

ARUNDEL HIGH SCHOOL

Citizen's Advisory Committee – CAC

Meeting Minutes

October 6, 2010

Our meeting began at 6:10 pm with Mrs. Billheimer and Mrs. Dziedzic speaking about Arundel's Signature/Global Cohort program. Several speakers have been instrumental to the program, including a Naval Academy graduate who is currently a liaison to the White House involved in antipiracy and drug trafficking. Jamie Benoit is scheduled to speak this year as well as an Arundel parent who has visited Afghanistan.

A slideshow was then presented explaining the "new definition of who is part of our community." Local + global = Glocal, the theme for our Signature program. The program helps students understand what their community has to offer, i.e. NSA, Pentagon, and BRAC.

Presentations were then given by Arundel teachers and students who traveled abroad this past summer. Ms. Whayland and Emily Twigg spoke about their experiences in Guatemala where they taught children in a small village. Mr. and Mrs. Yuscavage presented their experiences from their trip to Italy with six Arundel students. Their World History class came alive as they experienced such sites the Coliseum and Michelangelo's David. Ms. Hannan spoke to us about her trip to Costa Rica. She took a group of Arundel students and they experienced the rainforests and exotic foods. Zinhle Essamuah spoke about her trip to Ghana. She spent the first two weeks on a student trip and then an extended stay with family. Zinhle's father is from Ghana and they have family members who live in the country. Zinhle explained that not all of Africa is alike and each country has its own culture, traditions and customs. Amna Sassy gave her presentation on her trip to Egypt. She told us that the country is not all desert, but a very modern world, especially in the big city of Cairo. Amna's father is from Egypt and she has visited the country and her extended family members who live there many times.

After a brief break and refreshments, Andrew Pruski and Kevin Jackson were introduced, both are AACPS Board Members. Mr. Pruski informed us that next year's budget is awaiting the approval of the County Council. The budget included new walls for Four Seasons Elementary School which currently has open walls. They are scheduled to build the first half of the walls in the summer of 2011 and the second half in the summer of 2012. Piney Orchard Elementary is waiting on approval for an addition to their school. Mr. Pruski said he just came from an all day budget meeting and informed us they are doing what they can in this difficult economy. The budget is very tight this year. There have been a lot of complaints about class sizes and they did hire an additional math teacher at Arundel Middle School when one math class reached 40 students. Other issues to be considered: By the 2015, 35,000 new jobs will be offered in our county. Traffic will be a problem and our students will be spending more time on their buses. Also in the works in the redistricting of Meade.

In response to parent's, teacher's and student's concerns about the inability for computer communication with international students, Mr. Pruski told us that he spoke with the Public Information

Office (P.I.O.) about Adobe Connect Pro; a safe, secure program used and controlled by the school system. It allows for international communication and can be an alternative to Facebook. PPWs have reported that students have suffered harassment and bullying through Facebook. Mr. Pruski reminded us that companies such as NSA research students' Facebook accounts and some have been removed from programs and/or not chosen due to inappropriate postings on the site.

Another concern from the group was the October 15 deadline for approval of international trips. A change in this policy requires five votes from the Board of Education members. Letters from Mrs. Stratton, PTSO president and others would help this process. The student newsletter "The Glocal Times" is helpful as well. One concern from the Board is that not all students can afford the trips. It is great however that the ones that do travel, share their experiences with everyone.

Kevin Jackson introduced himself and told us as a USNA graduate he was able to travel around the world. He said the best place he visited was Israel where he experienced different perspectives/diversity. He told us that the Board of Education absolutely supports foreign travel. Mr. Jackson is on the Policy Committee and talked about the process of revising policies including revisions, drafts, discussions of the Board members and then the internet posting for 30 days for parents to make their comments. There are first, second and third readings of each policy. The field trip policy was just reviewed in March 2010. He advised us to talk to our principal regarding issues of concern before emailing the Board members, but after that step has been taken, he said to feel free to email them. He encouraged us to talk to parents of elementary students, helping to make communication a priority.

Mr. Pruski concluded their presentation with the question "what can we do better?" His goal is to reach people in our community that don't have children in school. He wants to get them to attend school activities to see what's going on and to participate with us. He reiterated that we have his and Mr. Jackson's full support and they will answer our concerns.

Principal's Report: Mrs. Stratton enthusiastically announced that Arundel High School made AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress)! AYP is calculated by the AMOs (Annual Measurable Objective) which includes nine student groups all which must be met to make AYP. A minimum of 72% of all students in each group must pass. Broadneck, Old Mill and Chesapeake high schools did not make AYP; Broadneck having missed it by one student. Our registrar will begin tracking students; if 400 begin at AHS as freshmen, then 400 should graduate four years later, if not, we want to know why.

HSA retakes are being held this week for the students that still need to pass. Mrs. Stratton is encouraging seniors to get extra help or tutoring to insure that they pass. Each year the target for AYP increases as does the stress to maintain it. Mrs. Stratton is under a tremendous amount of stress and will walk the day Arundel High does not make AYP. Fourteen out of nineteen middle schools did not meet AYP. Arundel Middle did not make their math scores; Crofton Middle did not meet requirements in math and reading. In turn, those 8th graders come to us and we have to prepare them to pass each year. We have two dedicated classrooms ("seminar classrooms") in G-hall which are being used for test preparation for our students. Parents are also being called at home if their child has yet to pass their HSA tests.

The Proficiency Policy was handed out. Mrs. Stratton reiterated that the purpose of our school is learning; students must be compliant and **learn**. The policy tells us that all assignments need to be aligned to the content standards. These standards can be found online at mdk.org and in curriculum documents. Teachers must also be aligned, if not they can “tweak” their lessons as needed. They have been in a tailspin about the new policy indicating the homework is not to be graded; it is their fear that the students won’t do it. Students are not doing the homework and failing tests and quizzes, yet hundreds come to the teachers under the “re-do” (Assessment Upgrade) portion of the policy. They are not eligible for a “re-do” if they haven’t completed the homework. The system is creating students who take advantage of this policy and don’t study on purpose because they know they can take a “re-do.” Summative or end of unit tests are the only tests allowed to be re-taken, not quizzes. The policy states that 85% their grade is based on summative tests, 15% on 21st Century Skills (effort and participation, homework can also be placed in this category). We don’t want students passing on homework alone; they must also pass the tests.

Re-cap:

~Teachers are working diligently with students in the two dedicated “seminar classrooms” to make sure they are prepared to pass the HSAs.

~Ensuring that our school stays on track and makes AYP again next year. The value of homes decline in areas where the school(s) don’t make AYP. People shop for houses by AYP scores.

~We don’t want visions of Annapolis High School to come to Arundel. They were completely restructured when they failed to meet AYP.

~Good news: Arundel High School jumped 228 spaces on the Challenge Index in a Newsweek poll of best high schools in the nation.

AYP came out of NCLB and is determined by each state but all must measure math and English. By the year 2014, 100% of students must pass; however, Mrs. Stratton believes that by then NCLB will be gone and something else will be in its place, perhaps national testing. It is confirmed by research and data that not all children learn the same way or at the same rate; she is trying to get our teachers to change with this in mind. Our administrators currently have focus groups which are constantly monitored.

On November 11, 2010, Superintendent Kevin Maxwell will announce the roll-out of our Signature program: Community Development and Global Citizenship. It will take place from 6-7:30 pm in our cafeteria.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kerri Barbour, Arundel High School CAC