

Banaadir Academy School Newsletter

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Principal: Shawn Fondow
Assistant Director: Danielle Dittrich
Assistant Director: Abdigani Ali
Secretary: Fartun Abdulahi

Principal's News

Shawn Fondow
Director Info

Welcome back for another year at Banaadir Academy! I am very excited for the opportunity to work with all of our students and their families. I will be filling in this year as Interim Director as Mr. Strait serves our country. Providing a positive and safe environment for your child to learn is my top priority.

Banaadir Academy has undergone a few changes over the summer. We have created a primary, intermediate, and middle school wing in our school. This allows us to group our like students and teachers together so they can better share staff and resources. Our middle school schedule has undergone major renovations. Seventh and eighth graders take eight different classes over two days. We feel this model allows for a more well rounded education and will better prepare the students for high school.

The best way for me to serve our families is to know our families. Please feel free to stop by the office and introduce yourself. I look forward to the opportunity to meet with all of our families and hear about the exciting ways we can make Banaadir Academy an even better place for our children to learn.

Thank you,
Mr. Fondow

Danielle Dittrich
Asst. Director Info

I am very excited to begin my role as Assistant Director at Banaadir Academy! I have spent the last four years teaching at our middle school. I previously taught fourth and fifth grade in the Andover schools, and I have spent time working with pre-kindergarten through high school in various capacities. In Mr. Strait's absence it is my mission to work hard in ensuring that our school continues to run with the same success as it did when he was here. We have a wonderful, dedicated staff that is determined to provide your child with high quality education. It is important to me that every student is in a safe, welcoming environment where they can learn and be successful. In turn, parents play a vital role in the school community, and I look forward to working with you. We truly have a special school environment as the result of our students, staff and parents working together. Thank you to all the students, staff and parents for a wonderful school year!

Thank you,
Ms. Dittrich

Welcome to a new school year! The teachers and staff here at Banaadir are very excited to welcome your students to the school for a great year.

We want to welcome you to come to school at any point, but please check in with Ms Fartun in the office before making your way to see your child.

Thank you!



Our 2011-2012 Staff!

This year we have had quite a few changes in staffing here at Banaadir. Some teachers have changed classrooms, and we have some great new teachers on staff!

Julie Law, one of our Title 1 teachers is now teaching Kindergarten
Staci Ahrens, our middle school math teacher is now teaching 4th grade

Ashley Olthoff is in 1st grade

Jenna Vogelsang is in 2nd grade

Rachel Javitch is in 3rd grade

Mandy Elder is in 4th grade

Andrea Eilertson is in 6th grade

Andrew Phillips is the 7th grade homeroom teacher

Mary Engelun is the 8th grade homeroom teacher

Banaadir Middle School

Our Middle School program has been revamped, and the students are being taught by content specific teachers from the MTS High School that shares a building with us. This should be a great experience for our 7th and 8th grade students.

Mr. Viren is teaching Language Arts
Ms. Jensen is teaching Math
Mr. Ombasa is teaching Science

Mr. Monsrud is teaching Social Studies
Ms. Gruhn is teaching Art
Mr. Prescott and Mr. Duggan are teaching computer skills

Upcoming Important Dates

October 20 and 21st - No School for MEA (educator's conference)

October 27th - Family night

November 3rd - Last day of the 1st quarter

November 4th - Staff Development day (No school for students)

November 6th - Daylight Savings (Don't forget to turn your clocks back 1 hour)

November 7th - EID Holiday (No school for students)

November 17th - Parent teacher conferences 4:00-7:00

November 23rd - Staff Development Day (No school for students)

November 24th and 25th - Thanksgiving Holiday (No School)



We, Mrs. Kerl and Mrs. Uzendoski, would like to personally invite you to our first **Banaadir Family night** of the school year!

On Thursday **October 27th** we will be having a wonderful event here at Banaadir that will include activities and a meal for you to share with your child and their teachers.

We are looking forward to seeing you here at school from **4:30-6:30**.

You will be receiving more information in your child's backpack. Make sure to keep an eye out for the details!



The staff members here at Banaadir would like to introduce themselves!

Abdighani M. Ali, Assistant Director, abdighani@mtcs.org

Hello, my name is Mr. Ali and I am the Assistant Director at Banaadir Academy. Additionally, I am the executive director of the Somali Communities of America, the founder of Islamic Foundation of America, the vice president of Ihsan Relief Organization and the director of Al-furqan Institute of Arabic and Islamic Education. I am also a registered imam in Hennepin County.

My educational back ground includes an AA in Computer Programming from MCTC, a Bachelor's Degree of Business Management from St. Mary's, a Master's Degree in Islamic Law at the Islamic University of Minnesota, Master's Degree of Educational Leadership at St. Mary's University of Minnesota. I am also a Candidate of Doctor of Educational Leadership at St. Mary's University and PhD of Islamic Studies at Graduate Theological Foundation.

Fartun Abdulahi, School Secretary, fabdulahi@mtcs.org

My name is Fartun Abdulahi and this is my third year working at Banaadir as the school secretary. I have two years of college education with certificates in Office Administration and Medical Management. I also have five children. I look forward to another great year here at Banaadir!

Sahro Jama, Teacher's Aide, sjama@mtcs.org

My name is Sahro Jama. I'm a Teacher's aide. This is my fifth year at Banaadir Academy. My education is a two year Program of Early Childhood Education at Rasmussen College in Eagan, MN.

Richard Burton, Teacher's Aide, rburton@mtcs.org

My name is Richard Burton (Hamza). I've been working at Banaadir for six years. I work in the ISS room. The ISS room is a place where your child may or may not spend time. This room is designed for recovery, or for students to change their behavior or just to talk about what is on their minds. Sometimes it's a tough position, because when the kids see you they always think that they are in trouble. I hope to meet all of our students' parents on conference day.

Nicole Peterson, Kindergarten teacher, npeterson@mtcs.org

Hello, my name is Nicole Peterson. I am teaching Kindergarten at Banaadir Academy. This is my 6th year teaching Kindergarten. I attended college at University Wisconsin-La Crosse. While in La Crosse I earned a Bachelors of Science in Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education. In 2006 I moved to Minnesota. My husband and I have a house in Bloomington. This year we welcomed our first son, Noah, into our family. We enjoy living near the city where there are so many exciting experiences. I spend much of my free time reading and being outdoors.

Julie Law, Kindergarten teacher, jlaw@mtcs.org

Welcome to Kindergarten! My name is Julie Law and I am one of two kindergarten teachers at Banaadir Academy. I am a graduate of the St. Cloud State University and have been teaching for three years. This is my second year at Banaadir. Last year, I was a Title I Teacher. As many of you know, I was out the first five weeks of school due to maternity leave. My daughter, Claire, is 11 weeks old now and doing great. I'm so excited to finally meet all the kindergarteners and ready for a great school year. Please visit our classroom any time and we can show you around the room!

Molly McGuire, 1st grade teacher, mmcguire@mtcs.org

Hello my name is Molly McGuire and I am one of the first grade teachers here at Banaadir Academy. I have been teaching for 14 years and I am very excited about my first grade class this year. I look forward to getting to know all of you as the year progresses. Make sure you look through your child's take-home folder each day. There will be important notes, spelling lists (this will not come home with your child until October), graded work and tests, and homework assignments. Please let me know if you feel the homework is too hard for your child.

Ashley Olthoff, 1st grade teacher, aolthoff@mtcs.org

My name is Ashley Olthoff, first grade teacher at Banaadir Academy. I am very excited to welcome you and your child to my classroom this year. This is my first year teaching first grade at Banaadir. I am a graduate of Metropolitan State University with a major in Urban Elementary Education. Last school year I was a substitute teacher here at Banaadir. And over the summer I worked as a preschool teacher at a homeless shelter in Minneapolis. I have enjoyed getting to know your children in the past few weeks, and look forward to meeting you as well. If you would like to meet with me to discuss your child's performance please feel free to call or stop by before or after school. It is going to be a great school year!

Rebecca Patterson, 2nd grade teacher, rpatterson@mtcs.org

Dear Families of Banaadir,

My name is Rebecca Patterson and I am proud to say I am beginning my fifth year teaching here! It has been a beautiful experience watching my former 2nd graders grow older and accomplish more and more. I like getting to know my new 2nd grade class and have had many of their older brothers and sisters in the past. I think that being connected to the family is very important.

This year we will continue to become better readers and writers. In math we will tell time, measure, count money, and begin multiplication among other things. In science we will learn about plants, planets, and animals. In social studies, we will study the people and places of the world. I hope to have a great year!

Jenna Vogelsang, 2nd grade teacher, jvogelsang@mtcs.org

Hello, my name is Jenna Vogelsang. I am a 2nd grade teacher at Banaadir Academy. I grew up in Albert Lea, MN and attended Minnesota State University for my Age 3-6th grade teaching license. I am very diligent in striving to fulfill my number one priority as a teacher: ensuring that all students have the opportunity to learn and are provided the necessary tools to achieve success. I am so excited for the school year and can't wait to see what it has in store for the students.

Rachel Javitch, 3rd grade teacher, rjavitch@mtcs.org

Hello Banaadir parents! My name is Rachel Javitch, and I come to you from Omaha, Nebraska. This is my 4th year as a teacher and I am excited to be teaching 3rd grade at Banaadir! I just moved to Minneapolis this summer and am thrilled to be living in such a wonderful city. My favorite things to do are play tennis, go running, play music, speak Spanish, travel and read books. I am looking forward to watching my students grow into role models and improve their behavior and academics as the year goes on.

Michael Edwards, 3rd grade teacher, medwards@mtcs.org

Hello! My name is Michael Edwards, and I am one of the third grade teachers here at Banaadir Academy. This is my thirteenth year of teaching, and my fifth here at Banaadir. I have spent most of my career teaching third grade, and all of it in the Minneapolis Metro area. I have been married for 17 ½ years, and we have a 10 year old daughter, who is in the 4th grade this year. I enjoy reading, fishing, hunting, watching football on TV, and spending time with my family. I am looking forward to another year with the students here at Banaadir!

Staci Ahrens, 4th grade teacher, sahrens@mtcs.org

Hello parents! My name is Staci Ahrens, and I am very excited to be back for my third year teaching here at Banaadir Academy. This year I am making the switch from teaching Middle School Math to teaching 4th grade. So far, I love the change! I live in Hastings with my husband, 4 children (ages 14, 10 and 8 year old twins) and various pets. I am originally from Wisconsin and am an avid Packer Fan (as my students have noticed by my coffee mugs)! I love to read, attend my children's sporting events (softball, basketball, volleyball, soccer, and football) and do Sudoku puzzles. I'm looking forward to another wonderful year here at MTS!

Miranda Elder, 4th grade teacher, melder@mtcs.org

Hello my name is Mandy Elder. I am a fourth grade teacher at Banaadir Academy. It is my first year here and so far it has been great getting to know all the students. I grew up in Eagan, Minnesota and attended Hamline University. I am currently taking classes at the University of Minnesota to get my masters degree. I love teaching and seeing how much the students grow throughout the year. I am very excited to be at this school and work with your kids. I look forward to meeting all of you as well. In my spare time I enjoy reading, playing basketball, and watching the Vikings!

Joe Hutchins, 5th grade teacher, jhutchins@mtcs.org

Hi my name is Joe Hutchins and I am the fifth grade teacher here at Banaadir. I graduated from the University of St. Thomas with a double major in Elementary Education and Psychology. Following my experience at St. Thomas I student taught and spent time in the St. Paul Public Schools. I'm getting more excited for the school year every week I'm in the classroom. The students have shown great potential in the first few weeks of school! I hope to stay in constant communication with you throughout the school year.

Andrea Eilertson, 6th grade teacher, aeilertson@mtcs.org

Hi, I'm Ms. Eilertson and I will be teaching 6th grade at Banaadir Academy this school year. I originally grew up in a town called Kiester, MN population 500 people. So a very small town. I went to Hamline University in St. Paul and have been in the Twin Cities area ever since. When I'm not teaching I'm usually coaching basketball or tennis and helping people reach their fitness goals. I'm excited for the school year and can't wait to achieve wonderful things with the 6th grade class!

Patrick Dreher, Physical Education teacher, pdreher@mtcs.org

I graduated from St Cloud State University with a degree in Health and Physical Education. I have been working at MTS elementary since April of 2011. I am excited to work with all the great students at Banaadir Academy.

Abdimahad Mohamed, Arabic teacher, amohamed@mtcs.org

Hello, this is my fourth year working at Banaadir Academy as the Arabic teacher. I look forward to working with all the students in kindergarten through eighth grade again this year.

Andrew Phillips, Middle School Lead Teacher aphillips@mtcs.org

Hello, My name is Andrew Phillips and I am the Middle School Lead Teacher at Banaadir. I will be working mostly with the Middle School Students (7th and 8th Grade), but I also will be working with each student in the Arabic Classes. I am excited to learn a little bit of the language. I grew up in the Twin Cities and Love living and working here. I'm excited to have a great school year and get to know each and everyone of you.

Laurie Wagner, Special Education, lwagner@mtcs.org

I have college degrees in elementary and special education and have taught for many years. This is my second year at Banaadir Academy. I love working with the students and staff here. When I am not teaching I enjoy many different outdoor activities including skiing, biking, walking my dog, and watching my two teenage sons play soccer. I also love to read. The Harry Potter books (and movies) are some of my favorites.

Ruth Kerl, Title 1 teacher, rkerl@mtcs.org

Hello Banaadir parents. I am a Title 1 teacher here at school and it is my job to help your children with their reading and math skills. If your children's test scores show that they are in need of some extra reading or math help, I will be working with them throughout the year in small groups. I am very excited to work with them and plan on having a great year with the students.

I am a trained ESL teacher and reading teacher with an elementary background and have worked with many students around the state, as well as in Seoul, Korea. I hope to meet you all soon.

Ann Uzendoski, Title 1 Teacher, auzendoski@mtcs.org

Hello, Banaadir Academy! My name is Ann Uzendoski but children often call me "Mrs. U." I am thrilled to be teaching at Banaadir with such talented students and supportive families and staff. I have just completed a month-long kindergarten guest teacher position and will now start working with Ruth Kerl as a teacher in the Title One program in the intermediate grades (4th– 6th grade). As a Title One teacher, I will be tutoring students to provide extra support in reading and math. I love teaching and am excited to begin working with children in small groups at Banaadir Academy!

Jennifer Scheffler, ELL Coordinator, jscheffler@mtcs.org

Hi my name is Ms. Scheffler. I am very excited to be back at Banaadir this year and I look forward to getting to know each student through programming and testing. I studied at the University of Minnesota and this is my sixth year as a teacher. I love language and it is my goal to learn more Somali this year so feel free to stop in and teach me a new word or expression!

Molly Sanders, ELL teacher, msanders@mtcs.org

Hello, my name is Molly Sanders. I am an ELL teacher at Banaadir Academy I will be working with students in grades 3 through 5. I grew up near Minneapolis and attended the University of Minnesota, where I received a B.A. in Japanese and later my ESL license and Masters of Education. Prior to teaching at Banaadir Academy, I taught ESL in Osaka, Japan and in the Anoka-Hennepin District. I am looking forward to another great year.

Mary Engelun, ELL teacher, 8th grade homeroom teacher, mengelun@mtcs.org

Hello, my name is Mary Engelun. I am an ELL teacher at Banaadir Academy, and I will be working with students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. Before coming to Banaadir I taught Social Studies and ESL to high school students who were immigrants or refugees. I enjoy working with students whose culture is different from my own. Here at Banaadir I am the 8th grade homeroom teacher and I am also working with small groups focused on language learning. It is going to be a great year and I am excited to be a part of this school.

Andrew Dwyer, ELL teacher, adwyer@mtcs.org

Hello, my name is Andrew Dwyer. I am an ELL teacher at Banaadir Academy, and I will be working with students in Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades. I grew up in Elk River, Minnesota and attended the University of Minnesota. Before becoming a teacher, I lived and studied in Germany, where I developed a love for language. I believe that having strong language skills is important for students to succeed in all subjects at school. I look forward to sharing my love of language with the students at Banaadir Academy.