



ABA Parent Teacher Association

Open Meeting Monday

14 January 2019

PTA Room

Members Present:

Reem Alshaikh
Jinane Helou
Hiba Kamal Gaafar
Dina Wahib
Francisca Cantos
Tonica aguilella
Leena Al Bastaki
Kathja Keuning
Terry Dontis
Melanie Pitcher

Attendees from PTA Executive Committee:

Lama Samman	Chair
Meeta Khira	Vice Chair Elementary
Anjum Khan	Vice Chair Secondary
Jankie Sampat	Communications Liaison
Paula Colaco	Treasurer
Bokamoso Kumwenda	Elementary Secretary
Nandita Shukla	Co-Chair ECE & Elementary Parent Representative
Hend Farouk	Co-Chair ECE & Elementary Parent Representative
Evelyn Hon	Secondary Parent Representative
Dina Wahib	Elementary New Parent Coordinator
Laila Al Mawali	Logistics Coordinator

Meeting opened at 7.45am

Welcome

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

Lama began the meeting with highlighting some changes to the PTA Events calendar; namely, the change of date of the flea market; which will now be held on the 3rd of May. An addition to the calendar is the Eid Market, which is a similar concept to Santa's Workshop; kids can come buy Eid gifts for friends and family. The Summer Fest will be an Iftar dinner, held off campus.

ABA Faculty:

Kathleen Bowin – Middle School Principal

Kathleen began by updating the parents that the Middle School Common room is closed to students so they can enjoy the current beautiful weather. She thanked the PTA for the newly installed artificial grass in the Drama Court and reported that all the kids are enjoying it.

The Middle School has an assembly coordinated and organized by the Middle School Student Council. The Winter assembly was coordinated in conjunction with the High School Student Council. This is in efforts to strengthen the relationships between the two student organizations, as well as develop the high school mentoring of the middle school.

14 February – the Middle school dance will be in the gym. More details to follow. They have been asked to reach out to the PTA for help.

The Middle School has been really successful in the organization of the assemblies and will be having assemblies monthly. Parents are always welcome.

Teachers are currently working on the semester reports. These will be published on the 31st of January. Kathleen encouraged parents to read the criteria and descriptors that go with the numbers given.

The fund request email has been received and the Heads of Departments will be asked to submit any requests they wish to make.

Kathleen shared with parents that she will be off campus for about a week for a cognitive coaching course, followed by a trip to Boston for recruitment.

MYP 2 and 3 (Grades 7 and 8) Adventure Oman trips were a great success and the kids came back with positive feedback. Reviews of these trips are underway.

MYP 1 (Grade 6) trip has been postponed to the last two weeks of February; details will be made available by the end of the week.

MYP 5 (Grade 10) coordinated the Middle School sports days as part of their unit of enquiry in PE. MYP 1 (Grade 6) will be having their sports day on Wednesday (16th January).

An MYP Assessment information session was held Sunday, 13th January and it was a great success. 20 parents attended in the morning and 34 parents attended in the afternoon session. Kathleen encouraged parents to email their questions to either her or Miguel.

Coffee morning on Wednesday (16th January) which will have a focus on middle school assessments.

This weekend there will be a concert band festival for Middle School. This will include PDO School, TAISM and BSM with a guest conductor from Chicago. The performance will be at 5pm in the PAC and all parents are invited.

Simon Walker – High School Principal

TEDEX event which a completely student run event was a great success, and having organized TEDex Youth last academic year, Simon congratulated the kids for doing a great job.

Grade 10 options evening is scheduled for Wednesday from 5:30pm in the PAC. There will be a general information session with all the parents, then parents can talk to teachers about the individual courses being offered. The course options booklet has already been shared with parents. Simon encouraged parents to read the first as it gives a lot of information which will be helpful when discussing the course with the teachers. In the past, students have had individual conferences with either Miss Keys, or Mr. Essex, but one of the challenges that has emerged has been students changing courses once they have started them as a result of parent disapproval on the chosen course(s). In order to prevent this is to invite parents to come into those initial meetings so they too can be aware of the courses their child has chosen.

Next week Discovery Week trips for Grade 11 next week. Grade 10 exams begin next week as well. These will be MYP on-screen practice exams in the gym. Grade 12 exams, happening in the same week, are used to give predictive grades. These MYP exams are not used to give predictive grades, rather they are to “test” the systems to be used for the May final exams.

Grade 10 and 12 conferences (by invitation) are scheduled for Tuesday February 5th.

Simon will be traveling with Simon Taylor to London next week to recruit teachers.

While Kathleen is away, he will be supporting Miguel in the Middle School and similarly when he is away, Kathleen supports the High School.

Kendra Glider – PTA Elementary Teacher Representative

Kendra gave an update on the ECE and Elementary. This included Sam's update as well.

Author's Week – a visiting author will be coming to ABA next week and classes will have opportunity to meet and talk to him during a scheduled session in the library.

22 January – Sam will be hosting an Early Childhood coffee morning, parents are encouraged to come and learn more about how the EC is changing and developing.

31 January there will be a Fun Run for Grades 1-5

Third session of ASAs will be starting on the 27th of January, parents are encouraged to sign up on Wednesday.

Kendra also thanked the PTA for the newly installed grass pitch, though the ECE kids do not go to the drama court yet, it's a wonderful facility they can enjoy when they do.

Simon Taylor – ABA Superintendent

Simon, having just returned from Bangkok, shared that he has been working on building a strong team, in particular, those that report directly to the Superintendent. He expressed that he is very pleased and confident that when he leaves next summer those he has been working closely with; Kathleen, Sam and Simon will do an excellent job going forward without him. To ease some anxiety and apprehension about the transition next year, Simon assured parents that he will be in contact with Dr. Sue Grosebeck for one year following the transition to ensure it is as seamless as possible.

Simon went on to say that this emphasis on building the school leadership was not only for the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) but it was also to tap into the wealth of talent we have within our school.

In addition to this, the roles of the Heads of Department have been expanded. Not only are they responsible for certain administrative tasks within the department, they teach and learn in the department. The cascade of leadership and responsibility in the school.

Simon briefly explained that the trip he took to Bangkok was to recruit teachers. He went on to share the processes of recruitment by attending recruitment fairs around the world and the unique challenges ABA, a school in the Middle East, faces when trying to recruit and retain teachers here in Oman.

Next week Simon will be travelling to London and then the United States. He expects the recruitment travel to continue until April.

ISA (the standardized tests for grades 3-9) results came back. The individual student results will be shared to parents

There will be a Superintendent's forum after Simon comes back from Boston in early February. He will give an overview of the results then.

Paul Brace

Elementary ASA signups start Wednesday at 6pm. Paul encouraged parents to be prepared and to try different devices if filling the Google form does not work on the phone.

MPSL season has kicked off with the kids travelling for a cross country meet today. Next week there will be a volleyball clinic. Paul asked parents to respond to the Google forms sent to verify if their child is taking part in the activity.

MSSL success rate has been fantastic, the results reveal that ABA is currently the top school in Muscat; having won 10 shields already. The JB basketball boys and girls won both competitions held on campus and at TAISM.

MESAC double weekend starts 31 January with a soccer tournament, at the National Stadium.

The varsity soccer tournament will take place the following weekend and Paul made an appeal to parents to consider hosting students coming in for this event. 18 boys and 19 girls' homes are needed. The message requesting host families to volunteer will be disseminated through the HRPs.

Lama shared that her family has hosted even when her kids were not a part of MESAC and it is a very rewarding experience as it's an opportunity to meet amazing kids and get involved in MESAC cheering and enjoying the community spirit.

Booster Club

Vanessa gave an update on the Booster Club events

- Half Shot, Hot Shot event for grade 3-12 during the break times in school (14 January)
- MESAC; the Booster Club will be there both weekends with concession stand, BBQ and merchandise.
- MESAC Awards night (February 13th) will be in the MPH. Tickets go on sale February 1st at the Admin.

Vanessa gave a quick financial update and informed everyone that a copy of the detailed report is available with her. Technical difficulties were the reason the financials were not in the slide show.

Upcoming Events

ABA Flea Market and bake sale – 3 May. Evelyn and Meeta will be coordinating.

Parent Art exhibition scheduled for the 24 April will be held in the Secondary Cafeteria and Bokamoso will be coordinating. The PTA is currently looking for artists, sculptures, musicians, photographers, illustrators etc. to take part.

Tuesday Talks and Travels: Wadi hike and picnic. There will be 3 hike options to choose from depending on levels of fitness. Signup done after the meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Paula presented the Treasurer's report, noting a balance of 15,708.640 OMR as of January 1st, 2019

The items settled (in Omani Rials)

Mother Language Tongue Program: 63.150

Artificial Grass fund request: 1,480.000

The second round of fund requests is underway; voting for new requests will take place in February.

Winter Music Fest

The Winter Music Fest was a great success. The PTA has gotten a lot of positive feedback for me the parent community. There were 42 vendors, 8 food stalls, performances by The Tribe, the ABA choir, folk dancing other amazing performances. This was the first time using the grass pitch for an event and found restrictions and challenges with electricity and set up.

Total cost of the event was 517.000 OMR and money made was 1800.000 OMR.

Picture of the Music Fest were presented.

Lama thanked Hend for her coordination and presented her with a gift for organizing the event.

Expressions of Thanks and Close

Lama thanked attendees and closed the meeting.

Next Open meeting: February 11th 7.40 am.