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ABA Parent Teacher Association

Open Meeting

Monday, 13 May 2019

PTA Room

Members Present:

Reem Alshaikh

Rebecca Mitchell

Alison Johnston

Moin Amena

Clauss Niazi

Doris Chan

Elaheh Karimi

Jinane Helou

Vanessa McCarron

Melanie Pitcher

Tatsiana Kaldayeva

Attendees from PTA Executive Committee:

Lama Samman

Chair

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

Laila Al Mawali

Logistics Coordinator

Anjum Khan Vice Chair Secondary

Janki Sampat Communications Liaison

Absentees from PTA Executive Committee:

Meeta Khira Vice Chair Elementary

Dina Wahib Elementary New Parent Coordinator

Alaa Mohamed Ali Secondary New Parent Coordinator

Meeting opened at 7.45am

Welcome

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

ABA Faculty:

Sam Cook – Elementary Principal

Sam began her remarks by informing that the teachers are currently working on students' assessments. These assessments are helpful for both parents and their future teachers.

The Grade 5 exhibition was a success and she thanked the parents who attended that. She explained that the exhibition was a very important component of the PYP Program and it showcases all the students have learned. Including organization, time management,

The upcoming events in the Elementary are the Class Talent shows. Each grade will have their talent shows and the final performance will be on the 17th of June.

Sam thanked the parents for their ongoing support.

Simon Walker – High School Principal

Simon noted that he too enjoyed the Grade 5 PYP exhibition and reflecting back to last year's DP results he noted that the students that did best in the DP were those that had gone through the PYP and MYP programs and the success of the students is really the collaborative success of the whole school.

He was especially impressed with how the students were able to talk about their learning and thinking process, skills which they will continue to develop moving on to MYP, then to DP.

DP exams began last Friday. These are going on very well.

The first e-Assessments begin today (13th May) for the Grade 10's; these will be held in the gym. These exams evaluate conceptual learning and applying skills.

He encouraged parents to thank Miguel Barker for the work in organizing the exams.

Grade 11 in - school examinations designed by teachers from past papers.

Grade 10 – work experience and introduction to DP as they look forward to Grade 11.

Graduation – 31st May. Evelyn is leading the team organizing the evening event.

The HOD interviews are ongoing for those leaving ABA.

Simon informed parents that the end of year high school awards have been stopped. After discussing the matter with other HODs and considering the current research; they concluded that the awards did little in reflecting the values of the school and that awards should be based on more than just academic results and rather reflect the individual learning journeys of the students. This change will be implemented this year and discussions have been had with the students to explain the decision, and a new reward system will be explored by both the teachers and the student council.

Kathleen Bowin – Middle School Principal

Kathleen began her remarks by letting parents know that they are very proud of the middle school basketball players as they have competed in various tournaments. Kathleen asked parents to let the principals know if students take part on other activities outside school as they will be happy to put this news in the newsletter for the community to also appreciate.

Currently, students and teachers have been working with Miguel Barker on the interdisciplinary links between the different subjects.

In Advisory, the students have been doing their learning reflections for Parent/Teacher Conferences.

The Ski week was a great success and Kathleen thanked Paul, Clair and Raewyn for accompanying the children on the trip.

The Middle School had an assembly and Kathleen apologized to parents for the information not going out sooner. She did assure parents that she has specific goals for next year with regards to the assembly communications to parents.

Grade 8 are getting ready for Grade 9 and have finished with their course selections. Each student has met with a counsellor and Miguel has offered to organize a parent information session as well.

The Middle School Student Council has donated a ping pong table and a foosball table to the MS Common room. They were also involved in the Superintendent interviews which they took very seriously and were very thoughtful during the process.

Fly up day – 28th May. This is for students in Grade 5 moving up to the 6th grade. There will be activities planned for the day that will give the students a taste of what it will be like in Middle School.

Last week of school – 2nd annual Middle School Creates – 18th and 19th teachers will be offering creative courses during those 2 days and students select the classes they are interested in. this will finish off with an assembly.

The May 2nd Middle School event was cancelled and June 17th was the next date for a student - led activity.

Simon Taylor – ABA Superintendent

This was Simon's last open meeting and appealed to parents and the PTA not to stop their work and efforts of building a strong school community. He reminded that the school community is often the place new people get connected and integrated into life in Muscat and the work the PTA does is extremely important to facilitating that connections and integration.

Simon hoped it was evident that the leadership team he leaves behind is a strong one and that the most important role he has had, has been to build strong teams and He has tried to then build leaders out of those teams. It has been evident that the efforts of these leaders, in the sports, arts and academics has had a big impact on the participation of students, the results at MESAC and the grades the last few years.

Simon shared that he has been in touch with Sue and she is up to date with what's going on, but it will be the SLT that will be continue what has been started even through next year. Simon feels very confident with the team and assured parent the School is in good hands.

Simon shared that he will be going to the Netherlands to join the Council of International Schools. He hopes to be back for the ribbon cutting at the new campus.

Paul Brace – Athletics Director

The competitive season is finished and the older students are moving towards exams. The elementary and middle school has moved to more recreational sports activities.

With the e-Assessments taking place in the gym, there will be information sent out to parents regarding the ASL program schedule and the changes in venues for some activities.

Paul shared the he had gotten a few questions about pre-season training. He informed parents that under the MESAC guidelines, training outside the MESAC season was not allowed. ABA runs recreational sports activities on the weekends but they are unable to cater for yearlong activities.

Paul shared the they have seen a large increase of student participation in the sports programs and has had great support from the SLT, the Booster club and the PTA which has resulted in the best year we have had.

Clauss asked Paul about the scheduling; in the past the schedule allowed kids interested in both the arts and sports to participate in both as they were different seasons, but this has changed. Paul explained that the training days have increased and ABA has no control over the game schedules by other schools. This is the reason that kids have to choose either drama or sports.

Paul thanked again the Booster Club and the PTA.

Booster Club

Vanessa recapped the year, going through the Booster club achievements and events as well as the merchandise that has been available this year. She shared the 2019/2020 Booster Club calendar.

She also went through the Booster club finances for the year 2018/2019 and finally thanked the support of the PTA and the parent community for their unwavering support throughout the year.

Upcoming Events

- Ramadan Food Drive – ongoing until the 30th May
- Eid Market - 20th May
- Ramadan Iftar – 23th May: tickets available after the meeting

Treasurer's Report

Paula presented the Treasury Report noting a balance of 16 751.053 OMR

Reimbursement for Domino group- 65 OMR

Flea Market: Income = 555.200 (expenses not included)

PTA Structure

This year we have operated with the 2-Campus PTA structure which consisted of

Current Structure:

Chair

Treasurer

Communications

Logistics

Elementary Vice Chair

Secondary Vice Chair

Elementary Representative

Secondary Representative

Elementary Activities

Secondary Activities

Elementary New Parent Representative

Secondary New Parent Representative

Elementary Secretary

Secondary Secretary

Elementary Teacher Representative

Secondary Teacher Representative

We found out the having all these positions was at times not useful. For example, the Secondary Activities Coordinator quickly found out that their job was redundant because in the secondary, most of the activities are organized by the students themselves.

The New Parent representatives found that only one person needed to do the job and the position needed to be re-looked at with regard to the type of person this position requires; a self-motivated, out-going person and active person who will reach out to the new parents and brings them into the community.

We have found that there are positions that are absolutely necessary namely;

- Chair
- Communications Liaison
- Treasurer
- Logistics Coordinator
- Secretary
- Secondary Representative
- Elementary Representative
- New Parent Representative
- Two Teacher Representatives

What we need are leaders for the events we have on the PTA calendar;

- Spooktacular
- National Day
- Santa's Workshop
- Winter Market
- Parent Art Exhibit
- Tuesday Talks & Travels
- Holi Celebration
- International Culture Festival
- 3 Flea Markets
- Eid Market
- Ramadan Iftar
- Ramadan Food Drive
- Teacher's Appreciation

There was a discussion and suggestions for the addition of a Middle School Representative to cater for their unique needs and concerns in the Middle School. The definition of the MS Rep needs also to be enriched by definition to include being the communication focal point between the HRP and the MS parents and keeping abreast with the ongoing social and community issues with the counselors and the STL in the Middle School.

Lama proposed a trial of this new trial structure for the year 2019/2020.

Voting for this Trial Structure will take place at the AGM.

Important Dates

PTA Annual General Meeting:

May 27th 2019

Events:

May 12 th – 30 th May.	Ramadan Food Drive
May 23	Summer Fest – Ramadan Iftar
June 10	Teacher Appreciation

Meeting adjourned: 09:35