

ISO 2021-2022 New Staff Bios

T. Scott Chaffin



A fighter pilot. That is what I was going to be. Of course, that was way back when the movie *Top Gun* came out in theaters. I took all the steps to achieve that too. My goal was to be accepted into one of the most difficult institutions in the United States in which to gain entrance - The United States Naval Academy. I did it. And then I turned it down. It did not seem like a smart decision at the time. But it was. Because I became a teacher. This was the best decision I have ever made.

Teaching. I absolutely love my job, my calling. I love the students. I love the atmosphere of schools. I love my discipline. I love reading. I love writing. I love Mondays (This statement often causes shock and horror in others!). I love working with other teachers. And, I love learning. I have taught all grades 6-12, and I will be teaching Upper School English at ISO.

Outside of school, I have several interests. Similar to a majority of other international teachers, I simply cannot get enough of travel. Whenever there is down time and I am able, I will be on an airplane headed to some foreign location, most likely a place I have never been. I am also very keen on outdoor activities. Fishing (any type) is an activity I particularly enjoy. I do also look forward to hiking, camping, skiing, and water sports. I have also started to learn how to cook. I have a long way to go to improve in this area, however.

Nelda Dafinis

I am very excited to be joining the team at the International School of Ouagadougou and getting to know the students and my new colleagues.

Ms. Nelda Dafinis has been an educator in the U.S. for almost 10 years. She is a certified Kindergarten through 6th grade teacher from Miami, Florida and Haitian-American. Although she speaks Haitian-Creole fluently, she is currently learning French. She earned her bachelor's degree in social work at the University of Central Florida. She then went on to earn her Master's degree in Education/Community and Social Change from the University of Miami. Ms. Dafinis has also worked with students in Cape Town, South Africa. She believes education can be a tool for social change. Ms. Dafinis enjoys getting to know all of her students, building relationships with them, and looks forward to joining the ISO community!



Niocie Browne

My name is Niocie Browne, and I am incredibly enthusiastic about joining the International School of Ouagadougou as a Mathematics Teacher. I started my 18-year teaching career in my home country – Guyana. In 2002, I earned my Secondary teaching credentials from the Teacher Training College in Guyana. I then completed my Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics in 2010. In 2013, I graduated from Walden University in Minnesota with a Master of Science in Education specializing in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. I am currently working on my Doctorate in Educational Administration and Leadership.



I gained my first six years of international school teaching experience at the American International School in Guyana before joining the American International School in Brazzaville, where I spent five years. I have a passion for teaching, and seeing students grow motivates me to continue on my exciting journey as an educator.

My teaching philosophy is to create and maintain an atmosphere where every student feels accepted and appreciated regardless of their differences. Instruction is differentiated to meet the needs of diverse learners, and they are encouraged not to measure themselves against other students. In my classroom, we recognize and celebrate growth. I instill in my students that success is measured by how much they can improve from their previous efforts.

I would be joining ISO with my 8-year-old daughter Ameerah and our dog Waggles. We enjoy cooking, singing, and dancing together. During vacations, we love to travel, camp, hike, or relax on the beach.

Keyara Fleece



Hello! I am so excited to be joining ISO as the new elementary music/IT teacher. I am thrilled to be able to share two of my greatest passions with you. I am coming to Ouaga with my husband, Amadou and my 3 year old son, Alpha. As a music teacher, I have taught students in Asia and the United States ranging from ages 3 - 18. While clarinet is my primary instrument, you will find me playing ukulele, piano or using the natural instrument that we all have access to: voice! I love spreading the joy and excitement that come with exploring all of the beautiful moments that we can create through musical expression. As a technologist,

I have trained with Google engineers to learn how to develop Android applications and I actively build and break things pretty much daily in whatever my programming language du jour may be. My graduate study was in Special Education and I love working with learners of the beautifully diverse backgrounds that they come from. I hope to share with my students the joy of embracing all parts of their unlimited selves and the power of having a growth mindset versus a fixed mindset. À bientôt !

Julia Kaye Jones



I am pleased to introduce myself to you all. Ms. Julia Kaye Jones is my name. I am elated to join the elementary school team at ISO. This is sure to be an exciting school year of learning, as we participate in hands-on, inquiry-based learning activities. Students can expect opportunities to collaborate with classmates and individual learning opportunities.

Here is a little information about me. I was born in Chicago, USA. At Faulkner University I earned my Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. Later, I attended William Carey University, where I earned my Master's degree in Education. Currently, I am working to receive my Doctorate's degree in Education Leadership.

I taught grades 2-7 in the USA. I also worked as Strategic Interventionist for struggling readers. I served as Lead Teacher for a Grade 4 team of 12 teachers.

I relocated to the UAE, Abu Dhabi in 2016 to begin my international educator journey. At Emirates National School, I taught grade 1 for 3 years. I earned certifications as an IB World Teacher. I also served as a Grade 1 Coordinator for 2 years. I then went on to serve as Literacy Coordinator for a school of 1200 students. My total teaching experience amounts to 17 years.

I look forward to relocating to Burkina Faso and joining the amazing team of educators at the International School of Ouagadougou.

Dean Jex

My name is Dean Jex. I am eagerly anticipating the opportunities and challenges ahead at the International School of Ougadagagou.

My career in education spans over 25 years, beginning in public education and then on to private International Schools in Guatemala, Morocco, and now Bujumbura, Burundi. I have taught at the Elementary, Middle and High School levels, and have served in administrative roles in both Middle School and High School.

Next year, my focus will be on helping students take ownership of their learning and working with them to improve their critical thinking skills. I hope to accomplish this through support and instruction in the disciplines of Social Studies and IB Economics.

In addition to teaching, I will be supporting Mr. Trudeau, Ms. Pichette (IB Coordinator), Ms. Sanfo (Dean of students), our teachers, and our students with some Upper School Administrative responsibilities.

I believe that taking a genuine interest in people rests at the core of all successful relationships. Encouraging students to reflect, take risks and care about each other are important to me.

I enjoy travelling, reading, cooking and staying fit.

Once again, I am excited to partner with all stakeholders of the International School of Ouagadougou to provide the best possible educational experience for the students.

