oryx will include the relevant links. I look forward to our conversation!

In the meantime, please begin reflecting on these questions:

- How would you describe WIS to a friend?
- What "snapshots" or moments of your time here are unique and special to WIS?
- What experiences do you want at WIS for yourself and for your child?
- What are three WIS traditions or distinctives that you hope will never change?
- What are three things that you hope will be introduced as a part of WIS by 2025?
- What is the profile of a WIS student? What should be the key attributes, skills, and dispositions of a WIS graduate?
- At this time in history, how can the WIS community of students, staff, parents, and alumni bring positive change to Namibia? ...To our world?

I believe that schools are places where people must be compelled to set their sights higher than they ever thought could be possible before. As the educationist Kurt Hahn once put it, "There is more in you than you think... if we could be made to see it; perhaps, for the rest of our lives we will be unwilling to settle for less." We will use the results of these initial mission/vision conversations to help identify priorities and then organise ourselves for continuous growth. Through this initiative, we will gain a shared understanding of what makes the WIS community special. I look forward to soaring to new heights with you all!

## PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

This week I have been working from home participating in a NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) Foundations visit. The Foundations visit is the first step in a school's application to go through the accreditation process. This is then followed by the Preparatory Phase. The final step is the Internal Reflection/ External Review. Last year WIS went through the latter process with the External Review taking place in January 2020. (Fortunately, the visits were still face to face then.)

This is the first visit I have done virtually. In "normal" circumstances I would have flown to the city where the visit is taking place, stayed in a hotel and spent several days onsite visiting the school, meeting with teachers, parents and students, observing lessons and reading through documentation. COVID has changed all of that and NEASC has had to adjust. I must say that while a virtual visit isn't quite the same since one can't get as true a feel for a school through a Google Meet or videos as one would have in person, it has still been an interesting and professionally rewarding experience.

Accreditation is not an event but an ongoing process and a cycle of:

- self reflection (*the school evaluates itself against the NEASC standards*);
- peer review (*a team of visitors evaluate the school's alignment with the standards*);
- follow-up (*the school develops an action plan in response to the recommendations of the visiting team*).

While serving on an accreditation team requires lots of reading and preparation ahead of the visit the process is definitely worthwhile. Seeing what other schools are doing, as well as having the opportunity to discuss and interact with colleagues from other international schools, is a form of professional development that one can't

necessarily get from a workshop or online course. In addition, participating as a team member for a school accreditation visit offers a fresh view of the expectations for accreditation, some new ideas, and new connections with other schools.

Regards,  
Beth Smith

## Science experience in Grade 2

*How do we recognise and support student agency in learning and teaching in Grade 2?*

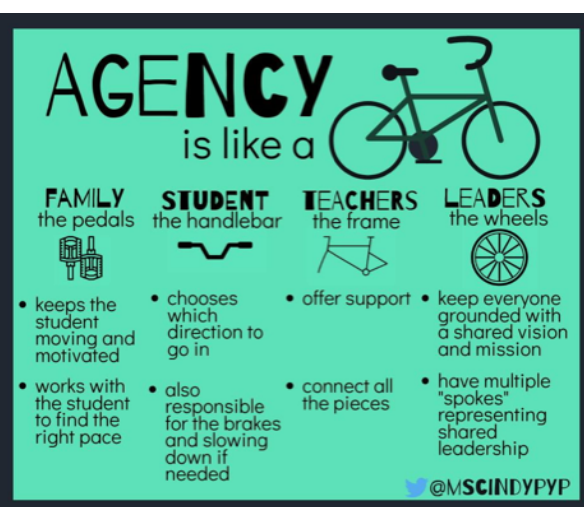
- Involving students as active participants in, and as co-constructors of their learning
- Developing students' capacity to plan, reflect and assess, in order to self-regulate and self-adjust learning
- Supporting student initiated inquiry and action

**We would like to share with the community two ways of learning, where students showed their agency.**

The Grade 2 students have been exploring the Scientific Method during the unit of inquiry: How the World Works. As part of our unit we explored by doing various experiments, coming up with questions and hypotheses and making observations and conclusions. The students thoroughly enjoyed this experience and towards the end of the unit we paid a visit to Ms. Urte's classroom. She was kind enough to show the students four experiments about forces and the different kinds of forces there are; contact and non-contact forces, push and pull forces. The students also got the opportunity to do the experiments. Thank you Ms. Urte for your availability and willingness to share with our students.



*Celebrating learning during Mini Science Fair*



*A kind reminder of What Student Agency looks like!*



The Science fair allowed our students to choose experiments and complete independent research by following the scientific method to test a hypothesis.

- Click [HERE](#) to view Grade 2B Google Photos album.
- Click [HERE](#) to view the Grade 2D Google Photos album.
- 

Grade 2 Team



## The Learner Profile in the Arts

**How do the qualities of the IB Learner Profile attributes relate to the Artist?**

WIS Community I need your help! I would like to share local and regional artists and artwork with our students that connect to the IB Learner Profile. Can you recommend contemporary African artists or their artwork that may help describe an attribute? Please email [lsmith@wis.edu.na](mailto:lsmith@wis.edu.na)

Thanks!

### IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

<p><b>INQUIRERS</b> We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.</p> <p><b>KNOWLEDGEABLE</b> We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.</p> <p><b>THINKERS</b> We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.</p> <p><b>COMMUNICATORS</b> We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.</p> <p><b>PRINCIPLED</b> We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.</p>	<p><b>OPEN-MINDED</b> We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.</p> <p><b>CARING</b> We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.</p> <p><b>RISK-TAKERS</b> We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.</p> <p><b>BALANCED</b> We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.</p> <p><b>REFLECTIVE</b> We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.</p>
--	---

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

© International Baccalaureate Organization 2013  
International Baccalaureate® | Baccalaureat International® | Bachillerato Internacional®



## The purpose of descriptive writing

Good descriptive writing focuses on creating an impression in one's mind and using detail and the five senses to set a mood and atmosphere. The writer uses imaginative language, interesting comparisons and images to keep the reader interested. **Salome Rey** is one student who has a talent for writing descriptively and who is able to captivate the reader through her writing. Well, that is my opinion at least. Please enjoy one of her descriptive writing pieces:

### Bakeology

It was a tranquil Friday evening. Everything stood motionless, the leaves, the branches, the birds and the streets were as silent as a graveyard. This was peculiar for the usually bustling city of Anemoia. The tinkle of a bell broke the noiseless night and indicated someone had just entered the Bakeology bakery. All of a sudden, a gust of cold air blew through the darkened streets and congealed the translucent dew that was resting on the leaves into flaky ice. The obscure stranger sat down at one of the tables and looked up at Finelia Strongsmith, the baker, expectantly. "We're closed," she said bluntly without a glance at the stranger. She was kneading dough on the counter as he got up and approached her. "I would like a croissant and two apple tarts please." He said in a deep, scratchy voice. Finelia looked up at him and sighed exasperatedly, "I said we're closed. We are open again tomorrow morning from 7:00, come back then," and looked back down at her dough again. "You could just pass me what I need, I pay you and we go on with our lives. So, hand me what I asked for," he persisted. "Out. Get out now! I'm busy and it's after hours!" Finelia was tired of this man, she went ahead and opened the door for him and said dryly: "This is the way out." "You're going to regret having said that." He said maliciously.

The sun had just risen when the mail boy passed out the newspapers. Mr. Montgomery picked it up and put it on the sideboard for his wife to read. Ms. Montgomery came down the stairs in a flurry, took the newspaper from the side board and rushed to her car. She then made her usual stop at Bakeology to go pick up her breakfast bagel when she saw that it was taped shut. She was confused and decided to look in the newspaper to see if there was a report of the bakery shutting down or something of the sort. Instead, she had the unpleasant surprise of finding Finelia's obituary. She was reportedly pulled apart bone-end by bone-end. Ms. Montgomery was in utter shock and slightly jumped when a man approached her and said to her "Oh that's weird, I came here just last night and Ms. Strongsmith told me to come back at 7:00 this morning. I wonder what happened to her." "Mmm" replied distractedly Ms. Montgomery who then got into her car and drove away for work, leaving the nameless man all alone at the entrance of the bakery.

## All About Anxiety

Sharon, Hannah, Tanya-May and myself were fortunate to attend the Anxiety course held by the NAOT (Namibian Association of Occupational Therapists) on Saturday, 17 April 2021. We had the privilege of listening to Dr. G. Morkel, Heidi Burmeister-Nel, Alta Vorback and Lian Drotsky - professionals who come across anxiety in children in their own fields of expertise.

It was definitely every penny and minute worth attending this course. As ATLi coordinator I feel it is important to know the signs and triggers of anxiety, as well as how to deal with it. The one thing that was clear, is that anxiety is necessary in our day to day life, that it helps you distinguish between feeling safe or in danger. Fear is in the present and short-lived while anxiety is long-acting and an excessive fear of something. Anxiety can and



should be managed and if it is left for too long, it can develop into an anxiety disorder - for it to be a disorder, it needs to be consistent and impact your day to day life.

Typical behavioural responses to anxiety may include:

- Avoidance behaviours such as avoiding anxiety-producing situations (e.g. avoiding social situations) or places (e.g. using the stairs instead of an elevator).
- Escaping from an anxiety-producing situation (like a crowded lecture hall).
- Engaging in unhealthy, risky, or self-destructive behaviours (such as excessive drinking or drug use to deal with the anxiety).
- Feeling compelled to limit the amount and scope of one's daily activities to reduce the overall level of anxiety (e.g. remaining in the safety of one's home).
- Becoming overly attached to a safety object or person (e.g. refusing to go out, away from home, to school, or to work in order to avoid separation).

#### **Tips for teachers to help students with anxiety:**

1. Set predictable routines
2. Set clear and reasonable expectations
3. Give students manageable tasks
4. Provide the opportunity for practice
5. Give special responsibilities to students with anxiety
6. Give anxious students time to relax when anxiety kicks in
7. Reduce or avoid unexpected situations

#### **Tips for parents to help children with anxiety:**

1. Be consistent
2. Avoid being over critical, be patient and listen
3. Maintain realistic and attainable goals
4. Do not communicate the need for perfection
5. And one more point of interest for parents with children with anxiety disorders: accept help to manage their own possible anxieties in order to be able to support their children.

We should all remember that anxiety is an emotion and if you can name the emotion, you can tame it. One should not try to eliminate anxiety but manage it. It is for us, as adults/teachers/parents to become emotional scientists rather than emotional judges. It is important to know what causes the anxiety and understand what is going on. Kids lack the language and understanding of this emotion themselves and that is why they explode through being mad and frustrated. The more we talk about feelings and label them with our students, the better they will be able to express themselves. We need to focus on cognitive reframing, forward thinking, attention shifting, meta-moment (best possible way) and mindful breathing if we want our students and children to manage their anxiety.

Recommended reading by **Daniel Siegal** : *Parenting from the Inside Out*. Anxiety is the most common psychiatric disorder and it responds well to treatment.

**Angie Janse van Rensburg - ATLi Coordinator**

**W.O.R.D.**  
**Iyalo en Faduli in Grade 7IB**  
**reading for WORD!**





## WIS Campus Plant-Drive

Walking down one of our school paths and noticing all the new plants laying down their roots to help combat soil erosion on our campus and also to make our surroundings look beautiful, gives me a sense of hope. Plants are magical. I love in particular how Mr. JP and Ms. Jolene placed a big ring of stones neatly around a couple of saplings outside the staff room area. Nurturing young lives to grow into their full potential is what schools are all about, and it gives me a thrill to see this intention extended to non-human people on our campus too.

Ms. Urte's involvement in this drive to make our campus more green and welcoming needs a special cheer. She has demonstrated how with creativity and imagination you can achieve a lot with very little resources. She has planted plants in old pots, pans and even shoes donated to her by students and teachers. The plants she has mostly resourced from other areas of our campus, using plants that are easily propagated and need very little water to keep them green and flourishing.



Seeing this project grow to spread joy, beauty and positivity needs some input from you. Even the most creative and imaginative need a helping hand every now and then. We would therefore like to ask the WIS community to please donate any old shoes (that are not suitable for wearing anymore) or any old containers that we can use as plant pots to dot around newly identified areas of our campus that need some sprucing up.

If any succulent plants or indigenous trees can be donated this would be of great help so that we can diversify the plants that we grow.



### PLEASE DONATE

1. Any old containers (pots, pans, shoes, old plant pots not in use etc)
2. Any resilient succulent plants and/or indigenous trees

Thank you and keep your eye on our evolving gardens!

**Kate Matzopoulos**



## Hope For Life Foundation

Hello WIS community, Olivia, Jessica and Beatrice of Grade 11 are working with the class EY 1/2 in order to promote this project called Hope For Life Foundation. Hope For Life Foundation is a project that strives to help kids from ages 0-3 by donating various items to them that will help them for a long period of time. This presentation explains the project more in depth, and there's a video as well with the kids of EY 1/2. If there are any questions regarding this project or if you want to donate please contact Beatrice, Olivia and Jessica at these emails: [jshaanika@wis.edu.na](mailto:jshaanika@wis.edu.na), [bcherici@wis.edu.na](mailto:bcherici@wis.edu.na) and [oshino@wis.edu.na](mailto:oshino@wis.edu.na)

All donations should be given to the class of EY 1/2. Click [HERE](#) to read more about the Hope for Life Foundation.

## IB Learner Profile

### Principled

Congratulations to the following seven students and one teacher for displaying the IB Learner Profile trait, Principled, for the month of April.

Well done to; Gr. 6 Benjamin Oldenburg, Gr. 7 Ndahafa Muadinohamba, Gr. 8 Maedot Abeje, Gr. 9 Taboka Takawira, Gr. 10 Tumisang Mabutho, Gr. 11 Iuze Limbo, Gr. 12 Janine Tibazarwa and Teacher - Sharon Gorelick.



The Secondary IB Learner Profile Trait for the month of May is:

## OPEN-MINDED

An **OPEN-MINDED** student understands and appreciates their own cultures and personal histories, and is open to the perspectives, values, and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view and are willing to grow from the experience. IB students have a deep understanding of various cultures and views, bringing an appreciation of new views to both their academic study and their involvement in local and wider communities. Their international-mindedness complements the missions of the best tertiary institutions.

Please send me your nominations for the month of May. Students and teachers. Anyone can nominate anyone in the school - it does not have to be someone you are taught by or someone in your grade.

Send your nominations to Ms. Angie at [ajvrensborg@wis.edu.na](mailto:ajvrensborg@wis.edu.na) and remember to send me the reason too.