



The Arts Based School

Parent Council Meeting Friday, October 9, 2015

WELCOME!

Michelle Hopkins Lawrence
PC Co-Chair

CO-CHAIR REPORT:

- Five Points Fundraiser Results
- We earned \$715 on our fundraiser night. Fun was had by all in attendance!

- Garden Grant
- ABS was awarded \$4500 over three years from the Garden Club Council of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County. The grant was written and submitted by Matt Mayers, parent and volunteer extraordinaire. The funds will be used to purchase native plants for the extensive ABS gardens. Congrats to Matt and all of our awesome garden helpers!

- Book Fair Results
- Our book fair total was \$11,235.62 (does not include online sales).
- The school earned approximately \$6500 in Scholastic dollars for the library and teachers to buy books.

- Request for volunteer apprentice for Library and Book Fair 2016
- Apprentice to Mackenzie Calhoun so that we have a Library/Book Fair Coordinator in both buildings.
- This position is needed beginning late summer 2016
- We need volunteers to work the library: shelving, cleaning, cataloging books, mending books, etc
- Volunteers can learn the Follett software
- Volunteers can complete inventory at the end of the year

- Book Fair Concerns
- A few parents have raised concerns about money being spent on toys instead of books.
- Discussion about regulating what is available for sale at our Book Fair. Several parents expressed desire for more books, fewer toys.
- A parent suggested that we leave out the pencils, erasers, etc. and put toys (like nail polish kits and pricier stuffed animals) away.
- A parent recommended putting the toys in another areas for only parents to purchase.
- Katie >>> expressed a desire to possibly being the apprentice starting in summer.

- Robin explained that this used to be a school routine.
- Michelle suggested that we make it school policy to keep toys out of the selection for students.
- Jessica Bell asked if Scholastic not send toys. Robin explained that it is good for our school to be able to select what we put out for purchase.
- Social Media Policy update:
 - A reminder will be going out reminding people that when posting on social media to please have parent permission before posting pictures, etc.
 - We can not legally stop people from posting anything on social media. We can only control what we post at the school level on our site.
 - We used to have an official Facebook page operator but that is no longer done.
 - Questions were asked about the Facebook site called ABS Parent Council. Agreement was reached that this title needs to be changed since the Parent Council does not manage this site.
 - Discussion about who is able to view this page and participate within the page occurred.
 - A parent suggested that we put the ABS new “Social Media Etiquette” notice be linked to the Thursday notes and Classroom Shutterfly accounts so parents have several opportunities to read it and be better aware of expectations.
 - Robin pointed out that this will also be included in New Parent Orientation information from now on.
 - Michelle explained that she will figure out how the ABS Parent Council Facebook page works/who currently manages this page so we can edit that page title.

VOTE TO AMEND PARENT COUNCIL BY-LAWS:

- The proposed amendment would make the Annual Giving Coordinators have two-year staggered terms.
- Michelle has rewritten Article 4 a, b, f to include this addendum
- Michelle has also rewritten Article 5 under “duties” to include extended personnel positions for hospitality and technology. Yearbook responsibilities, etc. was removed from technology position.
- The current policy states that PC Board members “attend all meetings”. Michelle will reword this so that it's clear to all that Board members are to attend any/all meetings which they are able.

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT:

Paige Raper
Assistant Principal

- Homework at ABS
 - Last spring when our 8th graders were in place, staff discussed homework policy for ABS.
 - Teachers provided information about current homework practices and discussed:
 - Do you assign homework?
 - What do you assign?
 - How do you communicate this information to students? Parents?
 - Etc..
- ABS wanted to revamp the homework policy if necessary since adding upper grades.
- School Leadership Team discussed findings
- Full school staff read The Homework Myth over the summer. In August, there was a book discussion based on this reading and individual opinions.

- Staff has revisited and still feels good about the policy in place & that this policy still fits our school. Students are here for a long day with educators who support them while here. Families should be able to dictate how students' time is spent after school.
- Upper grades students have a study hall period at the end of the day.
- Math especially was discussed re: older students. Paige wants to clarify that students who “need practice” (one of the main reasons math homework is assigned in schools) do this work at school with teachers available for assistance.
- A parent expressed that he is always pleased with our policy here. He asked if dialog has occurred with current HS students about this current practice.
- Paige answered this by explaining that there has been positive feedback from students who are now in high school.
- She pointed out that concerns around not having homework related to “how will they learn to manage time?” The book studied explains that homework doesn't necessarily support this time-management training.
- We acknowledge that there will certainly be an adjustment period after 8th grade when entering high school.
- In years past, we have gathered data from middle schoolers. We plan to do the same with our high school students.
- Katie- Kinder. Mom- expressed positive feelings after spending time with a parent of older student. She appreciates that our policies fit our philosophy at ABS.
- Another mom expressed gratitude for her older students being successful here all through school. She asked how this policy is shared with parents. Paige explained that it's in the parent handbook. It's also shared at new parent orientation.
- Another parent explained that the older students do have more homework as the years progress and that has gone well. She explained that this change as her students have grown and this year, she has seen a difference by having less homework. With less homework, her family has had some homework and been challenged with not having homework some days and having it someday. Since she has twins, she appreciates the fact that teachers plan and assign similar work.
- A parent shared that her students (4th & 6th graders) have a variety of homework at times.
- Paige explains that ABS expects 30 minutes reading to occur every night within the family routine for all students. In 5th grade students begin to use planners to practice time-management. 6th grade teaches study skills as part of their daily work. Even down to the details of how to use your locker throughout the day. 7th grade has a variety of teachers and are explicitly taught how to manage materials for each, also. Since 6th graders are the first to have letter grades along with narrative grades, there are many discussions about this.
- Lindsay pointed out that she feels that high school homework is much more age-appropriate. Homework now is in appropriate amounts with reading, adding Reflex in 2nd grade, etc...
- Michelle spoke to how prepared her students from ABS are at Salem Academy. She likes the study hall time in the upper grades so that work is completed at school and time management comes with that.
- A mom explained that coming from public school, her son loves reading after coming here. She expresses concern about supplemental reading coming home with her younger student to help her know how to help her student at home. Paige encouraged her to speak with the classroom teacher for any questions about what she can do to assist her child at home.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Fall Fest Saturday, October 24 from 12 to 3 pm

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- **ABS Board of Directors Meeting:** Tuesday, October 13, 5:45-7:00 pm, 7th Street Building
- **Parent Council:** Friday, November 13, 8:15-9:15 am, Resource Room in MLK Building

Submitted by April C. Greenwood 10/9/15