



**Awty Parents and Personnel Association (APPA)**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**September 1, 2015**

**1. Welcome and Call to Order:**

- Suneeta Rangwani, President, called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m.
- She asked the members to please sign the new attendance sheet.
- Introductions were made by all members in attendance.
- The Mission Statement (attached) was read by Suneeta.
  - No changes have been made to the Mission Statement.
  - Suneeta – It is important to focus on point No.3 (to promote cultural, artistic, social, recreational, athletic, fundraising, or other activities for the benefit of the school community), as we do this really well.
  - We need to support Awty in their goal of a “One School”.
  - We must focus on community building and communicate to everyone that we are not a closed club.
  - Maud Lhors (LS Liaison) – Are APPA’s functions explained to all parents? Suneeta – APPA’s functions and mission statement are clearly posted on the school’s website.
- Approval of May 2015 meeting minutes. Motion to approve the minutes of the May meeting was made. Moved (Cherie Chalk), seconded (Amy Pierce), voted and passed.

**2. Head of School:**

- Lisa Darling thanked everyone old and new members for their commitment. She appreciated that there was diversity among the members.
- She asked for all comments, positive and negative, to be sent to her. She is always available to answer any queries.
- Cherie Chalk (Parliamentarian) - Moving the start of school by one day was much appreciated by some.
- Tammy Karni (LS Liaison) - 6<sup>th</sup> graders were not fully prepared on their 1<sup>st</sup> day of school. Monica Fulton (Career Fair, Thanksgiving & Teacher Appreciation) had to help some students find their classes. A request was made for a better transition between 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grades for the next year. (Follow-up for Merel Ligtenberg and Cecile Roux, MS Liaisons).
- Barbara Schmidt (US Liaison and Career Fair) - Having two major events, Fall Festival (Sat) and Dragon Boat Races (Sun) on the same weekend was concerning. It may not be convenient for all parents to attend both events.
- She (Barbara) will try to communicate the dates ahead of the May calendar scheduling meeting. (Follow-up for Barbara).
- Lisa - Halloween falls on a Sat, this could be a reason for the current schedule. She was confident that both events will be successful.
- Lisa stated her three important goals:
  1. One school.

2. Preschool – One school curriculum has already been coordinated.

Language Pilot in Lower School. Curricular harmonization from Grades 1 – 12 will be implemented.

1100 Post Oak Project – Awty’s Center for Young Children. The necessary permits will be required and everyone will ensure that everything moves as quickly as possible. The school has started working with the tenants. Everyone involved will work towards meeting the set deadlines.

Fundraising for the school and the new project.

3. Second Campus – a high demand in admissions has the school board looking towards the long-term future (10 or more years out) and gave an example of adding a second campus.
  - She concluded saying that the “day-to-day focus still remains on our kids”.
  - Suneeta - A new family mentioned at the Welcome Coffee that being at Awty was like a dream come true for them. They received a warm welcome and their daughter felt like she belonged. All the hard work and efforts have paid off.

### 3. Events:

- Celebrating Awty - End of Summer Soirée, 2015/2016 theme ‘Taste of Texas’:
  - Menu has been prepared by Tim and comprises all kind of Texan dishes. There will be food for everyone including fish and vegetarian meals. Wine from a Texas winery will be available that cannot be found in Spec’s. Blue Bell ice-cream will also be served.
  - Currently the attendance stands at 70 (same time last year was ±120).
  - Ashley Amy - The date had been difficult to choose as their options were Labor Day weekend or Sept 11. Labor Day weekend was chosen and this may result in poor attendance.
  - Help is needed to really promote this event.
  - Flyers both in French and English have been sent out with the children.
  - Suneeta requested a jpeg version of these flyers so it could be emailed to members or sent out to other people who may be interested to attend.
  - As the cafeteria is only available after 4pm, they need help to set up on Fri.
- Used Uniforms:
  - Cherie would like someone to take over from her as Chair.
  - Used uniforms sales are only held three times per month.
  - \$6000 were made in two days of sales.
  - There will be another sale this afternoon (Sept. 1, 2015).
  - Barbara asked for a job description of this post. She thought that if people knew more about the position, they would be more inclined to volunteer.
  - Barbara - Were there any changes in sales due to the location change? Cherie - Yes.
  - This was the reason for the recent Used Uniform sales not being held in the cafeteria. It was important that people knew the new location of Used Uniforms.
  - Cherie thanked everyone for their support.
- Hospitality Committee (Care & Concern):
  - Christina Feder - Everything is going as per schedule.
  - They have a lot of volunteers.
  - They are ok with their budget.

- Community Service:
  - Gina Pavon introduced Zenia Quintana who will be assisting her and Farida Morsi.
  - Toy Drive to be held in Dec.
  - Coat drive to be held Jan./Feb.
  - Houston Food Bank – They would like the older children to be more involved.
  - They need volunteers for their events.
  - They have a family event and some new projects in the pipeline.
  
- Teacher Hospitality:
  - More help is still needed for Teacher Hospitality.
  
- Thanksgiving:
  - Sophie Zimmermann will be helping Monica with Thanksgiving.
  
- Fine Arts Booster Club - 2015:
  - The \$8,000 from last year was used to pay for a sound-proof floor in the Fine Arts Recital Hall.
  - Membership fee - \$50.
  - Canteen held Mon. – Thurs. (14:45 – 16:30) outside the Recital Hall/Staff cafeteria facing the Levant Foundation Building.
  - Not all students are aware of the canteen. It was suggested that an announcement informing the students of the canteen be made at the assembly. (Follow-up for US Liaisons).
  - Canteen scheduled to be put in Awty Notes. (Follow-up for Fine Arts Booster).
  - March is Fine Arts Month. To raise awareness of all types of Artists.
  - They are working towards introducing experts (in Award winning Arts) to teach children, e.g. Opera or Ballet.
  - The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Choir will sing the National Anthem at a Rockets game.
  - Maud asked if it were possible to organize “Theatre under the Stars”.
  
- Dragon Boat Race 2015:
  - The event is being held on a Sun. as more schools compete on this day.
  - Sign up for this event is strictly online.
  - Three boats competing - two boats dedicated to US (students only), one boat for MS. However, if there are more applicants from MS, then a redistribution of boats may be considered.
  - US students have their own site to post events so it is easy to communicate with them. However, MS are not allowed to be on social media at the school and most are not aware of this event. Communication is therefore made via MS parents.
  - This event needs promoting. Information regarding this event can be found on the website. Posters will soon be put up.
  - Dates need to be updated on the website and in Awty Notes. (Follow up for Barbara).
  
- Awty Cultural Connections:
  - This Group was created to bring people from different cultural backgrounds together.
  - Gino Coulom showed everyone the new flyers created to promote ACC.
  - 16 events were held last year with +/- 200 attendees from 25 different nationalities.

- These events are attended by parents who have children in all grades and as such they meet people whom they would not ordinarily meet.
- All events held were very successful and we received a lot of positive feedback.
- There was a huge response at the Welcome Coffees. We have increased our database to 164.
- 1<sup>st</sup> event to be held on Sept. 16, 2015 – Cuisine (Theme: Eggplant and Onion).
- Future events but no definite dates are: Visit to an Indian Temple and Rice University and Día de los Muertos/Day of the Dead Event.
- There are also three language conversation groups – French, Spanish and German. We are looking for more language conversation groups e.g. Italian or Portuguese.
- Most events are held in the mornings but we are looking into more events where families and faculty could attend.
- In addition to the information from the school's website and in Awty Notes, we send emails, listing ACC events, directly to those on our database.
- Suneeta thanked the ACC for helping to unite the Awty community.

➤ Zip Code Parties:

- Parties are held to bring people together in their respective suburbs.
- Dates set for parties around Houston – Sept. 25-26, 2015.
- Parties will be held in the following locations:

**Tanglewood/Galleria/Briargrove - 77056, 77057**

Joanna and Andrew Strachan - 5203 Briar Drive, Houston, 77056

Friday, September 25, 7:30 – 11:00 p.m.

*Cheese and wine party - bring your favor - Cheese and light bites will be provided!*

**Memorial - 77024**

Amy and Rob Pierce - 764 Pifer Road, Houston 77024

Friday, September 25, 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.

*Bring a bottle of wine from your country or favorite vineyard!*

**Spring Branch/Spring Valley - 77055**

Patti and Fernando Gil - 7919 South Wellington Court, Houston TX 77055

Saturday, September 26, 7:30 – 11:00 p.m.

*Cheese and wine party – bring a bottle o Cheese and light bites will be provided.*

**West University/Bellaire - 77030, 77401, 77005**

Hadia and Osama Mawlawi - 2518 McClendon Street, Houston 77030

Saturday, September 26, 7:30 – 10:30 p.m.

*Bring a bottle of your favorite wine!*

**Lakes on Eldridge - 77041**

Martha and Michel Hayek - 2618 Wilbury Park, Houston 77041

Friday, September 25, 7:00 – 10:00 p.m.

*Pot Luck – bring a favorite dish and bottle of wine!*

**River Oaks/Rice Military - 77019, 77007**

Jenny and Serhat Midyat - 2220 Pelham Drive, Houston, TX 77019

Friday, September 25, 7:30 – 10:00 p.m.

*Cocktail Party – bring your favorite appetizer and bottle of wine!*

**Energy Corridor/West Houston - 77079, 77077**

Nathalie Pierroz and Fernando Liani - 15200 Memorial Drive, Houston, TX 77079

Friday, September 25, 7:00 – 10:00 p.m.

*Potluck – bring a dish from your country and a bottle of wine!*

### **Timbergrove/Heights/Garden Oaks - 77008, 77018**

Le Hammer and Brian Williams - 6103 Hurst, Houston, TX 77008

Saturday, September 26, 8:00 p.m.

*Bubbles and Dessert – bring your favorite bottle OR your favorite dessert!*

### **Sugar Land - 77479**

Mrs. Inta Bozkurt and Dr. Gokay Bozkurt

Sweetwater Country Club, 4400 Palm Royale Blvd, Sugar Land, TX 77479

Saturday, September 26, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

*Light snacks and refreshments will be provided!*

- Yards signs to be posted outside each host's house are requested.
  - Barbara - These can be sourced from the Senior committee. Contact person – Kristina Anderson. Yard signs will be on sale as a fundraiser for the Senior graduating class 2016. Information will be published shortly.
  - Suneeta - At the Welcome Coffee, one parent noticed that there was no Zip Code for Sugarland and volunteered to be a Host.
  - An email will be sent informing everyone of the locations.
  - Electronic link to RSVP – [zipcodeparties@awty.org](mailto:zipcodeparties@awty.org).
  - Link is now active.
- Communication - APPA blog:
- Grace Tee would like to increase the readership by posting more photos and other information of what's going on at events, etc.
  - She asked everyone to please take lots of photos at their respective events and send them to her.
  - The APPA blog is found on the Awty website under the Parent Portal.
  - All information/photos to be sent by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.
- Open Positions:
- A new candidate will be required for VP French. Genoveva Jeanneret leaves at the end of this school year, so it is important to find someone soon for the handover. According to APPA by-laws, a preferred candidate must have a child following the French Bac.
  - President elect position is still open.
  - Suneeta explained that currently the APPA is structured as a two section board. In order to support the 'One School' approach, we will need to discuss with Awty Admin if re-structure or other changes in the APPA would support One School, which may affect President-Elect position.
  - Lorraine Talbot - 'One school' can only work for certain classes and not the entire school.
  - Executive board to meet and to discuss how to focus on a new structure.
  - Marie-Emmanuelle Marande has left so there are now two Francophonie positions to be filled.
- Review of Kick-off events:
- Secondary Parents - Mon. morning for new families / Primary Parents-Wed. afternoon
  - Helped to coordinate with Admin.
  - Committee representatives were encouraged to RSVP and show up to their main tables.
  - Welcome Coffees held last week from (Tues., Aug. 25 – Fri., Aug. 28).
  - Not a good turn out for Preschool. The first venue (North Cafeteria) was not conducive for people to move around but the second venue (Staff Cafeteria) was more comfortable.
  - LS – US had a much better turn out. There was a good partnership and a sense of welcome and support was felt.
  - Posters to be made in advance for next year's Welcome Coffees.

- Suneeta - We need to increase our exposure for these events. We need to document and promote what everyone is doing.
- Suneeta thanked everyone and said that she appreciated their efforts.

#### 4. Liaison' reports:

##### ➤ Upper School:

##### **French**

- Lack of Room parents as a result of lack of parents at sign up.
- New Faculty – most people are new and do not know each other. As a result there were some issues.
- There was no proper introduction made by Admin.
- There should have been a helpful form of communication of the staff changes made by division.
- New teachers for primary subjects were not introduced to the students or parents.
- This had a major impact on students.
- Since most of the changes were made in July 2015, the transition was not easy.
- Awty Admin should have done something to facilitate a better transition between staff and students before school started.
- Suneeta – We cannot provide all the answers but can direct them to people who can answer these questions.
- Proactive communication is needed.
- Bolster up Social connections between Faculty and Parents/Students.
- Grace suggested that Awty do a 'Round Up' as other schools do beforehand. An event in a social environment for staff and parent/students.
- Suneeta said that it might be difficult to navigate due to families and faculty arriving into town a few days before school starts.

##### **International**

- New staff members should be welcomed through Awty News release showing their photos, name, and position.
- Barbara will discuss this in her meetings with Mr. Waugh.

##### ➤ Middle School:

##### **International**

- Improve communication to all students, not just new students, that all MS students should report to the PAAC on the first day of school.
- Monica - A tour of Middle School (as done for new students) would have also helped the 6<sup>th</sup> graders settle comfortably. Most students were stressed about being late for class, etc.
- Suneeta – Mr. Beuscher and Ms. Boz were there to help those in need. Trust the school and the staff to navigate the hallways.
- It was requested that a smooth transition be implemented next year for students from 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Barbara - Buddy families do not have children in the same classes as new students. Can Buddy families be given a new student that is sharing a class with a buddy.
- Suneeta – No, students arrive all year long and schedules are made during summer only. Priorities are given to choose a boy/girl that as a similar cultural/ language background/school experience. The Administration makes class assignments during the summer in Primary and based on academic

classes in Secondary, therefore it is impossible for us to guarantee buddies in the same class as new students.

- We need to recognize that the current structure works for Awty and we can only assist to improve with a unified approach.
- Buddy families are there to offer a friendly face to new parents and students.
- We need to ensure that Buddy families are always available to assist new families.

## French

- It was mentioned that there was no French speaking contact in Admissions. It would be helpful to new French parents to have someone clearly explaining the process and curriculum in French.

Lower School and Preschool Reports were submitted in advance for review. There were no questions from the Board.

## 5. Treasurer's Report:

### ➤ 2015-16 Budget

- Suneeta thanked Debbi Gadin for helping and taking the time to explain the budget.
- Membership dues have already been funded to the APPA account.
- Zip Parties have been added with a \$500 budget. This budget is to be used for 'Thank You' flowers for each Host.
- Parents should be encouraged to submit receipts that can be submitted as 'in kind donation'. This could be useful for those wanting to benefit any tax deductions.
- 'In kind donation' receipts can also be used by Advancement to recognize efforts made by parents.
- Fall Fun Festival – same budget as last year.
- International Festival – decreased to \$12,500. This change in the budget was a concern for the Chairs. Debbie assured them that the new amount took into consideration all expenses from last year's festival and includes a \$1,400 cushion.

Suneeta re-assured them that if there are any unforeseen expenses and they go over budget, they are welcome to discuss with her and a solution will be found.

Any money left over in the International Festival budget can be used to assist those booths that have only one or two families representing their country.

- Suneeta - All events will be supported in a balanced way.
- Francophonie – budget increased to \$2,000.
- ACC requested a budget increase of \$300, \$150 was approved. Total budget - \$650.
- Debbie - For next year's budget, it would be advisable if we all met to discuss each one's needs.
- The Peace booth represents the APPA at the International Festival. APPA board encouraged to volunteer/support the APPA booth.
- Teacher Hospitality – increased to \$2,000. Staff numbers have increased.
- Sage - \$200 to host a breakfast for the staff as they cannot receive bonuses.
- Volunteers Fairs have been rolled into Welcome Coffees.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade graduation donation – helps towards end of year parties. Liaisons should know that there is money available for these parties. 5<sup>th</sup> grade committee did not submit last year's receipts and it's too late to do so now. Books closed on June 30, all receipts from the school year should have been submitted before this date.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade dance has been increased to \$800. Much larger 8<sup>th</sup> grade class than previous years.
- There is now an opportunity for a Guest Speaker should one be required- \$1,000.

- Care and Concern has been increased to \$800.
  - Community Services remains the same at \$500.
  - Annual fund is still the same at \$4,000 (remainder of pledge for three years = \$12,000).
  - Suneeta - APPA donated \$40,000 for the new Levant Foundation Building, so we should consider a donation for the new Post Oak project.
  - Net budgeted Income - \$10,575.
  - Motion to approve the Budget 2015-2016. Moved (Cherie), seconded (Yanam), voted and passed.
- Receipt submissions and reimbursements (tax exempt form) – please see attached form.
  - Discuss membership fee/follow up with Business Office – To be discussed at the next meeting.

## 6. Miscellaneous

- Submission of Reports – All reports including US, LS, PS Liaison Reports to be submitted the Wed. before the board meeting. MS Liaison reports to be submitted on Fri.
- Next meeting – Tuesday, Sept. 22

### In attendance:

Suneeta Rangwani, Genoveva Jeanneret, Karen Haug, Cherie Chalk, Debbie Gadin, Corinne Sonnet, Maud Lhors, Tammy Karni, Cecile Roux, Merel Ligtenberg, Lorraine Talbot, Barbara Schmidt, Monica Fulton, Gina Pavon, Talia Kallop, Patricia Gil, Ibela Penichet, Leticia Dion, Marcia Villas, Ashley Amy, Anshula Green, Amy Pierce, Grace Tee Lewis, Gino Coulom, Zenia Quintana, Sophie Zimmermann, Miri Wilkins, and Yanam Fozzani.

**Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.**