

AL NOOR-ABA NEWS

21st February 2019

Message from the Superintendent

Dear Parents,

Many of you will have seen the principals or me around the campus at the start or end of the day either out the front or at one of two entrances at the back of the school.

It is always a joy to see so many students arriving excited about what lies ahead. And yes, it is common to see that. Only rarely do we not see cheery faces, and then conclude that the student has either not slept well, had a disagreement with someone at the breakfast table or was not feeling well. In general terms, I think it is fair to say that ABA is a school that students enjoy. We hope that the happy faces at the end of the day reflect a good experience.

I regularly see happy parents too though there are occasions when this is not the case. This is usually a result of a traffic issue, whether at the lights or nearer to our campus. Over the years, we have tried to find the best solution for traffic around the school; I believe that it has got better. The safety of everyone and the efficiency of the system are my priorities.

I am pleased to announce that the movement about the parking area between the school and the field should be safer next week. We have completed the path parallel to the school wall and are putting in a new pedestrian crossing. Please would you use these facilities when walking to your car as an example to the students. I trust you will also be happy to know that we are soon to complete work that will provide extra parking. The partial back filling of land near the wadi has allowed us to create about 20 more spaces. This should ease the situation. Nonetheless, please would all parents follow some simple rules that will help ensure low stress levels and a safe environment.

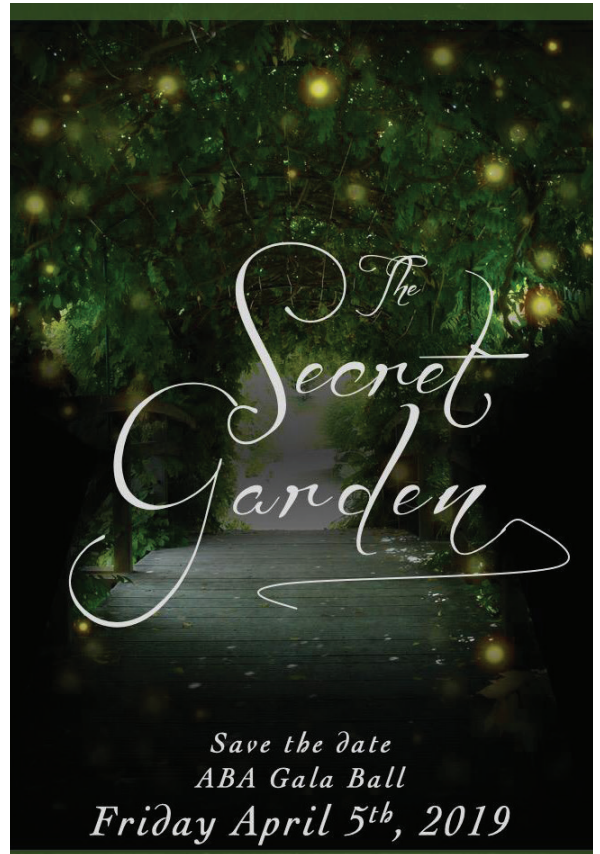
1. Please follow the instructions of my staff.
2. Please do not use your horn unless in an emergency
3. Please use parking spaces when they are available
4. Do not leave your car unless it is in a parking space.
5. Do not park on the pedestrian crossing.
6. On campus, only drop off and pick up in designated areas - NOT in front of the Administration Building please.

Many thanks for your support.

Simon Taylor
Superintendent

Upcoming Dates

24 Feb	Grade 5 Exhibition Parent Meeting Grade 6 common Room 7:40-8:40 am Superintendent's Forum Grade 6 Common Room 5:30-7:00 pm
25-26 Feb	Grade 9 Adventure Oman Overnight Trip
26 Feb	Early Release Whole School Dismiss 12:15 pm
27-28 Feb	No School for Students
27 Feb	Teacher Professional Development Day
28 Feb	Whole School Holiday



Message from the Middle School

On Monday 18th February we had a special assembly with the 81st Governor of Vermont (2011 - 2017), Peter Shumlin. He spoke with the entire Middle School about Vermont's successes with renewable energy as well as climate change.



Mr. Shumlin also hosted an informational session about various Summer Camp program opportunities which are available for both Middle and High School Students. (<https://goputney.com/>) We were also pleased to find out that our very own Kristin Westby has led some of these camps. Below is a picture of a few High School students that took the opportunity to chat with Mr. Shumlin about renewable energy.



*Kathleen Bowin
Middle School Principal*

Middle School Parent Workshop

On Wednesday of last week, Middle School parents attended a workshop on Peer Pressure and Peer Influence. Peer influence 'is when you choose to do something you wouldn't otherwise do, because you want to feel accepted and valued by your friends. It isn't just or always about doing something against your will.'

During the discussion, direct and indirect influences were considered, as well as the many positive affects peer influence can have on tweens and teens.



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Despite adolescents exerting their independence, and decreasing their reliance on parents, 'parental influence is important here - it is the biggest factor shaping your child's values and long-term choices.' This is the [link](#) to the presentation and bibliography for you to view at your leisure.

*Claire Anthony
Middle School Counselor*



Junior Debate Club/ World Scholar's Cup

Two teams of the Junior Debate Club representing ABA recently attended the World Scholar's Cup, Muscat regional round hosted at BSM. 'A world on the margins' was a very successful event for ABA scholars; Anja Van der Merwe, Anouk Langlands, Cassie Bennett, Helena Lehmann, Rehana Khan, and Vaishnavi Manivannan. Scholars participated in four events including the scholars' bowl, scholars challenge, team debate, and collaborative writing.

With just two teams on hand, we did an amazing job, achieving 13 silver medals, 10 gold medals and 3 trophies, including the overall 1st place trophy for junior debate team of the year; Anja, Anouk, and Vaishnavi. It was a very proud moment for us.





Students had so much fun meeting scholars from different schools around Muscat and working together as a team.... And yes, we qualified for the global rounds. Well done scholars!

*Mr Atiq Hussain
Junior Debate Coach*

Classrooms at Loibor Siret School



Our other news is that the classroom we raised money for and started building last June is now nearing completion. One classroom costs around RO5,800 and the school needs five more, plus teachers. If they reach this target, it means class size will drop from the current 70 to 45, the legal maximum, the government will adopt the school, which would be great news for them. We are doing our best thanks to your help.

The Tanzania Team

Message from the Tanzania Team



“Non-uniform for uniform” - update

Back in August, ABA held a “Non-uniform for uniform” day to raise money to buy uniforms for 49 children in Loibor Siret who could not attend school unless their families provided them with uniforms. We are pleased and proud to at last be able to show you pictures of the children receiving their uniforms from Edward Loure, our long-standing friend and contact in the community. We are now awaiting word as to how many more children need uniforms for the January intake as we have money left to enable others to attend school too.

A huge thank-you to all of you who so generously contributed and allowed these children access to education. We will keep you informed of how many more we can help and look forward to meeting the new students in June.

Message from the Extra Curricular Program

Middle School Basketball

The season started this week with a huge turn out, over 105 students. There was plenty of energy in the gyms as our coaches organised structured sessions to develop the skills and fitness of our young athletes. There are twenty five games scheduled for the season and six tournaments. The middle school basketball season will finish on 1st May.

MSSL Track meets

Though our Grade 6 Athletes were away at Adventure Oman, 20 of our students from the Middle School competed at the Dual Track meet with ABA and TAISM this Tuesday. The next track meet will take place on Tuesday 5th March from 4:00 - 6:00pm. These are fun, educational meets designed to expose our athletes to various events in the track and field arena. The events vary from week to week and it is crucial that the athletes sign up for the meets before the deadline which is sent to the students and discussed at training/meetings.

Middle School Training Next Week and Upcoming Games

Training for the Middle School next week will be on Sunday and Monday only. Basketball games will start the week of 3rd March. Schedule is below.

4th March	U13 Boys Basketball vs BSM @ BSM	4:15 - 5:15
4th March	U12 Boys Basketball vs BSM @ BSM	4:15 - 5:15
4th March	U12 Girls Basketball vs BSM @ ABA	2:45 - 3:45
6th March	U14 Girls Basketball vs ISO @ ABA	3:15 - 4:15
6th March	U14 Boys Basketball vs ISO @ ABA	3:15 - 4:15
7th March	U13 Girls Basketball vs ISO @ ABA	3:15 - 4:15

*Paul Brace
Athletics Director*

Message from the University Counselor

Applying to the United States

The US offers 4-year Undergraduate Courses
 The US offers a vast range of post-secondary education courses – there are over 4,000 Universities and Colleges in the US Colleges only offer undergraduate degrees and all Universities offer post-graduate qualifications (Masters and PhDs). Students applying to the US will mostly need to complete standardised tests and a language proficiency test to meet entry requirements. While there are some US Universities that do not require the ACT or SAT I for entry, the vast majority still do, and therefore a decision to apply to the US should be accompanied by a determined approach to studying for the SAT or ACT.

Students applying to the US will normally apply through the Common Application process (www.commonapp.org), which is the most widely used application system in the US. The alternative is the Coalition Application process, which 150 US Universities are signed up with. (www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org) The Coalition allows for slightly more flexibility in what students can supply as evidence in support of their applications, but they are both equally efficient and user friendly. The good thing is that students get started on the administrative side of their applications in Grade 11, therefore reducing the stress in Grade 12.

Application Requirements

1. A completed Common App or Coalition Application, which will include:
2. A thoughtful, carefully written essay of 650 words (Titles available on Common App website).
3. A school transcript showing semester grades from each subject area from Grades 9 - 12.
4. ACT or SAT I (usually required) + SAT II subject tests (good to have even if not required).
5. Proof of Language Proficiency IELTS or TOEFL.
6. Predicted Grades of the IB DP or IB Courses.
7. At least 2 Teacher recommendations and 1 Counselor recommendation.
8. A set of strong extra-curricular activities, summer experiences or ongoing learning where possible.

What does it take to get into a Highly Selective University in the US?

Highly selective universities, which include such colleges as Stanford, MIT as well as the Ivy Leagues (Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, Harvard and Yale) are extraordinarily difficult to get into because the admission rates are so very small (and particularly so for international students). While anybody can apply, it is worth bearing in mind certain essential factors to ensure that the application is not a waste of the admission fee. It is important to know that it is not enough to be best in the class, or best in your school – to be admitted to highly selective universities you need to be **'Best in the World'** in a particular area.

- Best to make the university your clear favourite, and apply Early Decision (ED). Ensure you know the college inside out. Visit if at all possible!
- Make sure you already have excellent SAT1s and SAT2s to send in late September or Early October. (See www.collegeboard.org for testing dates). 1500 /1600 would be a low cut off.
- Make sure you have taken an IELTS or TOEFL language test (www.idpielts.me)
- Your GPA should be in the region of 6.5 or above – your transcript should be predominantly filled with 7s (the odd 6 won't count against you too much)

- Spend your summers learning new courses, skills, or consolidating old ones.
- Decide what your 'Unique Selling Point' or distinguishing skill /virtue is going to be and work to show how that sets you apart from others.
- Read widely and avariciously – this is the best way to expose yourself to superior writing that will inform your own style on the Common App Essay.

Next Steps and Timeline for Applying to the United States

Steps	Timeframe	Notes
Make yourself familiar with the ACT standardised tests: www.act.org or SAT tests: www.sat.org	Grade 10, early in Grade 11.	Khan Academy provide excellent practice tests and exercises: https://www.khanacademy.org/ You can also find up to 8 Practice Tests on the SAT website.
Sign up for SAT or ACT practice tests on the relevant site: https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register or www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration.html	Feb / March of Grade 11 for first test, then plan to take one or two more. Your best score will be sent to universities.	SAT Sign up dates March 9th 2019 (Sign up by February 8th) (late sign-ups possible but more costly) May 4th 2019 (Sign up by April 5th) ACT Sign up dates Feb 8-9 2019 (Sign up by Feb 1st) April 12-13 2019 (Sign up by March 22nd) June 7-8 2019 (Sign up by May 17th) Next dates are usually early October and December. December 2019 is last date for university entry September 2020.
Meet university counselor to begin to think about what kind of university campus you are interested in; indicate any particular highly selective universities you are interested in. Discuss whether an Early Decision or Early Action application would be beneficial for you.	Feb / March of Grade 11	Applying ED (Oct/Nov) to ONE college means that you must attend that university if accepted. Applying EA means you can apply to other unis but will hear earlier whether or not you have been accepted. https://professionals.collegeboard.org/guidance/applications/early
Take an English Proficiency Exam: IELTS or TOEFL These are not difficult as intended for EAL students but you should still look at practice tests online and do a little bit of serious preparation.	Any time in Grade 11 is good.	www.idpielts.me https://www.ets.org/toefl
Request a letter of recommendation from 2 - 4 teachers (check university requirements). Make sure you provide a CV or detailed list of achievements. Teachers should be able to speak to both your academic achievement, potential as well as your character.	June - September 2019	Fill out ABA letter of recommendation form. You should note the universities - if highly selective or applying ED or AD you should say what makes you an excellent match for that university.
Start your application through the Common App or Coalition. Begin the first draft of your essay. This will probably need three or four iterations. It is really important so give it plenty of time!	May - June 2019	Share with family or friends for input but tell your own story and tell it from your heart. Do not be tempted to let others have too much influence.
Finish your application and get it in nice and early. The deadline is usually December / January (between Dec 15th - January 15th) but aim to have it completed by October. You will shine simply by being early!	September - December 2019	There is the option to share the Common App with the university counselor and / or another person so they can check it. Pay special attention to grammar and spelling and makes sure every section is filled in with as much detail as possible.

Secret of Ivy League Success?

Jessica Coutinho applied to Columbia College in the US and was accepted this December after a successful Early Decision Application. Jessica knew quite early on that she wanted to study in the US, and she already has a brother studying there, which made the decision even easier. So, still in Grade 9, Jessica really got down to completing some thorough research on the right university for her. She wanted a challenge, and really liked the location of Columbia College, being right on the doorstep of New York. Jessica felt that NY would offer the certain prospect of interesting internships and, perhaps later, some exciting job prospects. She also liked Columbia's core curriculum, which, with its breadth, focus on critical thinking and the requirement of historical reading is very 'IB' in style.



So, knowing where she wanted to go, Jessica focused on providing sufficient academic evidence that she could cope with the tough demands of a highly challenging undergraduate education. Jessica took two SATs, one in December of Grade 11 and the second in March of Grade 11. The March score was 1550 out of 1600, which meant that her application would make it over the first hurdle. There are 8 practice SAT tests on the website; Jessica did all of them, as well as completing Khan Academy questions each day.

Then, Jessica set aside time in her holidays to join courses that would teach her new skills or strengthen old ones. She joined a summer school devoted to debating, at Yale at the end of Grade 9, and then in Grade 10 went to Costa Rica to further improve her Spanish. The summer of Grade 11 was devoted to the reading and writing of two essays (in addition to the Extended Essay that she wrote for the IB Diploma). The first was a piece of research around language development in a specific area between Portugal and Spain; this Jessica was able to get published independently – she was also able to describe her findings in her Common App application. Additionally, Jessica entered another essay for an international Economics competition run by Oxford University in the UK. The essay was so well received that she was invited to attend a celebratory weekend in Oxford, and her essay came 2nd overall. Naturally, an international prize-winning essay would have been of great interest to Columbia admissions also.

So overall, what are Jessica's main points of advice to younger students?

- a) Do very thorough research so you are sure that your top choice universities are exactly right for you, and that you are right for them.
- b) Revise thoroughly and extensively for ACT or SAT.
- c) Keep learning and improving your skills over the holidays.
- d) Find a niche that you love and fully demonstrate your expertise in the area.

Congratulations Jessica. We wish you the very best of luck with your academic life.

Rachel Keys
University Counselor

Message from the PTA

Check the ABA PTA website for updates on all upcoming information.

SPRING FEST 2019 is INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL FESTIVAL (ICF)

Date: 7th March 2019

Time: 6.00 - 8.00 PM

Venue: ABA Tennis Court



Come represent your country! Look for the email from your HRP and contact the PTA Chair on Ptachair@abaoman.org for more information. Second informational meeting will be 25th February at 7.40am.

Building our community together!

TUESDAY TALKS & TRAVELS

PTA hosted the 2nd First Aid and CPR session at ABA. It was a complete sell out and all the participants thoroughly enjoyed themselves and gained good knowledge.

Next hike will be Tuesday, 26th February, location TBD. Anyone interested in joining this newly formed HIKE CLUB, email Ptachair@abaoman.org or PTALog@abaoman.org

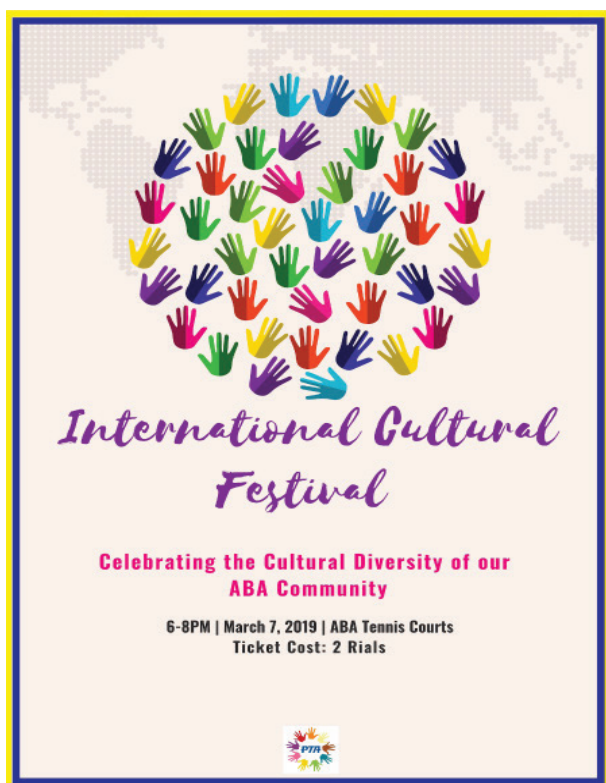
FLEA MARKET

Flea Market is on Friday, 22nd February 2019. Don't forget to visit!

PARENT ART EXHIBIT

Mark your calendars for 24th April 2019. This event is a wonderful chance to exhibit your talents as parents. It has been a major success over the last few years and we look forward to seeing your artistic creations on display once more!

We would appreciate if you could confirm your interest in participating. We have received interest from only one artist. This event requires at least 20 artists to make it interesting. Please send your desire to participate as an artist to Bokamoso Kumwenda at PTAESec@abaoman.org for further details.



Your PTA
Building our community

Message from the Booster Club

WOW TIME FLIES WHEN YOU ARE HAVING FUN!

It's hard to believe we are nearing the end of February. Looking back at what we, as a community have accomplished since returning in the New Year, it's truly amazing!

Pop up shops, Ice Frenzies, Half shot Hot Shot, 2 back to back MESAC weekends and an Awards night. Wow Wow Wow!

Thank you to our amazing community for all of your continued support and effort, your time and delicious food donations help make all of our events the success they are. Without you none of it would be possible.

The fun doesn't stop there though, the Booster Club have still got a few more exciting events ahead so mark your calendar now for our up and coming Pop up shop at the International Cultural Festival on the 7th of March and our



Ice Frenzy on the 18th of March.

If you would like to know more about the Booster Club, simply email us boosterclub@abaoman.org, Booster Club is a great way to 'support our kids' while making new friends and having fun.



Vipers Community Spirit!



Yours in community spirit
VIPERS Booster Club