



ABA Parent Teacher Association

Open Meeting Monday

7 October 2019

PTA Room

**Members Present:**

Mehreen Elahi  
Shanoona  
Nadia Naber  
Ingid  
Tara novacek  
Leena Al Bastaki  
Manuela Emmer  
Tatsiana kaldayeva  
Moin Amena  
Shalini verma  
Nawal Al Rahbi  
Tony Albert Karm  
Alison Al-Maskari  
Eman Shaltout  
Marzieh Shahsavari  
Gabriella Ibrahim  
Omega Hilbron  
Melanie Pitcher  
Iman al Maamary  
Felicia Anand  
Sylvia Quintana  
Lubna Taha  
Dana Albasha  
Gisele Jabbour  
Sreevidhya Ananth  
Hiba Kamal  
Ekta Pangasa  
Ann-Katrin van Schie  
Sulafa Ahmed  
Wendy Ting  
Munira Alawfi

Radka Slaba  
Azza Saeed  
Jane Sharma  
Cecile Loubens  
Yasmin Oshana  
Charmain Kuhn  
Soma Saha Roy

**Attendees from PTA Executive Committee:**

Lama Samman	Chair
Laila Al Mawali	Vice Chair/ Logistics Coordinator
Nandita Shukla	Communications Liaison
Paula Colaco	Treasurer
Bokamoso Kumwenda	Secretary
Rebecca Mitchell	Middle School Representative
Kami Lamki	High School Representative
Minita Sampat	ECE & Elementary Parent Representative
Anjum Khan	New Parent Representative
Penny Chang	New Parent Representative

*Meeting opened at 7.45am*

## **Welcome**

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

## **ABA Faculty:**

### **Simon Walker – High School Principal**

Simon began by informing parents that last week there was a Grade 11 and 12 coffee morning and that the key points addressed or discussed during the meeting would be put in the Newsletter.

The one to ones; students and teachers are currently going on. The subject teachers set targets, the mentors discuss these targets with the children (Grades 9-12). The parents' consultations are scheduled after the reports are published.

IB DP Core presentation will take place on the 8<sup>th</sup> October at 15:30 in the PAC. This will cover CAS, TOK and Extended Essay. Simon encouraged parents to attend.

There was a question asked about vaping in school. To which Simon said there were a couple of instances of vaping last academic year, which the School dealt with. This year, there have not been instance where kids have been caught vaping. When he has talked to some of the kids, the reveal that it is going on in the community and the are providing lots of information about vaping, to the parents as well. He commented that the education for parents is important because it is a relatively new thing and parents may not be able to recognize the vaping products that are used these days.

Another question posed to Simon was how the School speaks to kids about vaping. He informed parents that they use various methods of communication. This year, there are mentors in high school and PSAG program that educated children on making healthy choices outside school grounds which is where they face most of these challenges.

Another parent shared data from a US article that revealed is a big issue in the US because a large number of children are addicted to vaping as the nicotine content can be equivalent to 20 cigarettes. In addition to this they seem to target young people by offering various flavors that entice. She also shared that in the US there have been deaths linked to vaping use.

Simon encouraged parents to make themselves familiar with the trends and engage their children in conversations about the issue as well as finding out the various legal regulations in different countries.

## **Megel Barker (Middle School)**

Megel began by telling parents that the Middle School Advisory program helps students by helping students ask themselves how they can make good choices even if their friends are making different choices. At this age, the kids are very concerned with who their friends are and how that interact with these friends in a way that makes them feel accepted.

In the Middle School they are building those relationships with the adults that make the kids comfortable openly sharing some of the peer challenges that there are going through and asking for help when necessary. He also encouraged this open communication at home as well.

Megel shared that he recently read about 18 deaths related to vaping, which is indicative of people not being well informed about the dangers of the practice.

He also noted that while addressing the issue of vaping, we should not forget to educate and address the problem of smoking cigarettes as this is still an issue among this generation.

In the Middle School, they are trying to establish a Middle School culture that is evidenced by kids smiling, having fun and being successful. There are a number of programs in the Middle school that help this objective. One of which is Adventure Oman. This has been re-launched to be more than just a school trip, but an extension of the learning that happens in the classroom.

Adventure Oman dates are November 12 – 14 and all information has been passed onto the parents regarding the excursion.

Middle School Serves launched last week and there was lots of energy and excitement from the kids about the project. MS Serves is promoting service as action and shared with parents that he visited UNICEF Oman to engage them to partner in the project. Kids will look at the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and after picking one goal to address, will develop an NGO that addresses that goal. Kids will design the logo, mission and action plan of their NGO. Megel shared that he looked forward to ABA hosting an “NGO Expo” where the kids can showcase their NGOs along with other NGOs in the community.

Along with Middle School Creates, these initiatives in the Middle school help create the culture of student agency, of ownership, voice and choice.

Middle School Reports – teachers are working on mid-semester reports which will have notes on student targets. Parents consultations will be scheduled after the reports are published.

The Introduction to MYP – this workshop, which is particularly for new parents, will be an interactive session that will engage parents as they learn about the MYP.

## **Sue Groesbeck – Head of School**

Sue thanked the parents that attended the coffee mornings she hosted and told parents that the discussions brought forward some great issues.

She shared that she, along with the Board were working until 8 pm and that this morning at 7 there was a faculty meeting. She explained that she mentions these things to let parents know that the Board, staff and faculty of this school are fully engaged and everyone works tirelessly for the kids at ABA.

Sue shared that she has at least 5 goals for this year, which she will share briefly during the Open Meeting, but in more detail at the Board Meeting;

- I. The senior class deserves to have a wonderful year – she told parents that she has committed to learning each Grade 12 student’s name and interests to get to know them. This June will also be the 30<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony at ABA and there are ideas and plans to make it a very special occasion.
- II. Craig Williamson – will be coming in as Head of School and it is important that she keep him current with the issues at ABA. He will be visiting in November and Sue has planned they drive to Dubai and she will have the opportunity to talk to him and answer questions he may have.
- III. Marketing and communication – the newsletter, the website, the Facebook page will all be streamlined so they are utilized effectively.
- IV. New campus development.
- V. Counsel for the Board – Sue shared that five of the members of the board, including herself, went to Hanoi for training and had the opportunity to be completely honest and transparent with them. She reminded parents that one of the things an ongoing Head of School is not able to do is to be that honest and transparent with the Board because they are the employee of the Board. Her Interim status along with her 48-year experience gives her the ability to give counsel to the Board, which they have requested.

Concluding her remarks, she encouraged parents to feel free to contact her if they had any question, complaint, compliment or query.

## **Booster Club**

Vanessa gave the Booster Club update, highlighting that they will continue to sell swim gear (swim caps, goggles and the embroidered swimming bags). The tracksuits, sports socks and the travel polos will be available from the uniform shop.

Vipers Hoodies – these are good quality hoodies ordered from Dubai. Names on the hoodies are limited to given names or last names, or an approved combination of both. Orders for the

Viper hoodies is only done at the Booster Club Pop-Up shop and require payment at the time of placing the order. 28<sup>th</sup> October

Upcoming Booster Club Events:

MESAC – November 7 – 9 at ABA 08:30 – 6pm

MESAC Awards – 13 November (Date may change due to MS Explores)

Vanessa announced that she will be stepping down from the Booster Club, but assured parents that the Club is in good hands and she was confident of the team taking it forward.

### **PTA Updates**

Lama briefly presented the members of the Executive committee and reminded new parents of the coffee mornings at Mint and Coco, scheduled for the 9th and 10th October.

The HRPs have been assigned and have gone through orientation, parents should have received an email from their class HRP.

There is a checkout system for the reusable plates and cutlery in the PTA room. HRPs who wish to use these for class events may send an email to [ptalog@abaoman.org](mailto:ptalog@abaoman.org) to make requests. there is a 500bz charge for damaged or lost items.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Paula presented the Treasure's report, noting an opening balance of 16, 294.618 OMR as of 5<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

### **Fund Requests**

*Arabic Language Day Gifts for Games*

Request from: Elementary Arabic Teachers                      Serves: Elementary      Cost: 100 OMR

**What?** An assortment of pencils, pens, erasers & stationery.

**Why?** Arabic Language Day is a special day in which the elementary children celebrate Arabic as the official language of the host country Oman.

- Students design some educational games and present them to younger students to practice Arabic
- Students playing the games are given these small gifts when they win the game
- Students are very happy to practice Arabic regardless of their level or performance.

## *Board Games for Middle School Common Room*

Request from: Megel Barker

Serves: all Middle School Cost: 150 OMR

**What?** 15 board games

**Why?** For students to have an opportunity to play card/board games while on break in the common room.

- By providing the games, students will benefit from an atmosphere that promote social skills as well as soft affective skills such as perseverance, and negotiation.
- Games have been considered to have a positive impact on the social development of young children.
- When in competition they learn to negotiate and deal with losing and winning.
- Devices are banned from the common room, a diversion that increases learning and conversation is a welcomed addition.

### **Vote**

Arabic Language – 25 votes yes

Board Games for Middle School Common Room – 26 votes yes

Both fund requests approved

Lama explained the Fund Request process. before contacting the PTA with a request, teachers would have spoken to their department head to find out if the request has been budgeted for either in the department fund or other School funds. if it has not, the teachers are free to request money from the PTA to fulfill the identified need. A Fund Request form is submitted to the PTA for consideration by the community.

The fund request for misting fans will no longer be accepted by the PTA.

### **Upcoming Events**

October 31 – Spooktacular

November 18 – National Day

November 12 – TTT (Muttrah and Museum visit)

November 22 – Flea Market

#### **Spooktacular - Clause**

- the event has been moved up an hour to allow families to have time to enjoy other community trick or treat events
- currently there are 15 “doors”. the ideal number is 25, so we need more volunteers.
- any questions can be emailed to [trickortreat@abaoman.org](mailto:trickortreat@abaoman.org)
- There are Harry Potter and Snow White Witch themed supplies if anyone wants to use them for the evening.



- the candy donations request has gone out in the Newsletter and green bins have been placed in the Admin and at ticket sales for people to drop in their donations.
- Teal Pumpkin: This is an idea for kids who due to allergies can not have candy, but would like to participate. the idea is to collect separate items for them.
- This information will also be disseminated through the HRPs.
- The CAS opportunities
  - The Grade 6 Corridor
  - Grade 7 and 8
  - The High School Student Council - Scary and Not-So-Scary Haunted houses
  - Charity groups - sponsor games: kids create games and raise money for charity.
- tickets go on sale 21st October and pumpkins will be sold for the Pumpkin Carving Contest.

PTA Calendar – Amendment: January 2020: Back to school is the 5<sup>th</sup> of January

### **Expressions of Thanks and Close**

Lama thanked attendees and closed the meeting.

Next Open meeting: November 4<sup>th</sup> 7.40 am.