

ASFS PTA meeting Notes
September 13, 2011

The meeting convened at 7:00. After welcomes and introductions, Marty Swaim from Seed (Seeking Educational Equality and Diversity) introduced a series of upcoming discussions hosted at ASFS about race, diversity and the achievement gap. Parents are encouraged to sign up as discussion participants. The flyer below outlines the program and registration information.

PTA leadership presented on priorities for the year to include: continued outreach to new ASFS families; providing a clear understanding of issues and topics to all PTA participants through clear and understandable language and discussions; an even strong emphasis on offering technology and science support to enhance instruction; and a renewed emphasis on volunteer and teacher recognition opportunities.

Ms. Begley and Ms. Nesselrode presented next and welcomed the 17 staff members who were attendance. Building relationships and keeping an open line of communication between parents and staff are again priorities. The number one goal of the staff is to educate the students so should parents have questions or concerns, they are strongly encouraged to contact the classroom teacher or the specialist staff at the school. A second reading specialist has been hired. The Pre-K students are fully in the new relocatable teaching space. Current ASFS enrollment is 581 students. Looking at challenges from last year, attendance is an area which needs improvement. Parents were asked to not take kids out of school for vacations.

Test statistics from the previous two years were presented. Please contact Ms. Nesselrode with specific questions. A variety of leadership school-related activities were presented specifically related to grades four and five with some even for third graders. An accompanying timeline of application procedures will be available in the September edition of the Electric News due out in the next week. Some students are already in place as a core group was needed to get things off the ground at the beginning of the year.

The proposed 2011-2012 PTA budget was presented, discussed and approved by the PTA. Copies are available by contacting noah_simon@Verizon.net.

Girls on the Run registration is now open. Please visit www.gotrnova.org for more information. A new fundraising program for Arlington area schools is available at scouponclub.com. Daily emails will be sent to participants regarding merchant deals in the local area. ASFS will receive proceeds through member purchases. Please also remember to sign up for the Grocery Card Program. Details were in the first day packets. For additional information please contact ASFS parent Strat Zervos at sjzervos@aol.com.

Next the Science and Technology Advisory Committee was introduced. As the attached background paper outlines, the vision of the committee is to help meet the evolving

technology needs of ASFS students and staff to enhance science-based learning. Although the committee's make up is still under development, a core group of parents and staff met over the summer to discuss technology-related needs that would support science-based instruction. The committee's goals and the first proposed technology-related purchase recommended by the instructional staff were presented. The purchase would help support goals # 1 and #4 from the attached background paper. As the attached cost breakout shows the proposal was to purchase 30 Apple iPads 2s (16 GB) for use in the Investigation Station classroom. Of note, committee co-chair, ASFS parent and Chief Operating Officer of BTS technology company Craig Cummings agreed to have BTS provide half of all funding necessary for the device, app and case purchases. Use of the devices in Investigation Station will enhance the interactive science environment for students and help with documentation and assessment. A demonstration was given by Ms Ablott.

After a healthy discussion, the motion to approve the funding was adopted. The group directed the PTA leadership to investigate the feasibility of insurance and AppleCare for the devices in case any of the iPads break or need servicing. With the funding approval, the goal of the committee is to have the entire purchase available and operational by Back to School Night (September 21) in the Investigation Station classroom.

The next PTA meeting is Tuesday, October 4 at 7:00 p.m. where the group will receive a presentation about the Gifted Services program.