



Bishop Mackenzie
International Schools

BMIS Board Meeting

25th October 2011 in the Library at 6.30pm

OPEN SESSION

Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda
2. MYP presentation – Sally Elliott, MYP Coordinator
3. Approval of Minutes of 27th September 2011
4. Matters Arising from Minutes of 27th September 2011
5. Director's Report
6. Head of Primary's report
7. Head of Secondary's report
8. Business Manager's report
9. Finance Sub Committee report
10. Personnel Sub Committee report
11. Policy Sub Committee report

Director's Report

25th October 2011

MYP presentation

1. Sally Elliott, MYP Coordinator will give a presentation about the salient features of the MYP.

Maintenance and Security

- 1.1. **Security:** USI security services appear to have had a good transition from G4. No issues with current USI performance.
- 1.2. **Building of new storage:** New quotations were reviewed by David Pinto and Mark Burdett. Agreed that the lowest bidder also gave acceptable terms (no up-front payments required). Willy has been liaising with Jacques Carstens re contract details.
- 1.3. **Primary ICT:** The Primary ICT room has been re-modeled to make the room more student-friendly
- 1.4. **Theft:** Several issues recently of razor-wire being stolen from accommodation which has needed replacement. Amos Banda is looking into electrical fencing as an alternative.

2. Administration

- 2.1. **Maintenance Requests:** The networked maintenance tracking system is being populated with data (all classrooms, personnel, accommodation etc) and tested. Next step will be for training with relevant personnel
- 2.2. **Website:** The new website has been activated and appears to be a visual improvement. There were some initial teething problems where some visitors were unable to access the site, but these appear to have been resolved. Staff receiving training (Monday) on posting articles and images.
- 2.3. **Administrator Plus:** The Rediker software put in place last year is proving problematic. Setting up report templates is causing problems and Rediker are asking for \$1500 for two templates. Other primary and secondary progress templates apparently cannot be done by the software. Whilst a significant investment has been made already, the value of this software needs to be reviewed.

3. Students and Learning

- 3.1. **Learning:** Whole school staff meeting this week will focus on common definitions of learning and what is important (the question of how we learn and promote learning is not as straight forward as one may assume!). The whole school staff meeting is also an opportunity to further strengthen the liaison between the two sections of the campus.

4. Staffing and HR issues

- 4.1. **AISA:** NB attended the AISA Leaders' Conference (Association of International Schools in Africa) in Nairobi. Christelle Thompson also attended the Teacher Conference which followed. Sally Elliott was attending in the capacity of a trainer. Overall the AISA forums provided useful information to feedback to the school.
- 4.2. **IB training:** Paul Harrison will be attending IB training in Europe next month as part of the planned commitment to IB training provision.
- 4.3. **Erin Macdonald:** After much discussion individually and with Personnel Committee, Erin Macdonald has requested to be released early from her contract which has been accepted. Janette Johnson has secured a potentially very good temporary replacement and has been interviewing for a permanent replacement from Christmas.
- 4.4. **Sick leave:** Willem Snieder has been off school for two weeks on stress-related sick leave. He should return to work following the half-term break.
- 4.5. **Educational Support:** Esther Dekker has stepped down from the coordinator position of Educational Support in the Primary School. Coordination will fall under Janette Johnson and Christelle Thompson.

- 4.6. **Lifeguard:** The contact for the replacement Lifeguard fell through (based on salary expectations) and therefore this position is being processed again.

5. Events and activities

- 5.1. **French Trip:** Willem Snieder led a very successful international school trip to France and England. All the children and staff travelled safely and gained from their opportunities.
- 5.2. **Visiting Author:** Val Bloom was in school before the half term working with staff and students
- 5.3. **Visiting College Admissions:** Ms Diane McKoy from Columbia University visited the school and ran a workshop for senior students and for parents regarding university placements. Her feedback to the staff was also very much appreciated.

6. Finance and Budgets

- 6.1. **US Government Funding:** Willy has provided the US Embassy with cost projections for some security enhancements. We are now waiting for information from the US Embassy as to whether funding will be available for these items.
- 6.2. **Beit Trust:** NB met with Trustees from the Beit Trust when they visited the school. The Trustees were doing follow-up visits to see where support has been given. This was also an opportunity to look for future funding opportunities from the Beit Trust.

Primary School Report

No on Roll; - 453

Staffing

A letter will go out to parents this week to inform them officially about the temporary maternity cover for Mrs Debbie Mayer. Shelley Pyman has confirmed her availability to cover from 18th November 2011-(can't remember the exact date- will have to find the letter)

Two candidates have now been interviewed for the Year 6 teaching post but no appointment has been made yet. It is possible that other candidates will be considered before a decision is made. In all probability a new teacher will commence employment in January 2012. Supply teachers have also been interviewed to cover the Year 6 class for the remainder of Term 1. It is hoped that one of these candidates will be in place within the next couple of weeks.

Maintenance

During the half term break, work has taken place in the primary ICT room. The room has been re-organised to accommodate students in a better learning environment.

Work is on-going to complete the maintenance of interactive whiteboards in classrooms and many more classrooms now have fully functioning boards.

ISA Testing

The ACER Standardised Tests were administered on Tuesday, October 4th and Thursday, October 6th. Students in Years 4, 5& 6 in the primary school took the tests. The tests were completed efficiently and have now been sent by courier for external marking. Results should be expected in about two months.

Visiting Author

Our visiting author, Val Bloom was welcomed by the primary school and her presentations and workshops were a pleasure to attend. The children were instructed in some of the techniques of poetry writing and inspired by Val's funny and exciting performance poetry presentations.

She was available for book signing, in the library, while she was here and many families purchased her books. The school also purchased a class set of one of her novels and single copies of some of her other books for the library.

I would like to thank all staff for their enthusiasm and organisation during this visit but particular thanks go to Mrs. Veronica Mahari, for organising the schedule for the week and also to Mrs Gail de Oliveira and Mrs Yvonne Garside who provided accommodation and meals during Val Bloom's visit. They were great hosts.

Settling- in conferences

These took place on Wednesday 12th October and Thursday 13th October. Most parents attended and feedback from parents and teachers was positive.

Student Council

Student council representatives have now been chosen for each year group and the first, charity, fund raising, dress-up day was held on Friday 14th October. A list of dates for fund raising dress-up events throughout the year should be available soon and will be posted on the web site and in Tikambe! Details of the charity being supported this year will also be included.

School Events and Scheduled Meetings

An in-service training/workshop will be held on Monday the 31st of October from 13.45 till 16.00 with the Occupational Therapists from Sandi Centre, Titus Mwanjabe and Alice Shepard. All teachers from Reception, Year 1, 2 and 3, class room assistants and support staff will be participating in an active afternoon focused on visual perceptual difficulties, auditory skills, fine motor skills and energizers for children with attention difficulties. There will also be a parent information evening on the 8th of November from 19.00 till 20.00 informing parents about the Sandi Centre, and what services they deliver.

Janette Johnson
Primary Head Teacher

Secondary School Report

No on Roll; 277

ISA Testing

In conjunction with the Primary School standardized testing in Years 7, 8 and 9 was carried out as planned on Tuesday October 4th and Thursday October 6th. Tests were taken in Mathematical Literacy, Reading and Writing. Test scripts were sent off for marking during the holiday. We are now awaiting the return of feedback from ACER. We hope that the information we obtain from these tests will help us to identify where we need to adjust our programmes to better cater for the learning needs of our students.

Reports and parent conferences

Progress reports were sent home on Friday October 14th, and a follow-up parent conference is planned for Thursday November 3rd.

Middle Years Programme

The application for candidacy as a MYP school was finally submitted online to the IBO on Friday October 7th. The delay in completing this process was caused by technical difficulties the IBO experienced with their online application process. We are now waiting for the outcome of the application process, which we expect will recognize BMIS as a "Candidate school" for the MYP, the second stage of the process that leads to authorization.

Sally Elliott, MYP Coordinator, will outline the plans we have for the development of the MYP elsewhere in this meeting.

Timetable 2012-13

A preliminary draft of next year's Secondary curriculum structure is being developed and will be given to Heads of Department shortly as part of an on-going consultation process that will continue throughout the rest of the academic year. The purpose of this process is to help inform the school about the construction of a balanced programme across the Secondary school, teacher recruiting needs, and eventually to the construction of the school timetable for 2011-12.

IGCSE and IB Diploma examinations

A small number of re-take examinations for IGCSE and the IB Diploma will take place between 26th October and 18th November.

Mock examinations for students hoping to complete IGCSE and IB examinations at the end of this school year will take place between 21st November and 2nd December. One exception to this is the IGCSE mock examination for Art & Design, which will take place on Thursday 17th and Friday 18th November in the Secondary Art room.

Student Council

The student council has three events this term:

28th October – Halloween Disco

2nd December – Holiday Disco

6th December – Teacher Appreciation Day (including assembly)

Overseas Schools Project

The visit of Diane McKoy (Columbia University admissions), on October 10th to 13th, was a great success and we hope that another similar visit can be organized on a regular basis, probably every three years. The last visit took place seven years ago!

House Competitions

The first house competitions of the year are underway this week and next week, with Intermediate (Years 7-9) and Senior (Years 10-13) students taking part in Volleyball and Soccer competitions. This year each age group will have its own trophy to run for. Intermediate will have one house trophy and Senior will have another.

There will be one overall combined BMIS trophy for both Primary and Secondary, which will tally the results from all of the age group competitions across the school to come up with one overall house team winner for the year.

Administrative Report

Fringe Benefit Taxes on Staff Concessionary Fees

The MRA sent an a response through e-mail on 13/10/2011 with an attached letter dated 28/09/2011 written by their Head of Large Taxpayer Office, Mr R. Vokhiwa. In this response, the MRA has backtracked on its earlier indication that penalties would be waived since BMIS was pro-active in approaching MRA about this FBT issue.

No reason could be obtained for this change in decision as Mr Vokhiwa is reportedly out of the country. As per the said response, the liability now stands at K 21 029 284.29 inclusive of a penalty of K 3 504 880.71.

Invoicing and Debtors

Only one case for K 880 330.00 has been settled with regard to debtors from the previous year (i.e. K 5 921 249.40) that were submitted to the school's legal counsel.

Letters have been issued to current term's debtors (amounting to K 8 643 713.10) who did not make any arrangements with the school indicating that there wards will not be allowed to attend classes as from 31st October 2011 if the whole outstanding amount is not settled by the 28th.

Nedbank have not yet had any feedback from the Central Bank on a follow-up proposal to allow the school to invoice in hard currency even to residents who are known to be capable of paying as such.

Opportunity International Bank of Malawi [OIBM] Payroll loan Facility

Following the implementation of the new Pension Act by the Malawi Government, OIBM has indicated that it will no longer consider accumulated pension benefits and or severance as part of collateral for employees when applying for loans from the bank. Only tangible collateral and other forms of terminal benefits shall apply in addition to an employer's personal recommendation. Alternatively, the employer may choose to guarantee an employee's personal loan without the bank asking for collateral.

This in essence implies that loans will no longer be accessible from OIBM to employees without collateral unless the School guarantees them. Standard have since come up with a proposal for the School to establish a tailor made loan facility with them depending on a special agreement that may be put in place. Details of such a special agreement have not yet been elaborated to the school but only those of what the loan packages are.

Forex and Gratuities

Instructions to have the 25% remnant of gratuities remitted to respective beneficiaries were sent out to Nedbank on 12/10/2011 following the payment of US\$ 140 000 into BMIS's FCDA with the bank earlier on by the US Embassy. The payment related to the Embassy's annual school fees bill and it was done in such a manner as a favor to BMIS after a request was presented to the Embassy to that effect i.e. to pay in US\$.

Similarly, the school also expects to receive about US\$ 38 640 as grant claims filed with the same Embassy for the 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 academic years. These amounts will go towards payment of current year's Educational materials overseas order.

Human Resources

A new Driver and a Security Guard by the names of Abdul Lemani and Jonathan Joseph, respectively have been employed effective 1st October 2011.

A previously selected Life Guard turned down the offer due to low pay (currently working at Capital Hotel) and so did the next best candidate (working for Saint Andrews), for the same reason. The position was recently re-advertised with the 20th of October as the closing date. Applications have since been received and handed over to Mr David Sargent for shortlisting.

Contracts for Temporary Cleaners were put on hold on the basis that they will be hired permanently some months before they are about to complete a year as per the limit in the country's labour laws not to extend temporary employment beyond a year. Such will be dependent on their performance between now and then.

Security

Ursa Security International (USI) commenced their guarding service on the 1st of October 2011. No negative feedback has so far been recorded and it is expected that such will continue to be the case in the coming months.

Maintenance and Teacher Housing

New Storage Room

The contract was awarded to Tinthu Investments who pegged their revised bid at K 10 097 680.00, up from K 8 951 400.00. The original budget for the Storage building is at K 9 900 000.00.

The contract has a 5% retention fee payable after the 6 month defects liability period also incorporated in the contract. Tinthu is expected to finish the building by the end of December 2011 (i.e. 10 weeks).

Improvement of Secondary School Driveway

As reported in the previous month's meeting, costing for the above works has now been done awaiting further scrutiny of the available options. The Crusher-run option would cost about K 1 302 205 while the Road-chip option would cost about K 1 670 035.