



ABA Parent Teacher Association
Open Meeting

Monday 17 September 2018

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Grade 6 Common Room

Members Present:

Alison Al-Maskari

Kathja Keuning

Michelle Doyle

Inaam Naboulsi

Tara Novacek

Reem Hassan

Mayssam Alsaadi

Reem Alshaikh

Leena Al Bastaki

Lobna Khardani

Dana AlBasha

Jinane T. Helou

Vanessa McCarron

Shanoona Al barwani

Juveria Shahab

Minita Sampat

Sepideh Amiri



Terry Dontis

Abdalkareem Al Balushi

Wendy Ting

Nadia Naber

Clauss Niazi

Tony Tony

Pooja Chamadia

Reem Al Lawati

Melanie Pitcher

Diana El Bizri

Sherna Cooper

Rebecca Mitchell

Sonya Simmonds

Michelle Roberts

Ekta Pangasa

Attendees from PTA Executive Committee:

Lama Samman	Chair
Meeta Khira	Co-Vice Chair Elementary
Anjum Khan	Co-Vice Chair Elementary
Theresa Rabie	Vice Chair Secondary
Bokamoso Kumwenda	Elementary Secretary
Hiba Kamal	Secondary Secretary



Dina Wahib	Elementary New Parent Coordinator
Alaa Mohamed Ali	Secondary New Parent Coordinator
Nandita Shukla	Co-Chair ECE & Elementary Parent Representative
Hend Farouk	Co-Chair ECE & Elementary Parent Representative
Evelyn Hon	Secondary Parent Representative
Laila Al Mawali	Logistics Coordinator
Rund Fanek	Elementary Activities Coordinator
Elaheh Karimi	Secondary Activities Coordinator

Absentees from PTA Executive Committee:

Paula Colaco	Treasurer
Janki Sampat	Communications Liaison

Meeting opened at 7.40am

Welcome

Meeting opened by Lama Samman; welcomed parents and faculty present.

ABA Faculty:

Simon Taylor – ABA Superintendent

Simon introduced himself to new parents. Having been Superintendent for the past four years, this will be his final year at ABA. He informed attendees that the process of finding a successor is underway. He expressed how much he has enjoyed being a part of this wonderful school and that the PTA is very important and reminded the association that he knows and values the role of the PTA. He expressed how please he was to see the large number of the parent community and commented on the Grade 6 common room being the ideal place for Open Meetings from now on.



Simon reflected back to May during the PTA AGM, when people were being “encouraged” to participate in the PTA’s various sub-committees. He was happy to see that so many had volunteered and were doing a great job.

Simon reported that the school year has begun very well and great things are planned for this year. Kids are generally coming on time, though there are some that seem sleepy coming into school.

Simon mentioned that the traffic situation has improved coming in to the school but slow going out. He mentioned that there has been talks to the ROP to change the timing of the traffic lights; at certain times of the day ABA traffic gets more “green lights” to allow smooth flow of traffic.

Sam Cook – Elementary Principal

Sam introduced herself as the Elementary Principal and reported that the year has gotten off to a great start. She echoed Simon’s words about ABA being a great school with a wonderful atmosphere. ABA is very much a family and that is largely attributed to the work of the PTA.

Sam said she was looking forward to collaborating with the PTA this year, mentioning that her office, located in the Admin building, is open should anyone need to see her. Alternatively, she is happy to receive emails with and questions or suggestions anyone may have.

Kathleen Bowin – Middle School Principal

Kathleen introduced herself as the newly appointed Middle School Principal. She said she was thrilled to work with the PTA and in partnership with the students.

Kathleen reported that the first student council meeting was held the day before (16 September 2018) and there are three date on the calendar to have after school activities. She encouraged them to reach out to the PTA for support.

She thanked the PTA for the warm welcome. She reminded parents that her office is in the Secondary building and she is happy to welcome parents whenever they need anything.

New Teacher Representatives

Lama welcomed and introduced the new Teacher representatives;

Kendra Glider for Elementary and Pete Lawton for Secondary she invited them to say a few words.



Kendra is a K3 teacher, her fourth year at ABA. She said she is happy to join the PTA, though not sure what the post entails. Nevertheless, she is onboard and excited for the year to come. In addition to her teaching and PTA roles, she coaches MESAC swimming.

Pete introduced himself. Having just joined ABA he expressed that he was happy to be here. He hoped that all the goodwill and energy the PTA has in support of the Elementary manifests its way up to the Middle school and ultimately to the High school.

Simon Walker – High School Principal

Simon opened his remarks with the report that the school has the best diploma results in more than 10 years. The top score was Umniya Al Khalili with 44 points and has been celebrated even in the national press as this result is very rarely achieved worldwide. In addition to this, however, was that there were two other students who got 43 points.

Simon reminded parents that those top-end numbers only tell part of the story because it's the students that have lower points that they see the biggest improvements. Some students, had they been in another school they would not have gotten the support they need in order to be able to pass well enough to get their diploma. We want our children to do their best, both the parents and the teachers.

Simon commented on the new PTA structure and was happy to have met with the Secondary School PTA members with Kathleen Bowin. He said they were keen to have regular and ongoing communication with the Secondary School team and he thinks the conversations they have had already have been fruitful. He thanked them for their time and for the meeting.

Simon reported that there are a lot of things going on, namely the first year of eAssessments for Grade 10. He reminded Grade 10 parents of the message from Mr. Barker about the Information Session scheduled before the Meet-the-Teacher meetings coming up. He explained that the Meet-the-Teacher is an informal meeting with teachers which gives an opportunity for parents, both new and old, to get to know and connect with the teachers.

Simon reminded parents of Early release next Monday, 24 September 2018. Students will be released at 12:15. This will not apply to Grade 10 as they will use this time for their personal projects. Simon explained that although they have regular meeting times as departmental faculty, they use these Early release days to bring all the staff together and focus on the bigger picture of learning and teaching from the 3-year-old level to the 17-year-old level. This allows a cohesive approach to school development work.



Simon also reminded that the last Thursday of every month is a non-school uniform day and the upcoming non-uniform day will be on the 27th, which will be Peace Day. All students will come wearing white.

Simon mentioned the High School Coffee mornings start next week, 2 October, for Grade 11 and Grade 12. This year they will be on Tuesdays to include Mr. Essex who is unable to attend on Wednesdays. These will be the last Tuesday of every month and will alternate Grade 11 and Grade 12 and Grade 9 and 10. Forms will be sent prior to the meeting for parents to submit any questions they may have and these will be addressed during the meeting. The location for these meetings will be determined.

Paul Brace – Athletics Director

Paul introduced himself and expressed that he was happy to see the number of people who came to the meeting, and he hoped it continues throughout the year.

Elementary after school program has kicked off and has gone well. He talked about the uniqueness of the signup procedure and stressed that parents need to be ready at 6 pm when it opens up. The recent signup resulted in 85 signups in the first 15 minutes. He again stressed that parents need to be ready for sign up as soon as its opened. He suggested having different templates; computer Ipad, phone on various browsers so parents can sign up as quickly as possible.

ASA communications are done by the person facilitating the ASA. Parents should have received an introductory email from the ASA supervisors which outlines what the activity entails as well as absentee procedures.

Middle school and High school have no official ASA sign up procedure. Some activities take place during breaktimes, and before school. The children are encouraged to take responsibility for their ASAs and speak to the ASA supervisors directly. This also includes the coaches of various sports. The email communication comes from the coaches and they have already sent the schedule as well as all the details for the season.

There have been various changes that have been implemented namely unforeseen and sudden cancelations by other schools. In the event of such cancelations, the kids will be kept and trained for the duration of the allotted time until parents are able to pick them up.

Aladdin (rehearsals) have started, and the response been great; well represented by both the Middle and High School, involving over 40 students.

This year the children have had to make a choice between the drama and the sports components. In Middle school it's flexible so students can participate in both, but in High school students have



to make the decision between the two. This new change has worked well so far as it has eliminated the problem of students having two different activities demanding their attention at the same time.

MESAC – the Doha situation: still prevents Doha from hosting, so Oman and India will alternate in hosting MESAC this year, allowing Doha to participate and run the events. Paul explained that they bill Doha for the ground work they do for them.

(This week) the athletics directors will be meeting, with the Superintendent, to continue organizing the event. There has been some disappointing news about Season 3; which is scheduled during ABA's Spring Break in April. Unfortunately, ABA students will not be able to participate in the Track, Badminton and Forensics. However, there is an alternative opportunity for them to compete in Dubai. This tournament takes place on the 21st and 22nd of March, which will allow students to participate before exams.

Paul expressed appreciation of the Booster Club's support which works closely with the PTA. He applauded them for having achieved a great deal in the three years the Club has been running.

PTA Calendar and Website

Lama highlighted how hard the PTA has been working during the summer to have the Calendar ready for the first day of school. It has been well received and appreciated by the parent community.

Lama went through the new PTA website, accessible through the Parent Portal on the ABA Webpage. She highlighted the PTA Structure, introducing the members of the PTA present at the meeting. Lama noted that Laila; the logistics coordinator is in the process of creating a digitized inventory of PTA resources with images.

The PTA calendar on the website not only includes PTA events, but also information regarding the availability of the PTA Room. The new volunteer section allows for parents to fill in their details and volunteer for the activities and events they'd like. Lama assured parents that their information will only be sent to the relevant people for the activities they volunteer for.

The Blue Book is now under Parent Info. Updating it is still underway.

HRP workshop – HRP Information and Guidelines will be available on the site after the workshop.

PTA news – this portion of the site will have PTA event news as well as anything posted in the ABA Newsletter.



The PTA Minutes will also be uploaded and made available. The previous years' minutes will be archived.

There was a question asked about the online PTA calendar; if parents would be able to make bookings directly. Lama clarified that in order to book the PTA Room, an email needs to be sent to the Secretaries and they would be the ones making the bookings on the site. Another option would be for parents to book on the booking form in the PTA room and the information will be updated to the website. Lama explained that the reason for this was to keep bookings secure and prevent deletions.

Fund requests

PTA fund requests are for teachers to request PTA money for their various projects and activities. An example was given of Paul Brace requesting funds to purchase shades for the PE department which were used for MESAC, ICF and other school events.

This year fund requests will be done via a Google form sent to all staff this week and unlike previous years, there will be deadlines for submission. The deadline for the first round of requests will be the 30th September 2018, and the second-round deadline is the 24th January 2019. In order to avoid requests carrying over from one year to the next; everything needs to be delivered and paid for by 6th May 2019. This will facilitate smooth, complete transition of the PTA from one year to the next.

Treasurer's Report

Lama Samman presented the Treasury Report noting a total balance of RO 15, 451.311 to be brought forward from June 2018 as the beginning balance for PTA 2018/2019.

Spending to date has been RO 838.025

Update on the following was given:

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| 1. Tables from Sultan Center 19/40 ordered | 19 received |
| 2. Drums (for music department?) | completed |
| 3. Cleaning PTA sofas and repairs | completed |
| 4. Upholstering PTA Chairs | quotes received |
| 5. Calendar printing and sales | 300 ordered & received |
| 6. PTA pop up shades | Fund request closed, all items delivered. |
| 7. Books for Mother Language Program | In process |



Expenditure in Omani Rials:

Drums	232.000
Cleaning PTA Room	75.000
Calendars (300 copies)	160.000
Groceries for PTA	11.275
Chairs PTA (upholstering)	81.000
Gift for Turinda	50.000
Flowers (Staff appreciation)	11.250
Snacks (Staff appreciation)	7.500
Name Plate (JP)	10.000
Year-end honorarium (2 gardeners)	200.000

Income Report:

Calendar sales – RO 432.500 (sold 144)

Upcoming Events

Elaheh introduced the new PTA event Tuesday Talks and Travels (TTT), explaining that it will be very exciting and interactive this year. The first TTT will be Child Emotional Wellbeing in School and shared with parents that a guest from Whispers of Serenity will be the speaker on the TTT scheduled for September 25, 2018. The new component of TTT would be the Travels which will involve visiting various places in and around Muscat. Other TTTs include boat rides, cultural excursions, CPR training from the American Heart Association and art workshops are also planned for this year. Elaheh encouraged parents to make suggestions of their own as a way of enhancing the program. Elaheh emphasized the need for ideas and suggestions to support the Secondary School parents

Lama reminded that some of these activities are paid, i.e. CPR training. Sign up will be opened up ahead of time; payable at the Accounts office.

The CPR training does result in a 2-year CPR certification from the American Heart Association. Training will be done on campus in the morning; approximately 8am – 12:30pm. Sign up was done after the meeting.

The CRP course may run over 2 days, but specific detail will be worked out once people have signed up and we get further information from the American Heart Foundation.



Lama encouraged parents to consider these TTT as times they can focus on themselves, relax and have fun. Even the more serious talks will be interactive and fun.

Rund went through the upcoming events for the Elementary. This included the HRP Workshop on the 2 October 2018. She stressed the important of attendance as there will be new HRP guidelines introduced.

More events to come:

DATE	EVENT	LEAD
2nd October:	HRP Workshop	Nandita Shukla
1st November:	Spooktacular	Clauss Niazi
2nd November:	Flea Market	Evelyn Hon
11th -15th November :	National Day pop up	Alaa Mohammed
18th November :	National Day Oman	Ms. Batool
2nd December:	Santa's Workshop	Minita Sampat
6th December :	Winter Fest	Hend Farouk

Rund encouraged parents to volunteer, reminding them of the online forms available, and to feel free to contact the Activities Coordinators with any questions.

Lama clarified that HRP (Home Room Parent) Workshop was for those that have been confirmed as HRPs.

Clauss pointed out that the HRP Workshop was scheduled the same day as the Grade 11 coffee morning and this may affect the attendance of some. Lama explained that there will be an evening workshop scheduled to accommodate those that cannot make it in the morning.

Home Room Parents (HRP) Program

Nandita outlined the purpose of the HRP program which is to help the school, the teachers and parents, whether new to the school or not. The aims are to assist in maintaining good relationships with the class teachers and have communication from the school, teachers and PTA reach the parents at the right time. HRP help the teachers organize class events; parties, crafts, school field trips etc. This involves getting volunteers to participate which means the HRP doesn't always need to be there in the classroom. HRPs also helps in welcoming and integrating new parents. The New Parent Representatives will introduce new parents to the HRP.

HRPs need to be informed about PTA events in order to communicate these to parents.

Nandita explained how to become an HRP and the process involved.



The HRP Workshop will cover the important changes implemented to improve the HRP Program. This includes new communication procedures.

Police Clearances

New school policy requires all parent volunteers who will be alone with children at any point to get a police clearance from the ROP. This is a key requirement of the accreditation this year. Admin will assist parents in getting police clearances. The cost of getting a Police Clearance is RO 20 for expatriates and RO 5 for Omanis. The PTA is in talks with Admin about the possibility of the School covering the cost for these clearances – this is dependent on the number of parent volunteers.

Evelyn covered the Secondary classes that currently do not have HRPs and asked for volunteers to fill those spots. Grade 6 in particular needs volunteers for all the classes to assist particularly during the Adventure Oman excursion. Evelyn got a volunteer for 6.4 – Sonya.

Evelyn also explained the one parent can be HRP for 2 classes, but the ideal situation would be for each class to have their own. New parents are encouraged to be HRPs.

Spooktacular

Spooktacular will take place on Thursday 1st November 2018. Clauss Niazi, who is taking the lead in organizing the event, briefly explained what the event is and what it will entail at ABA: a safe environment for kids to trick or treat and get candy. Although the event is for the Elementary School, it does involve the Middle and the High School students who take care of the ‘Spooky Houses’. This is organized by the Student Council and various charity groups that raise money for different organizations and charities. Parents and ABA Ambassadors manage the Trick or Treat Lane. Parents are able to sponsor a door and decorate it. A photo slide show was shown to give parents an idea of the event. Themes are child friendly with a rule of no witches and no ghosts.

To get involved or to sponsor a door– contact trickortreat@abaoman.org

More information will be available in the newsletter.

Flea Market and Bake Sale

Evelyn Hon, who is taking the lead in coordinating the Flea Market, reviewed the event history, and went on to explain that there will be 3 flea markets this year.

The first one; is scheduled for 2nd November 2018 and table registration is currently open and the list is managed in the Accounts office.



There is also need for volunteers to manage various stations during the event and donations of baked goods for the Bake Sale

Booster Club

Vanessa expressed that she was looking forward to the year ahead. She gave a brief background of the Booster Club and its purpose on campus; support of the ABA Sport and Art programs.

Vanessa gave an overview of the Booster Club Calendar and though information is not on the website, but very much active on campus. The first event will be the *Ice Frenzy* on the 27 September 2018.

The Booster Club is working on new merchandise which will be available both for parents and kids. More information coming soon.

Vanessa was pleased to announce that they have exceeded their expectations and have been able to reach their goals sooner than expected. Allowing them to give back to the school sporting programs – the MPSL, MSSL and MESAC programs. More information will be available soon.

Mother Language Program

Diana, the parent coordinator of the Mother Language Program gave a brief overview of the program; a parent led and parent run after school program supporting bilingual ABA students.

Registration for new languages will open up Sunday, 30th September 2018 and more information will be in the newsletter.

Payments for the classes are done directly to the teacher by the parents

Questions can be sent to mlp@abaoman.org

Expressions of Thanks and Close

Lama thanked attendees and closed the meeting. Next meeting: 8 October 7.40 am.

Meeting closed by Lama at 08.50am

