



PCW Orientation Program

Tuesday, September 18, 2018

Holton-Arms School

Introduction

Parents Council of Washington (PCW) board member and event co-chair Malvika Paddock welcomed PCW Representatives, thanked Holton-Arms for hosting the event and introduced Susan Newell, PCW President.

Susan introduced the PCW theme for the year, “The Road to Well-Being: Empowering our Students” and mentioned that this is the 54th year for PCW. Susan spoke about “Who We Are” - a nonprofit membership organization established in 1964 to promote excellence in education by fostering communication among independent schools; “Who We Serve” - about 60 dues-paying independent schools representing K-12; “What We Offer” - eight to nine annual programs, resources and networking opportunities; and “How We Do It” - Connect Schools, Share Ideas, and Engage Parents, via PCW board members/liaisons to member school PCW Representatives and Parent Association Presidents.

Susan introduced Susanna Jones, Head of School at Holton-Arms. Ms. Jones said that she is proud that Holton-Arms is a founding member of PCW and she spoke about the importance of PCW and applauded member schools for engaging in conversations about important issues.

The A+ School Rep: Maximizing the PCW Partnership with Your School Community

Malvika presented on how PCW Representatives (“Reps”) and PA Presidents can best take advantage of their school’s PCW membership. She emphasized “You pay for our services, we are here for you!” She urged PCW Reps to maximize the investment by doing the following:

***Connect* with PCW and your school community!**

- Maintain a relationship with your PCW board liaison
- Stay informed by reading PCW emails/checklists and looking at PCW website
- Identify key players at your school to help share PCW news and information
- Reach out to your PA board to introduce PCW (a PowerPoint is on PCW website)

- **New this year** – 3 local coffees – meet with board members and other PCW Reps (dates include 10/11 in VA and 11/8 and 11/29 in DC)

Share PCW information!

- Provide PCW program information to all invitees (via phone, email, in-person)
- Contact your communications office to get info in school calendar/communications
- Utilize PCW monthly checklist blurbs, flyers, etc. on upcoming programs
- Forward program info to PA President to include in emails and newsletters
- Print flyers for display at school meetings, coffees, bulletin boards, faculty lounges

Engage your community of parents, faculty and administrators!

- Talk up PCW programs at school gatherings
- Attend applicable PCW events and bring friends!
- Share what you learn, forwarding program summaries to your community
- Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter!

Stay Informed 24/7:

- **Visit our website:** www.parentscouncil.org
- **Like us on Facebook:** www.facebook.com/ParentsCouncilofWashington
- **Follow us on Twitter:** www.twitter.com/PCWschools

Best Practices Roundtables/Breakout Session

Following the presentation, PCW board members and Reps spent time in small group discussions, broken down by tables. The goal was to brainstorm ideas on how Reps can work most effectively with PCW to deliver content and information to their schools.

Highlights to remember:

- If your school is sponsoring a free program open to the public that you would like posted on the PCW Facebook page, send the information to your PCW board member school liaison for consideration.
- The PCW Best Practices program, coming in April 2019, highlights topics and perspectives from member school leaders on our annual theme. Familiarize yourself with the Best Practices e-binder and help PCW identify the appropriate administrator to encourage your school to offer a submission for this coming year's e-binder.
- What your school gets out of its PCW membership is up to you! Reap the benefits for all in your community!
- **Action Items:** Publicize, Promote, Attend, Distribute Material!

Guest Speakers -- Dr. William Stixrud and Ned Johnson, Authors of *The Self-Driven Child*

Years ago, Bill Stixrud and Ned Johnson were helping kids overcome similar problems in surprisingly complementary ways. As a clinical neuropsychologist helping kids with

anxiety (Stixrud), and as a coach via his tutoring company (Johnson), both realized the most important ingredient for students to thrive is a sense of control.

As both speakers worked for years to minimize stress/anxiety and maximize motivation/performance for the children and teens in their practices, it became evident that a low sense of control is extremely stressful, while autonomy is a key to motivation. After deeper probing it became very clear – a healthy sense of control is positively related to physical and mental health, academic success, and happiness.

Takeaways for Parents:

1. *The Most Stressful Thing in the Universe.* Chronic stress wreaks havoc on the brain, especially young brains. A sense of control is the antidote to stress. Kids do not want to feel powerless. They need to be able to find their own way.
2. *The Parent as Consultant.* “I love you too much to fight with you about your homework.” Homework in school does not add much to learning, so it does not make sense to fight about it. Be a consultant, not the boss or manager. Do not fight, but offer advice. Ask, is there a way I can help? Express confidence in their abilities. Teach them to be thoughtful learners and self-disciplined, not well disciplined.
3. *Kids as Decision Makers.* “It’s Your Call.” It is important that kids make their own decisions - informed decisions that support individual autonomy. Emphasize logical and natural consequences. Let them practice before going off to college.
4. *The “Non-anxious Presence.”* Help kids find their sense of control by finding your own. Our anxiety seeps into our kids and sensitive kids pick up stress very easily. Groups and families function best when leaders are non-anxious, but you cannot fake it. Accept where your kids are, some are late bloomers. Enjoy your kids.
5. *Inner Drive.* Help your kids develop motivation. Support their autonomy. Help them find what it is that they want. Home should be a safe and non-stressful place. If stress is zero at home, it gives them more opportunity to take chances. Teach them to not be overly preoccupied with pleasing others.
6. *Radical Downtime.* Relaxing and rejuvenating are needed. Since kids are so connected electronically, they have very little time to reflect on themselves. Down time is crucial for development of identity and empathy. Let their minds wander. Down time promotes creativity. Try mindfulness or meditation.
7. *Sleep: The Most Radical Downtime.* Sleep deprivation is a form of chronic stress and impacts emotional control, physical ailments, learning, and anxiety and mood disorders. Make sleep a priority.

8. *Taking a Sense of Control to School.* Get your kids engaged, help reduce academic stress and pressure, and let them take personal responsibility. Remind kids of the big picture, that developing as a person is more important than specific grades.
9. *Taming the Beast of Technology.* Model healthy use of technology and have expectations and rules.
10. *Exercising the Brain and Body.* Set goals, pay attention to what your brain is telling you, model positive self-talk and self-compassion, practice reframing problems, and make physical fitness a family value.