



Orientation Summary

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

The Langley School

Business Meeting

Orientation began with a welcome by PCW President, Kathy Stallings. Kathy thanked The Langley School for hosting, and everyone for attending. PCW is a membership organization that reaches 58 independent schools who educate over 25,000 students in the DC metro area. We are in our 52nd year of existence. Our theme this year is **"Minding the Brain: Research, Education, and Parenting."**

Kathy then handed the program over to our VPs of Programs: Elaine Vining and Cal Daggit.

Cal introduced our PCW Board Members, and each Board Member identified their liaison schools.

How to be an A+ School Rep

There are three important steps for being an effective PCW Representative for your school.

1. Connect – with your school community

- Start Quick – identify key players of your team; if you have multiple reps at your school, you may need a quick meeting to decide who at your school will take on which tasks
- Make Contact – Communications Coordinator, Grade level reps or other parent volunteers, the Head of School
- Meet with the Parent Association Exec Board – you may use the PCW Power Point, available on the Resources for Reps page on our website.
- Talk up the PCW! Tell parents & friends, teachers & faculty, school administrators

2. Share – communications tools that can be helpful include:

- Monthly Checklists
- Newsletters
- School Calendar
- Brochures/flyers
- School Events
- Community Bulletin Boards
- Links to PCW Website - ask if you can put a link to the PCW Website on the resources page of your school website

3. Engage – ways to engage with others about PCW

- Attend programs if at all possible; invite friends to join you!
- Encourage your school to send representatives to the events for students and administrators
- Share information afterward – share summaries of events with your school community
- Be social! Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. You also can share information

Our panel of PCW representatives shared these tips.

Fay Berger Mitchell – PCW Rep from McLean School

- Include PCW announcements in the school newsletters
- Letter from the Head of School – set the tone for PCW school reps, connect with the board liaison, forward dates and information to the school community, and attend programs or find an alternative person to attend in your place if you cannot be there, our two lectures that are open to the programs, internal programs, then events for the next few months.
- They have multiple reps at their school (one for LS, one for MS, and one for US, plus one more) email each other to see who will be attending PCW events. It is helpful to have a rep serve for more than one year. You learn a lot in the first year and then can be more effective in future years.

Katrina Holiday - PCW Rep from The Lowell School

- Try to layer information so that parents can see the information in several different places; include it on the electronic school newsletter, but also through the grade level parent communicators; be aware of the deadlines; get on the school Facebook calendar and Twitter.
- After the MS leadership breakfast, the school puts together an article about the MS students who attended, and what the experience meant to them; they also include the MS student participants in the MS video that the school produces.

Tina Rouse – PCW Rep from St. Andrews Episcopal School

- Parents Council of Washington touches 4 different audiences: PCW Reps (orientation & PA presidents), parents of member schools, administrators/students, the general public.
- Engagement is not just showing up at the event, it also is about what happens to after people attend a PCW event; help school administrators to put together their Best Practices submission and then share it back with the administrators once it is posted on the website; report on the student leader breakfasts and best practices programs, by sharing the summaries with your school community.

The main takeaway: Your schools pay dues to be a part of PCW. We encourage you, as an ambassador to PCW for your school, to work to maximize the value of your school's investment in PCW by helping your school community connect to the resources PCW offers.

Keynote Speaker

Elaine Vining, VP for Programs, introduced our keynote speaker, [Dr. Elinor Scully](#), head of The Langley School.

Dr. Scully noted that the partnership between schools and parents is an important part of The Langley School's mission. The work PCW does is closely aligned with the mission of The Langley School.

Brain research tells us about the social and emotional development of children. We used to look to brain to inform ourselves about how children learn. Now, we use brain research to better understand children's cognitive, social, and emotional development.

At Langley, a preschool-8th grade school, we see a very steep part of children's development. Three-year-olds don't look ready for school. They are little, and their backpacks are bigger than their bodies. By 8th grade, children have transformed tremendously.

Social and emotional competencies are key for success in school and adulthood. They are intertwined with cognitive learning. If a child is worried about social and emotional issues, that child's brain is not available for them to learn long division. Social and emotional learning follows a developmental arc. Too often, schools privilege academic achievement over social and emotional competence.

Dr. Scully identified three important learning domains:

- **Emotional intelligence (EQ)**
 - Ability to identify, regulate, and understand the emotions we experience and how those emotions affect our relationships with others.
 - Ability to develop empathy and to understand how our actions affect others, and to take responsibility for these powerful interpersonal dynamics.
 - [Yale center for Emotional Intelligence](#) offers many resources.
- **Cultural competence** – how to thrive in a global and interconnected world.
 - Ability to appreciate how identity shapes how we feel about ourselves and others in the world.
 - Identity includes aspects of our humanity that are both visible and invisible to those around us; our gender, race, ethnicity, age, ability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and religion.
 - Ability to understand how stereotypes, bias, and discrimination limit and harm those around us.
 - Forging respectful relationships with those who are different than us.
- **Health and wellness** – How does health and wellness fit into your life?
 - Understand how our physical, emotional, and psychological being changes and evolves as we grow up.
 - Age-appropriate information about anatomy and physiology, nutrition, puberty, human sexuality, relationships, decision-making, and social dynamics, as well as safe and supportive environments in which to discuss these topics.

All of these learning domains are intertwined. They all also have an arc of development from preschool to college and beyond. The arcs are not smooth, and will have bumps, big jumps, and

sometimes retrogressions along the way. Schools must meet children where they are and assess prior learning and understanding before launching into discussions.

Building social and emotional competence in young people has a direct impact on their learning and achievement, and enriches the school environment for all children.

Children learn better and more effectively when educators and parents attend to all domains.

VALUES

Values education is central to many independent school programs because values undergird and support social and emotional learning.

- Emotional states have a direct impact on student learning and achievement.
- Communities are enriched and made excellent by diversity.
- Human variety plays a vital role in children's intellectual, social and emotional development, therefore, building and inclusive community is an essential element of building an excellent school.
- Students who are able to interact empathically with a diverse range of individuals are also able to think in deeper and more complex ways.
- Multicultural competence encourages students to challenge their assumptions, take intellectual and interpersonal risks, and learn to work with different kinds of people. These skills are important for life.
- Health is more than the absence of disease – requires understanding of how individuals take care of and nurture their physical, emotional and psychological well-being.
- A working understanding of body systems, puberty, human sexuality, and relationship and decision-making skills are foundational aspects of health and wellness that develop from early childhood through adulthood.
- Social and emotional learning allows students to be exposed to a range of value systems and beliefs.

"When educating the minds of our youth, we must not forget to educate their hearts." -Dalai Lama

Implementation strategies: What can schools do?

- Professional development – train faculty and staff on how to talk with students about emotions. The training should include everyone who interacts with students (such as receptionists and bus drivers) and not just teachers. It's messy work, and it's not easy. What do kids need to know at what stage of development? How can you lean into the conversations with children when the topics arise? Some curriculums school use include [The Ruler Program](#) and [Responsive Classroom](#).
- Curriculum development – look for ways to incorporate social and emotional learning into every subject.
- Parent involvement - be very clear with parents that this is what you are doing, so that parents will not be surprised when they pick up their child in the carpool lane.
- Be intentional - set aside times when certain conversations will take place so that students and parents can know ahead of time what topics are coming up.