



**Graduation 2022!**

# The American School of Kinshasa TASOK TALK – JUNE 17, 2022 SUMMER FAREWELL EDITION

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## Message from the Director –Bonnes vacances d'été!

As we come to the close of the 2021/22 school year and the final day of school, I wanted to share this special summer farewell edition to celebrate our graduating class, recognize our departing faculty, and share my optimism for next year. I am very thankful for a successful school year of student learning, and looking forward to everything that 2022/23 has in store for us at TASOK!



**Grade 5 Moving Up Ceremony!**

On June 1, 2022, we hosted our commencement ceremony to celebrate the achievements of our (16) TASOK graduates. We were fortunate to host this event on campus with special addresses from the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Marion Ekpuk, secondary teacher Garrett Austin, Principal Lesley Peacock, TASOK Valedictorian Emmanuel Butsana, myself, and presentation of awards by TASOK Alumni. The grade 11 students were also in attendance to support the event, while also visualizing and planning for their big day next year!

As many American schools around the world, TASOK has a very transient population of students and teachers. While this time of year can be difficult saying 'goodbye', it is also an opportunity to celebrate relationships and connections that will last a lifetime. This special edition includes information about our departing TASOK Faculty, their next adventures, and contributions during their time at TASOK. We wish them all the best in their future adventures!

And finally, thank you for your ongoing support and I wish you all a safe and wonderful summer holiday wherever you are in the world!

Be safe, be well, be kind,

Yours in Education,  
**Dan Mullen - TASOK Director**



**Our Mission for Excellence:** *The American School of Kinshasa provides dynamic and individualized educational challenges and opportunities that promote diversity and empower each of its students to develop into independent global community leaders.*

# So long, farewell, auf wiedersehen, adieu, and kende malamau to all our faculty who are leaving this summer!

American and International schools comprise a wonderful mix of teachers from all over the world. This means that TASOK attracts professionals who are curious travelers and open minded to new experiences, making for great qualities in a teacher; however, it also means that there comes a time when they are ready to embark on new adventures. This year, we have six elementary teachers doing just that: *Helen Bartlett, Sondra Fischer, Tommy Sheldrick, Tikva Chofi, Nancy Eale, and Rydah Parry.*

Each has played an important role in your child's life at TASOK, and it is with deep gratitude on behalf of all our students who have been taught and supported in their learning, we extend our thanks and say farewell. Helen, Sondra, Tommy, Tikva, Nancy, and Rydah will be missed by everyone. Bonne chance!

**Helen Bartlett** has led our little ones as a preschool/Early Years teacher for the past three years. During that time, Helen has brought new meaning to Play-Based Learning at TASOK and has been instrumental in incorporating her experiences and knowledge of the PYP into our Early Years Program at TASOK. Next year, Helen will be working in the Early Years Program at the International School of London Qatar.



**Sondra Fischer** will be leaving TASOK after 7 years of successfully guiding our grade 3 students through their elementary years. She shared her passion for local connections and technology integration with her students and colleagues. In addition to her contributions to the school, Sondra has built relationships throughout the community and has been actively involved in planning Congo Week celebrations.

**Tommy Sheldrick** will also be departing TASOK after 3 successful years of leading the Learning Support Program in the elementary school. During that time, Tommy has supported our students and families through developing activities and opportunities to reach all learners. Next year, Tommy will continue to support students in his role as a Learning Support Coordinator at Asociación Escuelas Lincoln in Argentina.



**Tikva Chofi** While Tikva will be leaving TASOK after six years in her role as an English as an Additional Language (EAL) teacher, she will continue to be part of the TASOK community as a mom and parent. During her time at TASOK, Tikva has been a valuable member of the elementary student support team, working with our students to develop English proficiency, and our teachers to develop skills to reach a wide range of multilingual learners.

**Rydah Parry** shared two years of her life with us at TASOK in the role of both a PYP and MYP Visual Arts teacher. During this time, Rydah has created opportunities to showcase student work and artistic talent through exhibitions and incorporating art in other content areas. Next year, Rydah will be returning to Ethiopia to find opportunities to continue her passion of exposing students to art.



**Nancy Eale** has taught French at TASOK for six years, building both fluency and literary foundations as they arrive from Francophone countries all over the world. During her time at TASOK, Nancy has contributed in developing the K-5 French learning continuum. Next year, Nancy will be returning to the United Kingdom to spend time with her family.

## Secondary Faculty: Farewells and New Beginnings....

These faces will be very familiar to you, perhaps more in their professional pose (with masks covering their faces), than in their relaxation mode. During their time at TASOK our departing teachers have taught across grades and I'm sure your child/ children would have joined them in the classroom at some stage during their education. It is always a sad occasion to say farewell to our colleagues who we have worked alongside, supporting students and advancing our programs. We would like to thank these teachers (and administrator) for all their support and dedication during the time they have worked at TASOK. They will be ending one more chapter in their lives, closing their TASOK classroom door, as they step towards the future and a new stage in their careers. Farewell from the TASOK community, we wish you all the best.

**Lesley Peacock** After three successful years as the Secondary Principal at TASOK, Lesley Peacock is moving on to Bishop MacKenzie International School in Lilongwe, Malawi. There, Lesley will continue to support students and staff as the Secondary Principal. During her time at TASOK, Lesley has successfully led the authorization of both the MYP and DP 5-Year Self Study while always keeping a positive attitude and focus on student well-being. Additionally, Lesley has brought a wealth of knowledge and experiences from IB schools around the world to guide the secondary school in fostering our Mission of Academic Excellence. We look forward to collaborating with Lesley in her new role and school, and wish her all the best!



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**Dan Flynn** Dan has worked at TASOK for 2 years when he jumped into our Diploma Program Business Management classes. Dan has also been instrumental in building a successful Personal Project program this year, and allowed students to showcase their work to the entire school community. Dan also worked closely with the grade 12's this year in planning their Senior Prom and other student led initiatives. Next year, Dan will be returning to the United States to be closer to family.



**Catherine Steinmetz** Catherine joined TASOK this year to support our future mathematicians in the middle school, building on their knowledge with her experiences working in the US and other schools around the world. While Catherine will be leaving TASOK in her role of a teacher, she will continue to be part of our community as a parent and hopeful substitute or part-time teacher. We look forward to her continued support of TASOK students and programs next year!

## CELEBRATING OUR SENIOR CLASS OF 2022!

*Lesley Peacock – Secondary Principal*

**Watch the Full Graduation Ceremony: [CLICK HERE](#)**

**See professional photos from the event: [CLICK HERE](#)**





# The American School of Kinshasa

## Senior Awards

### Class of 2022



Valedictorian  
**Emmanuel Butsana**

*Awarded to the 12th grade student who has been enrolled in TASOK for at least 3 years during high school with the highest overall grade average*



Madame Mwilambwe Award  
**Mia Laplanche**

*12th grade student(s) who have been enrolled in TASOK the longest amount of time.*



Condon Award  
**Yoanna Dang-Toulou**

*Student who most positively contributes to the improvement of TASOK through leadership and service*



President's Award for Educational Excellence  
**Rehan Alatia, Emmanuel Butsana, Mia Laplanche, Laura Tchamou**

*This award recognizes academic success along with high motivation, initiative, integrity, intellectual depth, leadership qualities and/or exceptional judgment.*

President's Award for Educational Achievement  
**Axel Ndimbasi, Yohan Mbuyi**

*12th grade student(s) who have demonstrated significant educational growth, improvement, commitment, intellectual development, or achievement in the arts.*

# Learner Profile Awards

## Class of 2021

The International Baccalaureate learner profile describes a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that go beyond academic success. These awards are given to the students who best represent each of those traits.



Knowledgeable  
Michael Ekerue



Inquirer  
Andlib Virani



Thinker  
Armaan Banydeen



Communicator  
Axel Ndombasi



Open-Minded  
Yara Tarhini



Caring  
Yohan Mbuyu



Risk-Taker  
Emmanuel Butsana



Balanced  
Laura Tchamou



Reflective  
Aaron Mukendi



Principled  
Yoanna Dang-Toulou



# GRADE 5 MOVING UP CEREMONY

*Mike Bailey- Elementary Principal*







# Meet the TASOK New Staff for 2022/2023

## Elementary & Secondary School

### Sarah Clover - Secondary Principal



Sarah is delighted to be joining TASOK as the new Secondary School Principal. She was born and raised in Minnesota, and spends summers with her family at their home in Saint Paul.

Sarah has a BA in Political Science, a MA in Southeast Asian Studies, and a Post-Masters in educational leadership. After working in politics in Washington, DC, and with NGOs in DC and Thailand, she joined a transition to teaching program.

She has over 20 years of teaching experience, including Social Studies courses, DP History and TOK in IB Schools in the United States, Thailand, and Russia. Sarah also has 13 years of educational leadership experience including Acting Principal, Deputy Principal, DP Coordinator, and Department Head. She believes deeply in building inclusive communities and empowering teachers and students so that learning is inspired.

The entire Clover family, husband Chris, daughters Maeve (16), Evie (14), Kate (10) and Russian rescue dog Luna are excited to join the TASOK community. Sarah's other interests include travel, dance/Zumba, reading, diving, and eating at local restaurants.

### Chris Clover - IB/MYP Social Studies



Chris grew up in Washington, DC, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. He has a BA in History, a Certificate in Teaching Intercultural Communication, and a MA in Secondary Education.

Prior to teaching, Chris traveled extensively and worked in politics, finance, rare books, and inter-cultural relations. He has over 15 years of teaching experience in Secondary in both Social Studies and English, including DP History, TOK, MYP Language & Literature and Individuals & Societies. He is completing a Post-Masters in Educational Leadership and has served as both a DP and an MYP Coordinator. He specializes in intercultural training and is passionate about understanding others through the lens of culture.

He is delighted to be moving to TASOK with his family, wife Sarah, 3 daughters and furry friend Luna. He has lived and worked in the United States, Turkey, Norway, Malaysia, Thailand and Russia and is excited to learn more about the DRC and other parts of Africa. He has played and coached rugby since college and also enjoys reading, diving, cooking, and spending time teasing his daughters.

## Ben N’Gambwa - MYP/DP Learning Support



I am Ben N’Gambwa, and I grew up in Silver Spring, MD, just outside of Washington DC. I attended West Virginia University where I earned my Bachelor’s Degree. Upon graduation from WVU, I started my AmeriCorps career, with a program called City Year. This started my path into education in the District of Columbia Public Schools system. I worked at a middle school in Washington DC, in an 8<sup>th</sup> grade math class for one year, before joining another AmeriCorps program, Teach for America in 2020.

I have been teaching Special Education at the high school level for two years now, working closely with 12<sup>th</sup> grade students.

I am looking to continue with my work in the special education field at TASOK and am excited to be living in Kinshasa and getting accustomed to the new culture. Outside of work I enjoy boxing, listening to music, cooking, dancing, and being outside. I am also working on learning French and Lingala.

## Meritaton Kirigha – PYP French



Bonjour,

My name is Meritaton Kirigha and I am excited to be joining the TASOK team!!

I have a Bachelor of Education degree in French and a B.A. Honors degree in Linguistics. I plan to do my Master’s degree later on this year. I have been teaching the IB curriculum for more than 8 years and I am also an IBDP French Ab initio examiner. I started off my teaching career at the Alliance Française, where I taught for a year before moving on to teach at an IB school in Kenya for about 5 years. After that, I went ahead to teach in South Africa. I enjoy teaching and creating an environment where students can attain their goals and become confident speakers of the French language.

I enjoy traveling – so I am looking forward to exploring the Congo region! I am also a fitness enthusiast and love taking part in various outdoor activities. I am looking forward to getting to know the TASOK family!

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### **Kezia Otoa - PYP/MYP Visual Arts**



Kezia is thrilled to be joining the TASOK faculty as PYP/MYP Visual Arts teacher with her family. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Art and Design and a PGCE from the University of Sunderland. She has worked in Uganda, India, Sudan and China.

Kezia enjoys painting, reading, photography, sculpting and dancing. Her son, Madiba is 10, and enjoys team sports such as basketball, football and also playing drums and piano, while her daughter Malaika 9 loves swimming and creating everything from making her own clothes to painting and making jewelry. Football is her new favorite sport. Kezia's husband Gilbert is passionate about teaching, reading, swimming and soccer. Kezia is looking forward to meeting new students, making new friends and enjoying more adventures in Congo.



### **Gilbert Kaburu**



Gilbert is thrilled to be joining the TASOK community. He is moving to Kinshasa from Tanzania where he is currently the Athletics and Activities Director at the United World College of East Africa, Moshi campus. Gilbert has 20 years' experience and has also taught in Uganda, USA, India, Sudan and China. He has worked as a physical education teacher, aquatics head coach, life skills teacher and residential parent.

Gilbert has a Bachelors in Political Science (International Relations) from Makerere University in Uganda, a Master's in Education from The College of New Jersey, an MA in Education and PhD in Education from Ohio State University. Gilbert represented Uganda in the 2008 Olympics and is passionate about sports, especially soccer and basketball. He enjoys reading, singing, coaching different sports and interacting with students.

Gilbert is Ugandan and is moving to Kinshasa with his wife, Kezia (ES & MYP Visual Art) and son Madiba (10) and daughter Malaika (9). He is looking forward to becoming a member of the TASOK community and interacting with the local and expat community there.

**Clara Sánchez - PYP EAL**



Hi, everyone! I am Carla Sanchez from Merida, Venezuela, and Bogota, Colombia. I have incredible planning skills, and at six, wanted to be a teacher and start a family (I have two children). I graduated in Early Childhood Education because I was inquisitive about children's development and thinking. I later had my first son Rodrigo, and finished my MA in Reading and Writing Education in 2006. I then joined my husband, Julio, in Henderson, KY where we lived until 2016 when Rodrigo graduated from high school. I later enrolled in an MA in TESOL at Murray State University, where I followed my passions of cultures, research, cleaning, and weight lifting.



What happened next? I received training in IB Diploma, Language B, and moved to Jamaica with my husband Julio, who had already begun his journey as an international teacher. We then had Lorenzo, born in 2011 in Kentucky, who has been an international student since kindergarten. Our lives were filled with many experiences, such as natural disasters, traveling, and discovering the world. Julio, Lorenzo, and I moved to China in 2017, where I worked as an ESL teacher in the Chinese Track at Beijing SMIC Private School. Later on, China changed its policy and only provided working visas to Native English Teachers to teach ESL. I am a risk-taker, and my husband is raising our younger son, Lorenzo. Rodrigo is a 24-year-old man who was blessed with a scholarship and is a Harvard Graduate living in Colorado. Even in distance, we are all together and count on each other. Happiness is what fills our lives, and I value family and teaching children. I am thrilled to be part of TASOK.

**Dube Nkululeko - MYP/DP Math**



I am excited to join Tasok because, in my view, I have another opportunity to learn and be of service to others.

I look forward to connecting and interacting with the Tasok community, especially students.

In my 18 years of international teaching across Africa and the Middle East, I have learned that, while passionate about numbers and everything science, I will only learn not more than a dozen words of a new language at a time. That said, I look forward to finally learning French!



I bring along my two daughters - Jessica and Isabella. Together, we like playing chess, traveling, and hiking/camping. Jessica will be bringing along her guitar while Bella will bring her sketchbook.



## YEARBOOKS ARE STILL AVAILABLE!

Get your 2022 '**Special Edition**' now in the Cashier's Office: **Cost \$40**



# Business Office News

Kareen Laplanche - Finance Manager

## Preparing for 2022-2023 School-Year

We just completed the invoicing process for returning families. Tuition agreements and re-enrollment deposits were due by Friday June 3. We distributed the documents electronically to addresses in the students' accounts. If you have not received an invoice or have trouble completing the tuition agreement, contact us as soon as possible for assistance.

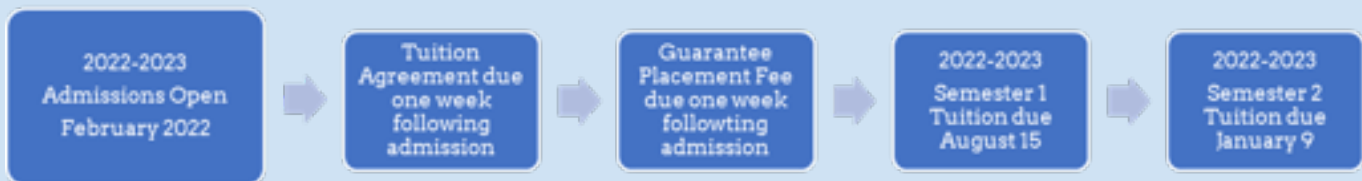
Our office will remain open for regular business until June 24. After this date, we will work with a reduced staff and offer limited services.

Take note to plan accordingly.

### *Returning Students Timeline*



### *New Students Timeline*



## Financial Aid Applications for 2022/23

The Financial Aid window is now closed for semester 1 of the 2022/23 school year.

## Payment Options - Reminder

TASOK offers families and companies the convenience of making tuition payments online. To provide this method of payment, we partner with Diamond Mind/Community Brands, an independent school payment service provider. All payment information is completely secure using the highest security standards in the industry.

### WEBSITE OPTION

Go to the school website's "Payment Portal" link, or enter it directly clicking here: [PAYMENT PORTAL](#)

- Sign-up to set up an online account;
- Enter student first name, last name and ID with payment information; the student ID # is on the invoice;
- Submit payment. Payment acceptance methods and any fees associated with an electronic payment are outlined in the payment portal.
- You can find common answers to online tuition payment questions at <http://diamondmindinc.com/parentFAQ/>.



### MOBILE OPTION

You can also pay using our mobile payment app:  
MySchoolWallet



#### *Signing into the MySchoolWallet App for the first time?*

- Go to the App Store on your phone.
- Search for MySchoolWallet and install.
- Complete your profile and select The American School of Kinshasa as your school and hit PAY.
- You will see various events and departments, listed as payment types. Select one of the payment types and follow the onscreen directions. Be sure to complete the student's name and fill out the NOTE with what the payment is for (for example, Tuition or Student Store, Event, etc...)
- Please check the box *"I would like to absorb processing costs so that the school receives my whole payment."* Each transaction incurs a processing cost from the bank.
- Once your transaction has gone through, you will receive an email confirmation and receipt.



Note that payments can be made via credit card (worldwide), debit card or echeck (for US accounts only). For online payments, receipts are automatically generated after each transaction.

### BANKING OPTION

- Direct deposits (cash or check) at bank counters into TASOK's account are accepted.
- Wire or ACH transfers are accepted.
- Online banking from your bank DRC or US bank to ours is possible. Check with your institution for options available to you.
- Most US transfer options work: wire, ACH, e-check, BillPay, Zelle, etc... These options are only available for US transactions, not international.
- Once the transaction is complete, send the confirmation to us.

### ON CAMPUS OPTION

- TASOK has an ATM station on campus. The ATM machine is located just outside of the Administration Building.
- TASOK Cashier Office accepts debit and credit cards for payments via POS. Both ATM & POS accept VISA® & Mastercard®.
- TASOK Cashier Office accepts paper checks issued to The American School of Kinshasa. Checks from a local DRC or US bank are accepted.

Help is available at the office to help you navigate the TASOK website and experiment with the tuition portal or the mobile app! If you need copies of invoices/agreements or would like a receipt for your payment, please email [accounts@tasok.net](mailto:accounts@tasok.net) .





### Stay informed

Visit the Business Office page [link](#) for details on Tuition Rates, Payment Plans, Financial Aid Application for 2022/23, and Educational Loans at Local Banks.

For questions/comments, contact us at [business@tasok.net](mailto:business@tasok.net) | +(243) 81-880-1330 |

## The 2022/23 Academic Calendar is Here! Also found on our TASOK website [LINK!](#)

2022-2023 TASOK Approved Academic Calendar

August	September	October	November
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December	January	February	March
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April	May	June	July
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**August:** 1 New Faculty First Day, 8 Returning Faculty First Day, 12 New Family Orientation, 15 Student First Day  
**September:** 1 Labor Day  
**October:** 10-14 School Break  
**November:** 23 International Day (1/2), 24 Thanksgiving Day  
**December:** 1 New Year's Day, 16-17 School Break  
**January:** 1 New Year's Day, 4 Martin's Day, 16-17 Breaks Day (No Students), 4 Faculty PD Days  
**April:** 1 Good Friday  
**May:** 1 International Labor Day  
**June:** 1 High School Graduation, 8 Final Day of Classes, 10 Faculty Final Day  
**July:** 4 US Independence Day

**Legend:**  
 Total student days: 178  
 Quarters: Early Dismissal (light blue), Campus Closed (dark blue), Important Date (yellow), Staff Days (grey)

Q1: August 12 – October 21  
 Q2: October 24 – January 13  
 Q3: January 18 – April 6  
 Q4: April 20 – June 9

APPROVED BY THE BOARD 05/10/2022

## New Family Orientation - August 12, 2022

We have over 65 new students and families joining our community next year and look forward to inviting them to *New Family Orientation* that will take place on August 12, 2022.

More information will be shared in late July for those interested in welcoming our new students and family members to TASOK and Kinshasa.

The PTC will also reach out to plan some fun activities for the day - Stay tuned!

