

# AL NOOR-ABA NEWS

20th February 2020

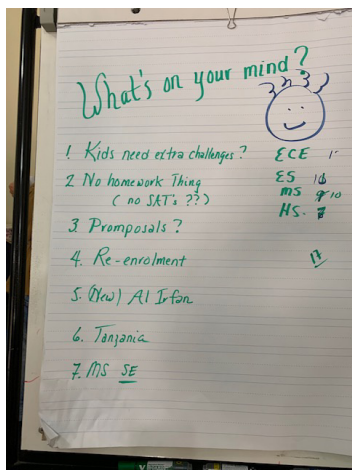
## Message from the Head of School

Dear ABA Community,

About 17 of us gathered together on Wednesday morning at 7:30am to share some croissants, a cup of coffee and some conversation in the PTA Room. There was representation from all areas of the school and the parents were comfortable, from my perspective, in asking questions and probing topics that were on their minds.

The groups were almost evenly split with children in elementary, middle and high school levels. The lightest representation was from Early Childhood and we acknowledged that they had just had an informational session. Too, the PTA had had a robust meeting only two days before at 7:30am with a very good attendance where there was voting for their bi-annual funding of projects.

There is always a lot going on at ABA and sometimes, too much!



As I have done in the past, I called for topics from the floor and then tried to answer all the questions, so that all concerns are discussed. The first topic was raised about kids who need extra challenges. This is an interesting topic. We do an excellent job of supporting students who need extra support if they are falling behind, but what do we do for the student who is above grade level? I gave examples of how the IB curriculum supports students in ever increasing ways (enrichment, Extended Essay, mentoring, Independent Coursework, Discovery Week) and is ideally suited for the particularly bright child.

We then spent quite a bit of time of the second topic of “The No Homework Thing” - or the fact that parents are seeing that their children nowadays are getting far less homework than the parents had as students. I discussed the international trend of

reducing homework in favour of “flipping” teaching, and that it makes no sense to give 100 Math problems if a student can solve the first 5 correctly. Equally, it makes no sense to give 100 Math problems if a student can not solve the first 5 correctly. This is a very large academic discussion and one that has been ongoing for years. For me, it is a discussion of quality, not quantity of homework. It is also about how the teaching minutes are being used while the students are in our care and in our classrooms. I could give a substantive parent lecture on this topic at any time. I have participated in this research and I think this article is a good starting point:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2019/03/homework-research-how-much/585889/>

The next question was very specific to the High School and it was about Promposals. I will have to have a discussion with Simon Walker about it but I think it will go something like this. I didn't decide from my office that we would not be having “Promposals” this year. From what I have gathered, the concept of Promposals might have been casually started last year or the year before, but it isn't something that is appropriate at the high school level, in my opinion.

### Upcoming Dates

23 Feb	Muscat Eco Network Summit Secondary Lecture Hall 9:30 - 11:00 am 1:00 - 1:45 pm
	Muscat Eco Network Summit Drama Court All day
25 Feb	ToK Information Evening Grade 10 Parents PAC 5:00 - 7:00 pm
26 Feb	Mentor Meeting ABA 7:00 - 7:25am

When an invitation to the prom is extended publicly and with great fanfare, it can be terribly awkward and humiliating at these teenage years. It is the school's responsibility to protect the young and vulnerable hearts. Those who aren't invited are also to be thought of. A layer over this is that we are in a Muslim country where the pressures of dating and "proposals" at such a young age should be considered. The Prom is pressured enough and while I was not asked whether we should have Promposals or not, I support the clear heads who simply decided this was not something this school would support.

I then placed Re-enrollment onto the easle as a topic for conversation. I covered the topics of the re-enrollment plan and those things which had been addressed directly to me in the past weeks and things I had heard being discussed. One suggestion was that the 15th (middle of the month) was harder for payment than at the end of the month and would we consider changing the payment of the deposit to the end of the month? I recorded this suggestion.

The new campus (Al Irfan Campus) was the next topic. At this time, the Sports Complex is projected to be readied for the MESAC 10th Anniversary Games from November 4 - 7th, 2020. Those games may include swimming and volleyball. If all then continues to go according to plan, the rest of the campus will proceed to open after the first of the year 2021. With construction, there will be certifications and final fittings that are required that are different than for an office building. With occupancy by children in a school, the final occupancy and move-in is much more exacting. The board will update everyone on the progress towards our goal.

Tanzania was the next topic and I will have to get more information about that as the termination happened last year. I know that we are no longer allowed to raise monies for projects not sanctioned by the Ministry. I also know the products gathered by the students were completely divested. At this time, we have no relationship with Tanzania.

Lastly, we talked about our student support services in general and Bahul Pillai (our business manager for 21 years) explained that we have added 7 support positions to our staff in the last few years. I met after our coffee with Kathleen Bowin, in the Middle School, and she invites and hopes for a personal conversation about the excellent services which the Middle School is offering. That will be the most satisfying way to hear what is going on in the Middle School. We also talked about a one-page leaflet that will tell what the services are. That will be helpful.

Thank you to those who came to the coffee! It was a pleasure!



Calling all Seniors!

Wednesday

February 26th

Countdown to Graduation Day

It will be my pleasure to welcome each member of the Class of 2020

to my office to Celebrate

100 Days until June 5th - our 30th ABA Graduation!

*Sue*

Dr. Susan R. Groesbeck

# Message from the School Counselors

Please read the following important announcement from The ABA School Counselors.

Dear ABA Parents,

We would like to draw your attention to a dangerous trend that some communities worldwide are experiencing with children and young adults. This has been named 'The Tripping Jump Challenge' and is becoming popular on social media and Youtube. We are not aware of this happening on the ABA campus, therefore, this is a message of information and prevention.

The following News Report on this behaviour provides you with a clear explanation of the behaviour.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_wqhrbBbANA&t=31s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wqhrbBbANA&t=31s)

Discussing this with large groups of children during the school day is likely to lead to replication and added excitement about an issue we are trying to prevent. Therefore, we strongly recommend you view this content and discuss the implications and severity of participating in this activity with your child at home this weekend.

ABA faculty have been fully informed and will be vigilant on campus. ABA administration will not tolerate this behaviour on campus and there will be serious consequences for any individuals found engaging in this activity.

*ABA School Counselors  
Coette O'Driscoll, Claire Anthony and Alli Hostetter*

# Message from the Athletics Director

## **MS Basketball and MS Track**

MS basketball and Track starts next week. An email has been sent to all the Middle School and at the assemblies this week all the information was given to the students.

Basketball Training Times:

Gr 6 Boys Monday and Thursday 2:30 - 3:30 (MPH)  
Gr 6 Girls Monday and Thursday 2:30 - 3:30 (GYM)  
Gr 7 Boys Monday and Thursday 3:30 - 4:30 (MPH)  
Gr 7 Girls Monday and Thursday 2:30 - 3:30 (GYM)  
Gr 8 Boys Monday 3:30 - 4:30 and Wednesday 3:00 - 4:00 (GYM)  
Gr 8 Girls Sunday and Wednesday 3:00 - 4:00 (MPH)  
Students sign up with the coaches on the first day of training

### Track Training Times for Next Week:

Sunday 23rd Sign up in the Lecture Hall 2:30 - 3:00 pm

Monday 24th 2:45 - 4:00 pm at the Sultan Qaboss Sports Complex

Wednesday 26th 2:45 - 4:00 pm at the Sultan Qaboss Sports Complex

Monday and Wednesday the bus will leave at 2:30 pm sharp and return at 4:30 pm

Students are to meet outside of the main gym to meet their coaches who will take the team to the bus.

### MESAC and MS Track Teams:

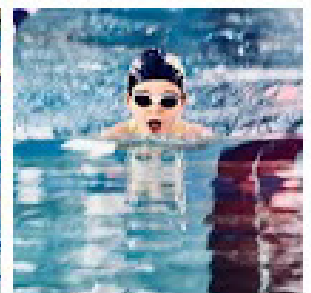
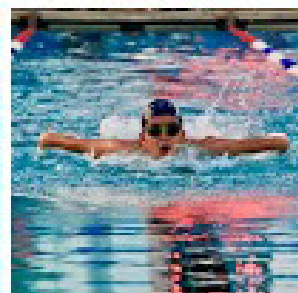
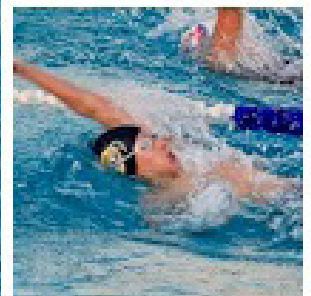
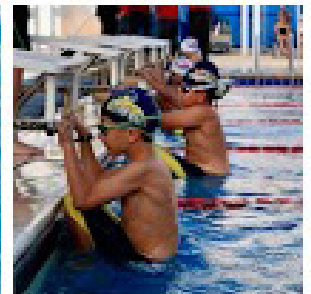
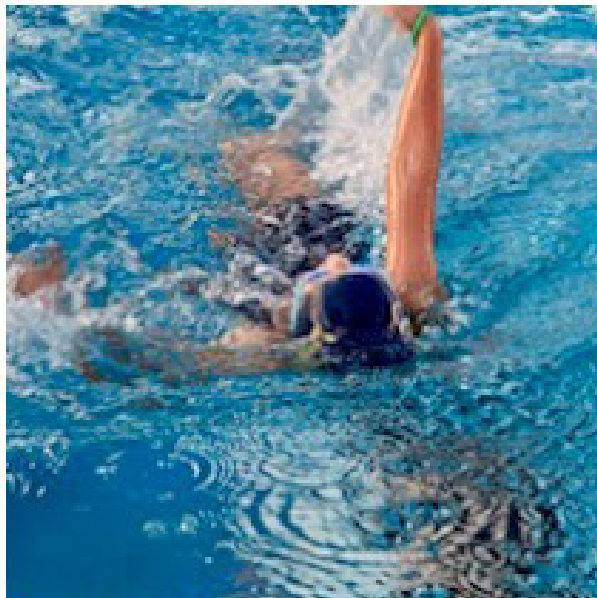
Track Teams: A bus will transport the teams to and from Sultan Qaboss Sports Complex (SQSC). Athletes will need written parental permission given to the coach if they walk home from training from SQSC. Parents picking up their child at SQSC will need to be at the venue before the end of training (4:00 pm). If a parent is not present at SQSC for the end of training, the students will be bused back to ABA. Parental permission is also needed if a student is picked up from the SQSC by another parent. The bus from SQSC will return to ABA by 4:30pm.

### Vipers Excel at TAISM Swim Meet:

Last Tuesday saw 67 Vipers athletes attend the ABA v TAISM Dual meet. Swimmers from V4 to V2 were represented in an event which saw many first time competitive swims. Our athletes performed superbly, demonstrating the skills that they have learned over the last practice cycle, showing maturity, focus and having lots of fun along the way. 98% of all swimmers swam new PBs.

Our Vipers Swimmers now look forward to heading to Dubai to represent the school at the Middle East Unity Cup from 5th - 7th March, The TAISM Relay event on 3rd March and the Nautilus LC meet from 13th -14th March.

Term 3 renewals take place from 20th - 23rd February, with the new term beginning on 1st March. We will be running new assessments to join the team after 1st March. We are especially seeking boys and girls from grade 1 along with grade 7 and 8 in preparation for next year.



MESAC swim meet which will be held in Muscat at the new Al Irfan Swimming Pool.

*Paul Brace  
Athletics Director*

# Message from the PTA



"Building our community together!"

## Tuesday Talks & Travels (TTT)

Our next hike promises to be amazing; through the sand dunes taking you to a beach and an exhilarating swim thereafter. The

hike back will ensure that you are nice and dry when you get to your cars. Conservative swimwear is advised.

To receive updates on hiking destinations and to join the upcoming hikes, email Laila at [PTAVice@abaoman.org](mailto:PTAVice@abaoman.org).

## Teacher/Staff Fund Requests- Round 2

All the four fund requests were voted in favor of by the community.

1. Lost and Found Closet Cost: RO.500
2. Sensory Pathway Cost: \$1450 US + shipping (RO.558 + shipping)
3. POP UP Open Mic Cost: RO.650
4. Live Streaming Equipment Cost: RO.1790

## International Cultural Festival - *A World without Borders*

ICF is edging closer. PTA is coordinating with the language department to have a week of movies, football, music and mufti to celebrate all the beautiful cultures at school.

Starting on the Sunday 8th March, The Language World Cup Football matches will begin with mixed groups from Middle and High School.

An international movie festival for kids and parents during language class times will be held in the PAC. Three movies have been chosen so far:

Tin Tin- French with English Subtitles

Campeones- Spanish with English Subtitles

The Three Idiots- Hindi with English Subtitles

Thursday during break at the drama court will be the first musical performances of the day!

Volunteer and represent your culture!

## PTA DATES

**Tue. Feb. 25th**

TTT - Hiking Club continues @ 7.40 -1 pm

**Thu. Mar. 12th @ Grasspitch**

ICF - A World without Borders @ 6-8 pm

## International Cultural Festival



*A World Without Borders*

Coming together to see how similar we are!

6-8PM | March 12, 2020 | ABA  
Ticket Cost: 2 Rials



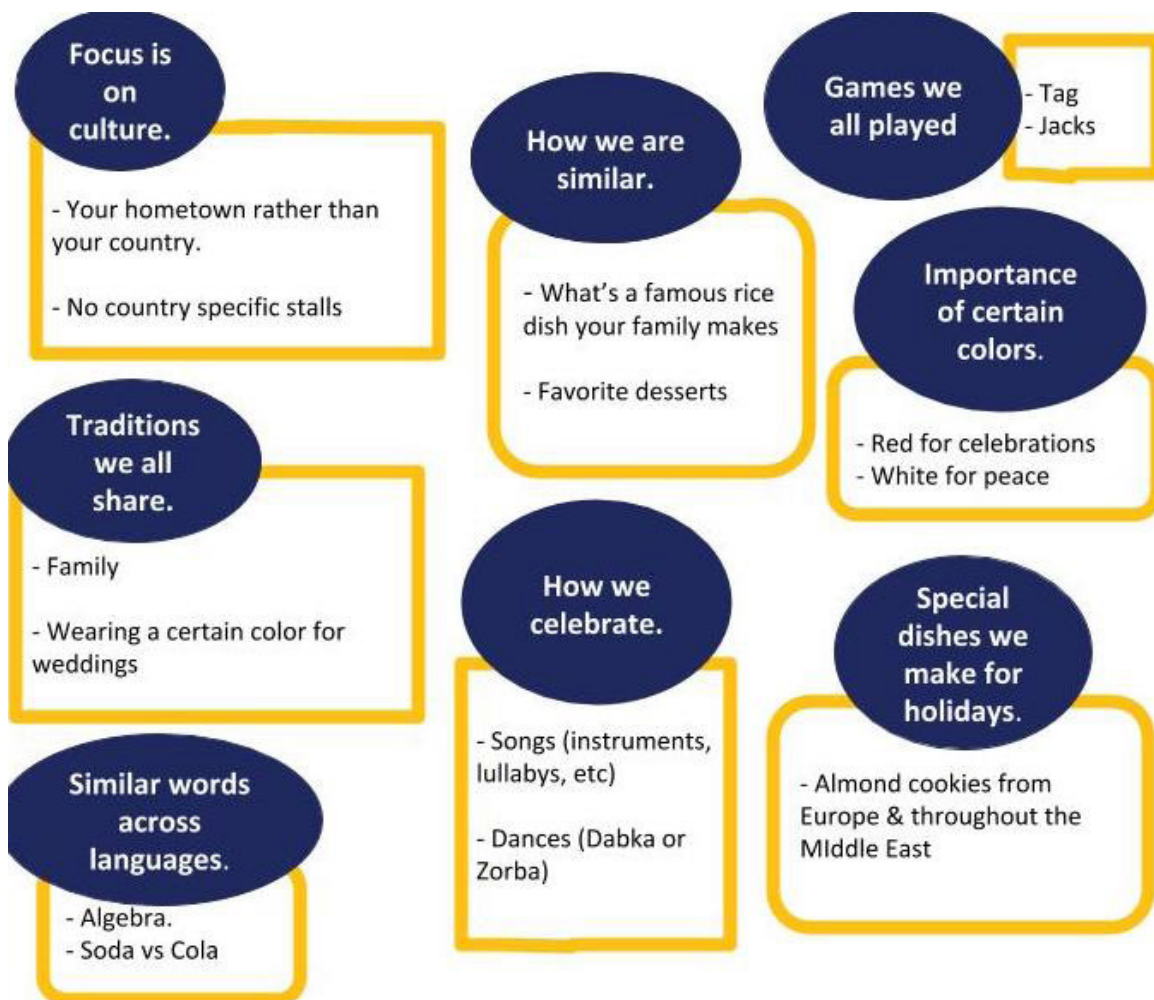
There can be one coordinating volunteer for a culture or there can be several individuals contributing to the event. In the case of a coordinating volunteer, they will be the point of contact to bring together the food, donations, decorations, music and a stage performance (optional) from that specific culture.

You can bring one dish or many. Come as an individual or a group. Bring your decorations and we will help you put them up around the pitch, you won't be stuck at a stand all night, you can walk around and enjoy what others have to offer. We are looking for volunteers to man the different food tables, the game area and the stage performances.

Wednesday 26th February from 7.30 to 9am, PTA will have an information session for all those that are participating.

Represent your culture click here. Thank you to all those that have come forward.

Not sure what to do, below are examples of ways to represent your culture at the event:



Please feel free to contact Lama at [PTAChair@abaoman.org](mailto:PTAChair@abaoman.org) for any queries.

**Volunteer for the PTA or PTA events:**

We will soon be sharing the PTA positions for next academic year. Elections will be conducted in the AGM on 2nd June, 2020. We look forward to new volunteers and their ideas.

You can also volunteer for specific events or activities. Just visit <http://abaoman.org/wp-site/pta-volunteer/> and submit the form on the page. We would love to hear from you.

Your PTA  
"Building our community together."

# Message from the Booster Club



## Booster Club Pop-Up Shop

Get your official VIPERS

# MERCHANDISE

## Monday 24 February 2020

07.00-7.45am

come see our friendly team outside the ECE Building

### HOODIE ORDERS AVAILABLE!!

### VIPERS Merchandise 2019/20

AVAILABLE NOW... ONLY from VIPERS Booster Club!

 <p>no.8</p>	 <p>Student Training Parent Support</p> <p>no.10</p>	 <p>Sports Bags</p> <p>no.15</p>	 <p>Custom Slides</p> <p>no.10</p>
 <p>Personal Hoodies <i>Pre-paid orders only</i></p> <p>no.15</p>	 <p>Spray Water Bottle</p> <p>no.7</p>	 <p>Caps</p> <p>no.3</p>	 <p>Car Sunshade</p> <p>no.3</p>
 <p>Pencil Cases</p> <p>no.3</p>			 <p>BAM Sticks</p> <p>no.1.2</p> <p><b>SOLD OUT</b></p>
 <p>String Bags (Embroidered)</p> <p>no.5</p>			 <p>Tattoos</p> <p>no.200</p> <p>Limited Stock on ALL ITEMS</p>

**AVAILABLE NOW**

*All proceeds from the sale of VIPERS merchandise go to the VIPERS Booster Club - supporting our kids!*

Yours in community spirit – VIPERS Booster Club

# Community Message



Thinking about our new Al Irfan Campus...

Much good work has been done by the Transition Committee which was established by Simon Taylor, our former Superintendent. I'd like to reconvene that committee and add to it. If you are a logistics thinker, if you want to guard ABA's culture, if you are a city planner.... you are needed!

All types of "thinkers" are needed to be on the Transition Committee in different groups. Please give your name to Jasmin Wadsworth in Administration if you would like to think about the transition to the new campus.

# Class of 2020 Invitation

You are cordially invited to come celebrate  
ABA Class of 2020 Graduates

**Friday 05 June 2020**  
Muscat Ballroom Kempinski Hotel  
Al Mouj, Sultanate of OMAN  
7.30pm - 12.30am

*Dress: Formal / Omani National Dress*

**Celebrating ABA 30th Graduation**

'It's almost as if hardships and constraints were sublimated into a more exquisite perfume than that obtained by cocooning and pampering the trees with nutrients and water.' - Anna S. Eric

*Purchase your tickets from ABA reception from  
20th February 2020 from 07.30am - 2.00pm*

**OMR 30pp**

*Price incl. delicious buffet dinner, water, juice, tea, coffee  
& a night of celebration with your graduate*

*\*Cash bar available on the night*