



# IN THE LOOP

## UPDATES FOR BMIS SECONDARY PARENTS

20th September 2024

### Our Mission

*"We are a diverse and welcoming community in a joyful learning environment that promotes well-being, sustainability, and inclusivity and celebrates growth as success".*

### Message from the Principal

Who would have thought that September 28th to October 4th would arrive so quickly? We're now in the final stages of preparation, ensuring that every detail is in place. This includes finalising the schedule to cover all necessary meetings, coordinating airport pickups, arranging accommodations, and organising transportation to and from the school. Our goal is to ensure the visiting team can focus entirely on our school, its mission and objectives, our community, facilities, governance, teaching and learning, staffing, and wellbeing—essentially, everything that defines who we are.

While this may seem daunting, the team of 12 will be visiting as 'critical friends,' following standards and practices that will help BMIS in its ongoing journey of development and improvement, while also acknowledging our strengths.

Since the start of this academic year, we've introduced new parents to our Mission and Objectives, and students have engaged in activities promoting intercultural awareness and global citizenship. Additionally, we've welcomed our new student council, who will represent student voices during the visit.

Our teachers continue to make learning visible through classroom displays and by planning their annual goals aligned with the whole school goal of High-Quality Learning. This process marks a significant period of progress and development, which will be followed by consolidation, reflection, and strategic planning for continued school improvement.

Lesley Peacock, Secondary Principal  
secondaryprincipal@bmis.mw



### OVERVIEW:

- Message from the Principal
- Senior Retreat
- Keeping you safe at BMIS
- 3rd round of the South African Maths Challenge
- DP Life Skills
- Grade 12 ToK Exhibition
- High-Quality Learning in Mathematics
- Introduction to the MYP
- Up and Coming Events

## Senior Retreat



# Grades 11 and 12 Retreat



Friday morning was an exhilarating buzz as we embarked on the two-hour bus ride to the boat port in Salima. The conversations on the buses were constantly flowing as others sang along to songs. Despite one of the buses getting a flat tire, all the students kept a positive attitude and made the best out of it. Soon enough we were back on the road and headed to the Blue Zebra Island port. When we all finally arrived on the island, the Blue Zebra staff welcomed us with appetizing hibiscus iced tea and were accommodating.

The first item on the agenda after lunch was a team-building activity. This entailed two people sitting back to back and they were given a theme to draw each round. When the first partner was done drawing, they would have to describe their drawing to their partner, and the second partner had to attempt to draw an exact copy. Throughout each round, we all discovered that everyone has different perceptions of almost everything, down to how the grass looks. We therefore learned, that it is important to be as specific and clear as possible when communicating your ideas, which we applied to classroom scenarios. Furthermore, This activity allowed for a joyful learning environment that taught us clear and in-depth communication is key.

Later on, we dived into a session on the assessment policy. Instead of being taught the policy as a big group, we were divided into smaller groups with each group looking at a specific section of the assessment policy. Each group was to present their understanding and collaborate with the rest, which allowed an in-depth understanding to the assessment policy.

The highlight of day one for most people was animal charades and taskmasters. Each group had to bring a scenario to life within 10 minutes and each presentation was outstanding in its own unique way. The night eased down after dinner as everyone unwinded in their rooms and got to know their roommates. Shortly, everyone was asleep to the sound of the waves crashing, waiting for the early morning rise.

Despite the 6 am hike on both mornings being challenging for some, it was a great opportunity to get to know someone else within the DP cohort. The combination of the conversations with partners on school life and personal life with the astonishing view was a perfect distraction on the 30-minute to one-hour-long hike.

From an academic perspective, Saturday's activities were not only educational but were also engaging and collaborative. The G11's took a look at the main pressure points of the different programs over the two years. While the G12's tackled the issue of burnout and how to best prepare for exams. After lunch, we talked about how best to manage your time and create a schedule that fits in ECPS because balance is the key to success. We did not know that the extreme scavenger hunt was awaiting us.

The scavenger hunt was yet another team-building activity and one of the tasks was to take a picture as a group with the blue hippo at the top of the mountain. Groups tackled the excruciating hike together all motivated by the idea of winning first place. Everyone had to work together in order to complete the tasks and cross the finish line. The relaxing swim after the scavenger hunt was definitely worth it.

The perfect way to end off the retreat was the formal dinner, where everyone put on their best suits and dresses. It was an exceptional night that brought us all closer together. The next morning we reflected on the retreat as a whole. We also discussed what is to come in the future and everyone's expectations.

The key takeaway from the retreat was that studying for your final exams in G12 starts in G11. Additionally, friendships and bonds within the cohort are important as we all need to lean on each other to succeed to the best of our abilities. It is an understatement to simply state that the DP retreat was a successful and educational experience because it was way more than that. Core memories were created within the cohort, which I am sure we will all cherish forever.

By Mwayi Mhango

## Keeping You Safe at BMIS - Reporting Concerns

On September 10, BMIS secondary students were introduced to MyVoice, a secure platform for reporting child protection concerns.

MyVoice is a confidential platform that BMIS students can use to self-report any child protection concerns about themselves or any other BMIS students. The assembly explained various child protection issues, including abuse, relational aggression, self-harm, and suicide. This initiative is part of BMIS's safeguarding and child protection curriculum, aiming to equip students with knowledge and tools to recognize and prevent harm, advocate for themselves and others, and contribute to a safe school environment. For more information, visit the [BMIS safeguarding page](#).



Kristina Sharma Social and Emotional Counsellor

### Third round of the South African Mathematics Challenge

This year BMIS participated in the South African Mathematics Challenge for younger learners from Grade 4 to Grade 7 for the second time. Students are challenged with questions aimed at conceptual knowledge, the application of knowledge in new situations, problem-solving, reasoning, communication, and general mathematical thinking.

In March 2024, learners from Southern African countries including 54 BMIS students participated in the first round of the 2024 South African Mathematics Challenge.

Twenty-eight of our students made it through to the second round which was written in May.

On September 12th two of our secondary students and four of our Primary students wrote the third and final round of the Challenge.

We are so proud of all our BMIS students who have embraced problem-solving and who have taken part in the Challenge and the Olympiad. And we look forward to encouraging more students to participate in 2025!



Hazel Drummond Mathematics Leader of Learning

### DP Lifeskills

After a successful DP retreat, the students reflected and requested that we provide them an opportunity to learn some life skills that will better prepare them for university and life beyond BMIS. The DP tutors collaborated and came up with 26 different tasks that will be completed throughout the year. Students will take photographic evidence to show that they have completed the activities, which range from using a washing machine, understanding the difference between loans, debit cards, mortgages, and credit cards, cooking a meal for their family, and changing a tire.

### Sport

This last week the BMIS sports teams completed their first fixtures of the year. Both of our senior basketball teams were in action and came out with dominant victories against Paramount International Academy (PIA). Our U15 boy's football team suffered a 2-0 loss to PIA whilst our U19 Netball team and boy's Soccer team were victorious against African Bible College (ABC).

We have finished the week with internal basketball matches for our U19 teams so that coaches can start the selection process for our international competition in February in Cape Town.

BMIS Sports Coordinator (See Life Skills Check List P7)

## Grade 12 Theory of Knowledge (ToK) Exhibition

From Neil Nambiar:

The ToK Exhibition was an excellent opportunity to discuss everything we've covered in our Theory of Knowledge lessons in a way that allowed us to expand our thinking. Writing for the ToK exhibitions was one thing, but discussing our questions and ideas with others allowed us to think and reflect more on what we previously thought. The exhibition served as a learning opportunity in which we, as students, got to see how others would approach the questions we asked whilst simultaneously having our input and ideas involved in the conversation. At its core, this is what ToK is about expanding upon our knowledge through new critical lenses/perspectives and building upon what we think we already know.

From Michael Martrich:

If there were one student reaction that resonated as the Theory of Knowledge Exhibition was coming to a close Monday evening, it would have to be this: "We should have done this earlier! I learned so much that I could have added to my final exhibition!" But here's the thing. Isn't this what we want students to experience? A learning that doesn't end with the "final" product? What if we thought of the final product more as a foundation, a ground from which we might take off and explore? Ultimately, these very questions and ideas shaped the narrative of the 2024 BMIS ToK Exhibition Night. Together as students, parents, and teachers, there was a perpetual buzz of curiosity and inquiry, not to mention an all-around pleasure that comes with slipping out of our routines for the openness of asking that ToK mantra, "But really, how do we know?"



## High Quality learning - Mathematics

At BMIS, we have defined High-Quality Learning (HQL) through a set of principles. One of these principles states that High-Quality Learning is an active process that builds upon prior knowledge, enabling the construction of new understanding through meaningful connections.

The educational theorist Jerome Bruner described the revisiting of knowledge as a spiral curriculum where knowledge is continually reviewed and built upon over time, allowing students to develop their understanding and deepen their knowledge. Revisiting prior knowledge is particularly important in Mathematics due to the cumulative nature of the subject. New concepts build on previously learned concepts, and gaps in foundational knowledge can be a barrier to new learning.

Building upon knowledge in the classroom can take different forms. It may be a planned activity at the beginning of a unit, or when introducing a new topic.

Giving students a real-world problem which connects to a concept not yet taught, allows students to access the skills and knowledge they already have and demonstrate what they already know. It also provides them with the opportunity to extend their knowledge through problem-solving and reasoning. Grade 9 students were asked to solve a real-life problem before being introduced to systems of linear equations, yet managed to come up with one of the methods they were about to be taught. The teacher could then formally teach them their method, and show it to the students in their textbook!



Mathematical investigations can also allow students to activate prior knowledge while constructing new understanding. Through a practice Criterion B (Investigating patterns) assessment, Grade 9 students derived the exponent laws before learning them by selecting and applying appropriate problem-solving skills. Grade 6 students explored how the number of factors a number has connects to whether it is prime or composite (which they knew) and extended this to square numbers.

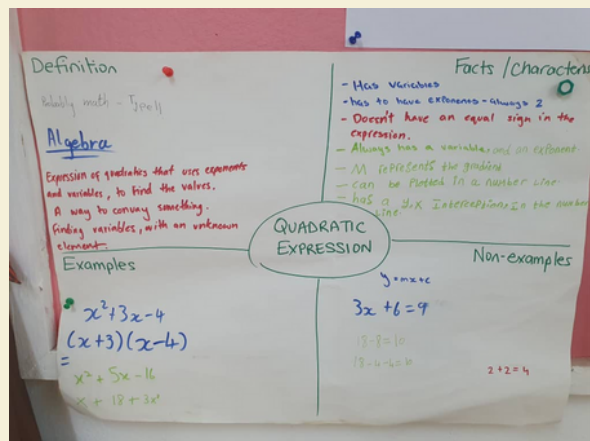


Providing students with the opportunity to construct their own knowledge by connecting to prior knowledge empowers them and shows them how much mathematics is “work-out-able”.

Engaging with prior knowledge also allows teachers to assess what their students know, identify any misconceptions they may have, and adapt their teaching accordingly. Number talks explore how students approach different mathematical concepts and how they carry out calculations. Asking students to present their strategies informs the teacher, while exposing the class to new methods and the flexibility of numbers and reminds them that there are always different approaches available.

Student’s prior knowledge can be explored through thinking routines such as those from Project Zero. Performing a “Chalk Talk” collaboratively builds understanding through sharing ideas, questioning one another and developing the ideas further, all through a silent and somewhat anonymous process. “3-2-1 Bridge” helps students engage with their learning before and after a topic is taught, enables them to identify any of their own misconceptions and reflects back on how their perceptions have changed.

The use and development of language is an integral part of the learning process. Accessing prior knowledge through mathematical vocabulary can be done using protocols such as the Frayer Model. Students work together to define the term, analyse the term's meaning through the characteristics, and apply the meaning by identifying examples and non-examples.



Building on prior knowledge does not only happen as part of planned activities at the beginning of topics but is rather an active and ongoing process. Questioning can be used to assess understanding and to encourage students to make connections to prior knowledge and other topics in mathematics. When students are asked to explain their thinking, it is an insight into their understanding - both for their teacher and for themselves!

Hazel Drummond Leader of Learning Mathematics

### Welcome to Our New College Counsellor, Jemison Foster

We are delighted to announce that our new College Counsellor, Jemison Foster, has officially joined us on campus and has already made a significant impact. Over the past few days, Jemison has been holding one-on-one meetings with Grade 12 families, offering tailored guidance on university applications and helping our students navigate this important phase in their academic journey.

In addition, Jemison has met with both the Grade 11 and Grade 12 cohorts to discuss their individual needs and determine how he can best support them in reaching their post-secondary goals. His personal approach and wealth of experience have already begun to make a difference for our students.

On Thursday, we hosted a successful Grade 12 Parent Evening, where Jemison provided valuable insights into the college admissions process and answered important questions from families. We are excited for the upcoming G11 Parent Evening and the G9 & G10 Parent Morning, where Jemison will continue to guide our community on the path toward higher education.

Jemison's presence has already brought positive energy and invaluable expertise to BMIS, and we look forward to the continued support he will provide to our students and their families. Stay tuned for more updates as we navigate this exciting phase of the academic year!

Kindest

Jonathan McClenahan  
IB DP Coordinator



### Mulberry Trees-Chimdiamara Ozah Grade Language and Lit class.

Unique shadows formed under the peaceful mulberry trees. Each one is different, no shadow's the same. Unique patterns on each leaf, they're all similar, but not the same. My eyes moved up and down capturing the beauty of my surroundings. I couldn't help myself and took some mulberries. The perfect mixture of sweet and sour. After each one, I craved another. Eventually, there were no more in my reach. My mouth was disappointed, so I decided to focus on my ears. I could hear birds of different kinds blessing the world with their songs. I could hear laughter from primary, lessons in classrooms nearby, and water gushing from the tiny waterfall that smelt of cinnamon buns. I smelt coffee from the teacher's lounge, where I'm not allowed to go. They always have the best food there. And last but not least, the wind. It pushed the trees and caused them to dance and sway side to side. The sound of the leaves beating against each other was soothing, and tranquillising.

## Introduction to the MYP Evening

On Wednesday 11 September, we hosted our MYP Introduction session with families new to the MYP. While we only had a small number in attendance, our conversations and learning were rich! We worked together to reflect on our own experience of education, what we hope for our children, and how the MYP approach to teaching and learning mirrors real life (and how we learn as adults), to ensure that our students develop the attributes, skills, competencies, and approaches to learning that will support them to become lifelong learners.

One of the things we discussed is how can you help as parents. An important part of your role is encouraging a growth mindset. I shared a quote from Mark Manson:

“If you think about a young child trying to learn to walk, that child will fall down and hurt itself hundreds of times. But at no point does that child ever stop and think, “Oh, I guess walking just isn’t for me. I’m not good at it.”

Avoiding failure is something we learn at some later point in life.

At some point, most of us reach a place where we’re afraid to fail, where we instinctively avoid failure and stick only to what is placed in front of us or only what we’re already good at.

This confines us and stifles us.

We can be truly successful only at something we’re willing to fail at. If we’re unwilling to fail, then we’re unwilling to succeed.”

– Mark Manson

This is so true, and an important reminder that we need to cultivate and nurture a growth mindset to help our children succeed. Ways that you can do this include:

- Recognise that we aren’t born with fixed abilities
- Recognise that our abilities grow over time as we learn from mistakes and setbacks
- Value the process
- Encourage risks
- Promote positive self-talk
- Reflect on and learn from failure
- View challenges as opportunities
- Celebrate growth as success
- As a family, be open to sharing your failures and how you have learned and grown from them.

Remember, a growth mindset is about the belief that someone can learn and improve. Normalising failure as an integral part of the learning process is key – your support to help embed this message is truly appreciated!

Kathryn Leaper MYP Coordinator

### Up and Coming Events

Saturday 21st-Tuesday 24th Long Weekend

Tuesday 24th Preparation Day for CIS/NEASC/IB Visit  
(Staff only) 7.10 am-3.00 pm

Wednesday 25th Science and Design Evening Grades 7-8  
6.00 pm-7.30 pm

Saturday 28th September-Friday 4th October-CIS/NEASC/IB Evaluation Visit

Monday 7th October Coffee and Connect “Safeguarding and Child Protection” 7.30 am-8.30 am in the library

Wednesday 9th October-2.00-4.00 Parent -Teacher -Student Conferences

Thursday 10th October-8.00 am-4.00 pm Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences

Monday 14th October-Friday 18th October Mid-Semester Break

Tuesday 29th October -Friday 1st November WWW

## LIFE SKILLS CHECKLIST



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|--|--|
| PUT ON A LOAD OF LAUNDRY                                 | SWEEP/VACUUM A ROOM                                |
| TURN ON AND USE THE OVEN                                 | IRON THREE TYPES OF CLOTHING                       |
| FOLD 10 ITEMS OF LAUNDRY                                 | CHANGE BEDSHEET/DUVET COVERS                       |
| CHANGE A LIGHTBULB                                       | CHANGE A TYRE (ADULT)                              |
| JUMPSTART A CAR (ADULT)                                  | DO THE WEEKLY SHOP WITH FAMILY                     |
| COOK AN OMELETTE   | COOK A RICE DISH                                   |
| MAKE A POT OF TEA/COFFEE FOR FAMILY                      | KEEP A PLANT ALIVE FOR A MONTH                     |
| RESEARCH 3 BANKS IN YOUR POTENTIAL UNI AREA              | COOK A FAMILY MEAL <\$5pp                          |
| RESEARCH THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A DEBIT AND CREDIT CARD | MOP A ROOM IN YOUR HOUSE                           |
| PLUNGE A TOILET  | LOCATE YOUR TRIP SWITCH BOX AND WATER SUPPLY TAP   |
| MAKE AND PREP A PACKED LUNCH ON YOUR OWN                 | MAKE A RESERVATION AT A RESTAURANT/LODGE ETC...    |
| BOOK YOUR OWN MEDICAL/DENTIST APPOINTMENT                | COOK YOUR OWN PASTA/NOODLE DISH                    |
| DRESS PROFESSIONALLY FOR AN OFFICE ENVIRONMENT           | LEARN HOW TO CLEAN A CUT AND APPLY BASIC FIRST AID |