



Parents' Association of The Columbus Academy

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Columbus Academy Parent's Association Meeting Notes August 12, 8-9am

I. Welcome/Intros/Goal Sharing

Members present included: Ken Brown, Mark Turner, Lexie Lazarus, Prabha Narayanan, Shireen Firouzian, Katharine Mallory, Miranda Cox, Linda Anderson, Steve Berger, Ben Nicola, Lisa Berliner, Jeff Jeffers, Cathy Hile, Jenny Luckett, Kathy Turner, Lee Szkowny, Debbie Daoud, Cindy Poehlmann, Beth Fisher, Ann Boeckman, Rachel Lichten, Sara Browning, Erich Hunker

II. Meeting Format

There is a commitment to maintain the timely format of the meetings. Today's meeting will run over by 5 minutes. The goals for the meetings are to have succinct yet productive meetings and be accountable. This enables us to succeed in achieving the desired outcomes and enrich the school with a legacy left by us. Hats were presented to all members in attendance with the "Leave A Legacy" theme serving as a reminder throughout the school year. Ken also suggested that during the process of these subsequent meetings, each member could consider welcoming another parent to meetings. This not only serves to broaden participation, but helps to create interest for the following board. Each committee is asked to provide action items for issues needing attention. This includes activities needing support from volunteers and funding necessary from the treasurer, etc. Limiting the reports to action items allows precedence for upcoming activities.

III. School View

- Austin Bening, Student Body President was present to provide board members with an inside view of the school. Some of his goals this year include :
 1. Reforming the student court and along with reviewing the board disciplinary procedures. Last year the student court had an occasion to meet over issues once. Hopefully if there is a possibility for joining the teachers and court representatives, there may be more involvement and contribution by the students in these meetings.
 2. The second goal mentioned was the effort by Austin and Alex to create a function for students that would be responsible for planning fun activities including pep rallies and/ or preparations for the school and other planned events. This gives a unique opportunity to students who do not routinely get a chance to use their imaginations to help and motivate a larger group, & unite for a common goal.

3. The final interest of student council and Austin this year is to redefine students' goals and also allow more involvement by the entire members of each grade rather than a few. Historically, the older students have had majority of planning and responsibility and despite the interest of the other grades there has been little balance. Austin feels it is necessary to involve all those who have committed and shown ability and interest to lead.

- **Shane MacElhiney, Head of Upper School**

Mr. MacElhiney wanted Austin to have the opportunity to speak first since Austin represents the leadership of this school year. The way adults can empower students and help foster a sense of leadership involves allowing them ownership. Upper school is the ideal time due to the fact that adults are still present in their life and the decisions made by them allow support and redirection when there are consequences. Open dialogue is necessary to help students acquire the skills that allow them to successfully move forward to the next step of their life. He has experienced, already, great interaction between all levels of students and appreciates the welcoming response. His administrative goals are to be available to those that need him. Emails may take a day to return since he plans to spend time in the midst of things. He believes it is important to be in the middle of the activity, in the classroom etc, in order to gain a sense of what is being done and how. He has an open door philosophy and a value for relationship with the community. I believe: "we must prepare students for the future and not our past". The world is moving faster than before and students must be prepared. There is a difference between academic excellence and intellectual intelligence. Teaching involves modeling ethical and moral behavior and flexibility for even faculty to grow. Must be flexible and reflect on our teaching to make certain it fits the needs of the students. Parent coffees are a great opportunity to meet and greet parents. It will occur one month or six weeks after the beginning of school. Students must be provided with freedom to grow. It is important to instill respect and a sense of the world around them. Moving students from a self centered existence to a self to that is more aware of the world and their impact on it. A goal in the communication with parents is to ask for openness in dialogue when a concern arises. In order to solve issues, it is important to know both sides of the problem and then judge appropriately. There is a partnership between parents and teachers that open dialogue solves when concerns arise.

IV. Goals for '08/'09 All about creativity and how we can do something better than it has been done before. Please deliver on this. A goal was to have met with previous chairs and received their book. If this has not happened, next best alternative, create your own book and take your position to a higher level.

- Raise more money to benefit our children
- Make a Difference

- Enhance Parent Association Communication & Awareness; Viking Voice will now be published to homes via email on Wednesdays with information for the following week to 10 days. This allows for more information to be passed along that helps in the communication process with families.
- Insider's View into the School, visits by key school representatives will be publicized to parents in order to have more attendance and involvement by parents.
- Have Fun!

V. Key Reports with Action Items: Any items that require a decision or involvement are encouraged to be discussed at each meeting in order create a more productive process for the board.

- **Parent Education: Theme: Healthy Decisions: How We Make Them**

This year we will be providing materials and opportunities for parent dialogue related to the above theme throughout the year. In considering how we make our decisions, both good and less good, we can exchange ideas on how to share that with our children and help them consider how they will make their choices. What is healthy for one child may not be for another, but considering how we make our best choices should be relevant to all.

We will be working with Bob Lee to offer more resources for parents on the web page.

We will be providing materials to grade parents to share as they wish and at grade coffees.

We will schedule four consecutive Tuesday evenings(7-8:30) beginning mid-January for parents throughout CA to participate in a facilitated dialogue about decision making and how we model and recognize when a child is ready to make which decisions for him/herself. Meetings may rotate morning and evening.

SEED program is offered by Joyce Simson, result of a Parents' Association grant. Group membership is limited so please contact Joyce:

jrs@ix.netcom.com

ISACS- Again this year, Adam Cavnar will assist us in making these teleconferences from Independent School Association available at school. Schedule will be announced.

- Volunteers: There are many current volunteer opportunities available. Volunteer forms can be provided to anyone that would like them present at any activity. Volunteering provides a great exposure to other parents and the school.
- Annual Budget: Budget was presented and will be voted upon at the next meeting. It was suggested to provide information to students encouraging them to apply to grants that are available through Parents' Association.
- Spring Fundraiser: This year's planned event will be unlike any other and promises to have something for everyone.

- New Parent's Liaison: Lower school Popsicle party was a huge success; new parents had not only met their liaisons but already developed a wonderful friendship with them. Creating a community by welcoming, say hello to someone who may be new.
- Viking Corner: New merchandise coming in for the new school year. Anyone interested in volunteering a lot or a little, or even at the many events is appreciated.
- Service: The Parents' Association of Columbus Academy will once again be collecting donations for the "**Kids for Kids**" **Holiday Clothing Drive**. So if you are cleaning closets and don't want to store the unused items until November, a truck will be located in the Art Entrance/Lower School turnaround on September 4 from 7:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. so that you can drop off your gently used clothing (sizes infant through adult), toys, books and bicycles. We ask that you separate dress code clothing from other clothing and encourage you to bring winter coats of all sizes.
- Scrip: Right along with the goal of raising more money for the school, if there is something you need or want to gift, scrip is an ideal way to help your school. There is something for everyone. Look for the order forms!

Leave a Legacy