

The Mission Support Team kicked off the 2017/2018 school year with the first Town Hall of the year. Over 150 people attended in the Atlanta Classical gym. The goal of this gathering was four-fold:

- Review the January survey results and the actions the MST has taken as well as present the survey results from the May parent survey
- Hear from the Principal of the school as he reviewed his themes for the school year
- Reveal the MST's philosophy surrounding the Development & Communications Committee as well as name the Chair: Mrs. Frost Osborne
- Hold a time for Questions and Answers from the constituents

After the pledge of allegiance, the school pledge, a reading of the school's mission and vision, the Mission Support Team was introduced:

- Joy Harty: PTCA Co-President
- Joe Santifer: PTCA Co-President
- Lisa Woods: Lower School Parent
- Jim Braun: Upper School Parent
- Mrs. Boyd: Lower School Faculty (stepping down)
- Mr. Schepps: Upper School Faculty
- Ms. Faux: Staff Representative
- The Administration

The purpose of this survey is to find out where we are as an institution, and to provide direction upon which we may act.

Our charter requires that we:

- Conduct an annual survey
- A family participation rate of 85% or more
- Satisfaction rate be 90% or better

Mr. Schepps reviewed comments from the January survey, noting the five key areas within which we could improve in order to better accomplish the mission. These have been a primary focus for the MST since our formation. They are as follows: (1) Extracurricular and Social Activities (2) Communication (3) Homework (4) Athletics and (5) School Spirit.

Extracurricular and Social Activities

The MST spearheaded a research project geared toward understanding how extracurricular life at ACA compares both to similar schools around the country and to local schools, both public and private. To provide some data here:

- We offer 19 extracurricular activities to the lower school – other classical charter schools around the country average 7 such activities; local schools average 18.

- In the upper school, we offer ten sports teams as compared to an average of nine at similar schools and eleven at area schools.
- In the upper school, at the time of this research, we offered nine extracurricular, as compared to twelve at similar charter schools and 26 at area schools.
- In the upper school, students are hard at work getting several clubs off the ground:
 - Hiking Club
 - Debate Club
 - Yoga Club
 - Key Club
- Dr. Roth and Mr. Hawkins established Quintilian Society, a Latin-oriented academic group, at the end of last year
- A core team is continuing to work on founding a Civil Air Patrol Chapter
- Furthermore, Mr. Franklin has been hard at work establishing a pretty incredible Fine Arts Program that will span the grades of the school, including:
 - Digital Photography
 - Mixed Media
 - Painting
 - Jazz Ensemble
 - Performance Ensemble
 - Keyboarding
 - Guitar
 - Strings
 - Junior Cavalier Singers
 - Advanced Vocal Studio
 - Drama Society
 - Dance Ensemble

Communication

Existing methods of communication that work fairly well:

- Chronicle
- Regular email updates
- Livewire

New methods of communication:

- Official Atlanta Classical Academy facebook page
- Instagram
- Updated website
- MST is implementing a Communications Team consisting of faculty and staff members, interested parents, and subject-matter experts, which to say, folks with experience in communications. This team will focus on ways to tell our story both to our immediate constituents – students, parents, even faculty and staff- and to our city and community at large.

Homework

We tried a few pointed strategies last year in the upper school:

- Keeping a homework log
- Exercises in class that focused on study skills and expectations about homework

This year, a key development on the homework front is the Freshman Advisory. Mr. Lambert and Mr. Greer meet with a class of ninth graders every day in 8th period to help them develop the skills and character to succeed in high school.

Athletics

- Two new staff members: Coach Johnson and Coach Curry, who will act as Program Managers this year, overseeing male and female athletics respectively.
- Coach Dunlap has also been hard at work establishing two new athletic club- swimming and sailing- for the upcoming year.
- We are planning to build a park-style set of benches and bars to create a fitness station in the small square between parking lots where we have been unable to make the grass grow the last few years.
- The PTCA also has established a new Athletics Committee that already has thirty members committed to supporting our coaches and programs.
- Early in the summer, Mr. Franklin, Mr. Schulte, Mr. Wright, and Mr. Schepps led packed basketball camps for our lower and upper school students.
- Each week, we have dozens of students along with several faculty members show up for intense games of basketball at open gym.
- Last year 75% of our middle school students and 54% of our high school students participated in sports.

School Spirit

There is much anecdotal evidence for the positive:

- The giant crowd of all ages that came to the Supper on the South Lawn
- Cheers echoing from different spots on campus at 2:36 pm on August 21st when 97% of the sun was eclipsed
- Various upper school dances from the past three years
- Field trip to Washington, DC last year and will occur again in October
- Mrs. Dollacker is working with Mr. Greer to plan trips in the spring where our students will visit and tour college campuses
- Mr. Greer is scheduling more unique spirit-building events
 - Parent/faculty basketball games,
 - Screen on the green
 - After school pep rallies to kick off sports seasons
 - Cavalier Days where students can wear ACA-related gear

Following Mr. Schepps, Mr. Braun commented on the five areas from the May survey where we had high marks. They are: (1) Overall Satisfaction (2) Mission (3) Academics (4) Our People and (5) Safety.

Overall Satisfaction

As stated in the beginning, our charter requires that we obtain a 90% overall satisfaction rate. In the data collected in the May survey, 9 out of 10 parents stated they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their overall student's education.

Mission

We are a mission driven school and we aspire to a higher level of virtue and character. ACA Students should strive to **"do the good" even when no one is watching.** We, as parents, clearly feel this is being accomplished with an impressive 96.7% satisfaction rate.

Academics

We are succeeding at delivering on the Mission Point of providing classical, content-rich curriculum with 93% of our constituents agreeing that our classical curriculum is well executed.

Our People

We all appear to agree fervently with the tenant that we are being effectively led, have teachers who fully back the Mission and are supported by a staff of, responsive and personable back office personnel. Ninety percent of the surveys agreed that we are a school that is well led. Ninety-five percent believe that the faculty is effective in accomplishing the mission of the school. And over ninety-six percent feel the staff is accessible and responsive.

Safety

The safety of our students is the highest ranking area, with a 98% satisfaction rating. There is no arguing that our students are in one of, if not the, safest school in Atlanta.

Following on the heels of Mr. Braun, Mrs. Woods spoke of five areas where the MST is looking to improve: (1) Athletics (2) Community (3) Facilities (4) Fundraising and (5) Support Services.

Athletics

- 68% of us agree or highly agree that our students have adequate opportunity to thrive as an athlete
- We don't want to be good when we can excel, so we are open to other programs
- Mr. Schepps spoke earlier about some of the new Athletic Programs that are launching this year and our two new Program Managers

Community

- This is one of our lowest scoring areas and we can do better.
- Mr. Lambert started a conversation around community in The Chronicle a few weeks ago that we will continue throughout the year.

- We are adding lots of opportunities to engage with each other across grades and throughout the school
 - If you desire to volunteer to connect, the PTCA added positions and committees this year
 - If volunteering is not your thing or your schedule doesn't allow the time, this year's principal coffees will alternate between morning and evening so more people can attend. And, they will be more conversational.
 - Our children spend a significant amount of their week with their teachers. The Supper on the South Lawn and this Thursday's Faculty Recital are both ways to connect to the individuals who are helping to mold our kids. After seeing a few faculty members perform at one of our early Coffee Houses, I can't wait for Thursday. There is significant musical talent within our school walls.
 - This year, Mr. Greer has been actively working with the PTCA to plan one all-school social activity per month to foster community within ACA. More details will come on this.

Ultimately, we have listened and are working on ways to improve our community.

Facilities

- Only 58% agree or strongly agree that our facilities are adequate.
- As charter school, we have to find and fund our own facilities, which isn't a simple task.
- While we are fortunate to have a place to call home, we know that there is room to improve as we grow.

Development

- Just shy of 63% feel that our fundraising is sufficient.
- We are excited about what's coming in Development.
- Please refer to the notes below regarding the Development Committee.

Support Services

- This question was added to the survey as a baseline for our accreditation process.
- Over the next few months, we will move forward towards accreditation.
- From the flurry of activity of Mr. Greer and Mrs. Dollacker around college engagement to the incredible work that our Student Services is undertaking to ensure that all students thrive to the onboarding of a new social worker, Miss Bacorn. This area has our attention in many different ways.

Mr. Lambert then illuminated the audience with his major themes of the 2017-2018 school year:

- Grow leaders within the institution
- Streamline delivery of the curriculum
- Help all students thrive

- Achieve SACS Accreditation
- Prepare for re-charter in 2019
- Prepare the facility for K-12 status

Lastly, Mr. Lambert unveiled the plans for the Development and Communications Committee, naming Mrs. Frost Osborne as the new Chair. Mrs. Frost has over 20 years in public relations and corporate communications and is very excited in investing in our school.

Under her direction, the Development and Communications committee will be for the Cavaliers...by the Cavaliers...with the Cavaliers. This committee will not only be interdisciplinary, collaborative and transparent, they will be mission and vision focused. They will be focused on getting the Cavalier story out to the general public while also strengthening communications within our community. They will also build both an annual campaign as well as a capital campaign. If you are interested in getting involved with either the Development or Communications Committee, please contact Mrs. Frost.

We ended the evening with a Q&A:

- Clarification of the vertical (ensuring the students progress seamlessly through the pipeline from K-2) and horizontal (ensuring that teachers of different content areas plan collaborate among grade levels) planning of the curriculum
- Update on the North Atlanta incident - As far as we know, the incident is limited to students at North Atlanta. The administration collaborated with Atlanta Police Department (Precinct 2) and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and there was reason to be believe that our students are in danger.
- Development plans - several parents urged the administration to share plans for fundraising as soon as possible to give ACA families enough time to plan their giving accordingly. Mr. Lambert promised this would happen in the very near future. In his words, the plan will be “interdisciplinary, collaborative, and transparent,” and would require the help, time, and effort of all Cavaliers.
- Update on college counseling and engagement -
 - Mr. Greer and Mrs. Dollacker are actively pursuing colleges and getting ACA’s name out to admissions personnel. They initially sent out 40 emails a day to colleges and are now hearing from colleges from whom they hadn’t previously reached out to.
 - Mr. Greer and Mrs. Dollacker plan to attend a national conference for college admissions officers this month. Over 600 colleges and universities are expected to attend; Mr. Greer and Mrs. Dollacker have hatched a plan to meet all 600 of them.
 - College Fair - Will be held on September 12th for Juniors and Sophomores only. Ninth graders are not invited because colleges are generally interested in only talking to juniors.

- Naviance - Ninth grade students and parents are encouraged to use Naviance as a way to get started on the college search process. Initial training will be held for parents of Junior and then rolled out to the parents of 10th and 9th graders.
- Encouragement of all parents to get involved with either their time, treasure or talents