



YORKTOWN PTA MEETING
Monday February 13, 2023
7:30 PM

1. **Welcome:** Katrina Brubaker, PTA President
2. **Approval of January 9th Minutes:** approved
3. **Mary Kadera, YHS School Board Liaison - School Board Updates**
 1. Top of mind is recent incidents around safety and substance abuse and the connected issue of mental health. Incident at Wakefield that involved overdose of student at school. At same school had other incidents involving safety. At Escuela Key, there was a threat of a student to bring a weapon to school. At YHS have had issues of safety. such as the lockdown last year. Incidents of assault and drug use at many of our schools. Clearly a need across system to take a hard look at what APS is doing around student mental health, crisis support, and school safety. Not an issue confined to the schools. Also a community issue. There are briefings that are happening next week for school board members and the Chief of Police to talk about how police engage with the school communities. Reviewing procedures of how police are brought in and how incidents are reported. Want to make sure that any loophole is closed and that we are marshaling all the resources across the county.

Particular interest in mental health of staff members. Need to make sure that staff have the resources they need.

Looking at processes we can improve and also the budget. Att school board meeting coming up next week, the Superintendent will present budget for the next school year. Board first has work sessions and then will approve the budget in May. Will be looking at substance abuse counselors and mental health staff in schools. Making sure that these and social-emotional learning needs are reflected robustly in the budget. Idea of mental health and community support also needs to be reflected in the budget.

Budget work starts next week and then is a 2.5 month process. Budget work sessions are public. **Thurs. 2/23 is the budget presentation** – if there are things you want to see, can reach out to Mary or the school board.

Q: Are there a lot more incidents this year? A: Since last year, there is a marked uptick of reports of mental health crisis. Compared to pre-pandemic, there is a reporting increase. In particular, incidents of reports involving opioids and fentanyl. Drug related offenses that came up prior to this year were primarily related to vaping equipment and marijuana. Presence of fentanyl is much greater this year.

Q: Are special needs kids on the radar in terms of alternative ways to provide substance abuse education and counseling? A: There is an effort to get info to students in multiple ways, especially for English learners, but will take suggestions back about special needs kids and how their needs are being met.

To contact Mary - Mary.cadera@apsva.us

IV.. **Principal's Update:** Dr. Kevin Clark, YHS Principal - Yorktown Updates

- a. Wants to extend thanks to PTA and parents for continued support. Half way through year. Has been a great year but impacted by incidents in community.

We extend our condolences to family of student who lost his life at Wakefield.

Still dealing with Covid. Need more subs for coverage – if you know anyone who wants to sub, have them reach out.

- b. Semester 1 just wrapped up and starting into third quarter. Working on plans to help students understand dangers of drug abuse and how landscape has changed. This week doing “Choose Health” – have a variety of sessions every day this week. Kim Chisholm did a session today. Wednesday last week had teachers trained on use of Narcan, substance abuse crisis and current trends. Staff are able to receive two

doses of Narcan and can keep it in their classrooms. A large group of staff have this in the building.

- c. Shout out to school counselors. They are in their busiest several weeks of the year. Course Request forms due last Friday. They meet with each student individually to review the requests.
- d. Attendance reminders – monitoring this very closely. Unverified absences, tardies. Have after school detentions.
- e. Wonderful program on 2/21 hosting Black History Month assembly. Panel discussion as well as highlighting videos of Hall's Hill - High View Park historical sites that were filmed during the pandemic. Education on desegregation of schools in Arlington, including desegregation of Yorktown. New firehouse being built on Langston Blvd. History of the firehouse will be part of the discussion. Appreciate everyone from the community who is supporting the panel.
- f. Planning ongoing drug abuse awareness for students. Some of this is occurring in health classes for grades 9 and 10. Ms. Chisholm covers dangers of pills, fentanyl, opioids. Looking to host experts in the field in early March. Large group assemblies for students. Different challenges and mentoring opportunities.
- g. Shout out activities in athletics. Swim and dive girls and boys won district championships and girls won the region. Gymnastics were district champs and were .5 points away from being regional champs. Rifle district champs. Wrestlers going to state tournament. 2/20 first day of spring tryouts. Spring sports: Lacrosse, baseball, softball, soccer, tennis, track
- h. Transportation concerns – met with APS transportation staff. Did a tour of arrival and drop off points. Reduced speed limit between Little Falls and George Mason. How to address drop off points that are not really drop off, for example adding signage for crosswalks. Suggestion to move bus stop from top of hill to bottom of hill. Have moved elementary bus stops. Looking at what other efforts can put into place with country to promote safety
- i. Spring musical coming up – Beauty and the Beast – end of March.
- j. Robotics team – doing first competition in March. Group has been working hard to build their robot.

- k. Club leadership council has been developed for the club leaders to get training

Q: What is being said to students about crossing in the middle of the street?

A: When we were out observing could see a lot of kids not using crosswalk. A lot of it is where parents are dropping off. Or students walking by taking the most direct route. Talking about adding a crosswalk – there is a spot right up Little Falls on Yorktown where a crosswalk could potentially be added.

Florida is horrible. Bolting across Florida with high school students and little kids. The students need to do better.

Have done some messaging in the newsletters and the dailies. Trying to put all messaging out for students and parents at same time. Can do another set of announcements after spring break.

As a community, need to consider what are additional things we could do. Ideally we would have someone out there in the morning. There has been discussion about additional security staff and other possibilities. If that happens, maybe can have people out there monitoring.

Q: Attendance – Get text message if child is late for class. What is confusing is that the text the parent receives from school will tell them to call the attendance office. But not clear what the parent is calling for.

A: Idea is for parents to be alerted ASAP just in case the parent thinks the kid is at school but they are not. The reason for implementing system was that parents were feeling like getting a notification at night was too late. They wanted to know more immediately that their kid was out of class. Sometimes can serve as reminder for parent to report the excused absence.

But if the student is just late for class, the parent doesn't have an immediate role. Process of automated messages was updated after break. May be a bit of a hassle but gives peace of mind that parent is aware that the kid wasn't where they were expected to be.

Seems that the precise messaging may need some additional review.

V. **YHS PTA Committee/Community Updates:**

- a. **Thank you** to all those that donated for the Science Fair Breakfast. The judges and staff enjoyed all the offerings.

- b. Speaker - **Sarah Clapp**, volunteer with the intercultural organization AFS - USA. Sarah to speak about the amazing opportunity to be a host family to foreign exchange students. – offers opportunities for kids to study abroad but also for families to host students. Host from 80 countries and send to about 45. Can last 12 weeks, a semester, or a full academic year. She was a host sibling in high school and now a host parent. Or can be a “vacation” family in the event that host family needs to go somewhere (e.g. funeral).

Who can host and what is required? Anyone can host. All types of families are welcome. There is no typical family. Encourage families of diverse backgrounds – every experience is the American experience and want to showcase that diversity. Involve kids in daily lives, provide care and support, a bed (a real one), a desk, a dresser, windows that open. 3 meals/day. If go out to eat as a family, include them the same way you would include your own kids. AFS do come with own spending money. Host families don't need to provide allowance or spending money. But you are required to provide basic necessities.

Host families assigned a liaison to help navigate cross cultural experience. 24/7 support from community of trained volunteers.

Benefits – experience of having someone from another culture in your home. Gain new family members. You become part of a network of host families.

Visit afsusa.org/host to look at bios of students coming to our area. Can also contact Sarah Clapp directly.

C. PTA Executive and Chair Positions that need to be filled: Internal VP, Volunteer Coordinator, Fundraiser/Grocery Receipts

d. Committee Updates - none reported.

VI. **President Notes:**

March 13th meeting will be hosted by YHS/W-L/Wakefield - it will take place in person (and online) at 7pm. The PTA presidents of each school have been to organize a community event to address the drug abuse happening in Arlington. We have been working on putting together a panel of local experts to speak and answer questions about the drugs and abuse affecting our youth today. Will have experts in the field in Arlington speak.

VII. **Treasurer's Report:** Michelle Cowan, PTA Treasurer

Updated [budget report](#) is on PTA website for people to review.

VIII. **Adjournment** - Thank you for attending