

**Sept 11, 2024**

**8:45 – 9:45 AM via MS Teams**

**1. APG Activities (Bengu Bostanci)**

- Introduced APG officers and roles and discussed the purpose of the APG
  - Hospitality
    - New family ambassadors (May/June)
    - Ice cream social for students 9/13
    - Fall Harvest “Come Together” celebration onsite at EPS 9/27 6:30 PM (setup, decoration, cleanup)
    - Photo re-take day 10/28 (check in students)
    - EPS all-school picnic 5/31
  - Faculty & Staff Appreciation
    - Back to School Breakfast (“Bagels and High Fives”) 9/13
    - Winter/Holiday baskets (Dec)
    - Valentine’s Day care packages (Feb)
    - Teacher Appreciation Week (May): Goodies for faculty and staff all week
  - Athletics
    - Ensure sports teams have parents assigned to provide snacks, communicate game information and collect donations for coach gifts
    - Host end-of-year banquet for athletes
  - Arts
    - Provide support, snacks, flowers and events for theater participants both in middle and upper school
    - Fall Play support: “Matilda the Musical”
  - Class Rep Coordinators
    - Recruit, train and communicate with class rep volunteers in each grade (3 – 4 per grade)
    - Communicate to families within grades via WhatsApp and email (answer questions, relay pertinent dates/info)
    - Build community and social connections by hosting events, walks and informal coffee chats
    - Host back-to-school picnics
    - Attend all grade-level meetings including the Parent Coffee Meetings with EPS
  - Secretary
    - Scribe for APG exec meetings, APG general meetings and collate notes from grade-level Parent Coffee Meetings with EPS
    - EPS publishes these notes in the EPS Weekly

**2. Director of Student Wellbeing (Paul Hagen)**

- We survey students to understand how they are feeling about the school and one another
- “Authentic Connections Student Survey” out of Boston is our medium. It is tailored toward high-achieving schools.
- Authentic Connections surveyed students in over 300 schools nationwide this year, the majority of which were independent. Polled over 150k students last year.
- Survey responses guide us as to how we should shift our focus to address emerging trends and best support our students
- EPS Stats:

- 87.8% participation
- 91% well-being index (very high)
- Director at Authentic Connections reached out to EPS to ask us how to replicate our success at other schools. Our focus on well-being and progress has been remarkable!
- Five-year progress at EPS: We are well below the national norms in all areas but Depression
  - Anxiety has fallen from 14% of students reporting to 5.5%
  - Depression has fallen from 19.2% to 5.9%
  - Rule-breaking and Isolation at school has remained steady
  - Substance use has increased slightly in alcohol consumption, but other forms of substance use have decreased (e.g. marijuana and vaping). We've campaigned heavily against vaping and smoking with students.
- Even though our well-being index is high, we still have students who are struggling with various issues including anxiety and depression. We still have work to do!
  - **Digital Wellness:** Helping students navigate a digital world. Social media makes them feel worse. We aren't saying technology is bad, but we want to ensure that students know how best to leverage it.
  - **Balancing Workloads:** This encompasses both academic and extracurricular workloads. Students feel overloaded. "You can do anything, but you can't do everything" is our message. We help students balance their activities and time in advisory groups.
  - **Empathetic Dialogue:** Students should feel safe and supported to share their opinions.

### 3. Accompanied for Caregivers (AFC) Program (Dr. Kelly Moore)

- Saw a trend of rising mental health issues in high-achieving schools
- "Accompanied for Caregivers": Parents are magic! If parents are supported, they can be more successful at home. Parents don't need more advice... they need more support.
- Dr. Moore's goal is to help parents navigate mental-health issues at home. What do we do when kids come home feeling anxious or depressed?
- Tenets:
  - Understand the tricky mind
  - Open the heart: Parents take the blame and blame themselves
  - Unleash the innate wisdom
  - Connect with loved ones
- Program has existed for the past 5 years at EPS. This is a year-long, evidence-based curriculum that runs every other week (Tuesdays at 9 AM and 6 PM beginning next week). Includes live-teaching for 30 minutes followed by break-outs of smaller parent cohorts. Includes practical tools around mindfulness, etc.
- Program is free to EPS families, but costs at other schools
- Builds community among parents and is rooted in relational science
- Theme this year: "**Navigating Turbulent Times**"
- 4 C's: Compassion, Collaboration, Clarity and Calmness
- Register for the Keynote using the QR code in the slide deck / EPS Weekly
- Dr. Moore's article in the next issue of *Inspire* will dive into this

**4. Head of School (Sam Uzwick)**

- EPS strives for authentic, genuine partnership with families
- Sam has a new 6<sup>th</sup> grader at EPS, so he knows what it’s like to be a parent as well as an educator
- Our theme this year is “empathetic dialogue”
- We’re leading compassionately and pushing hard, but also taking into account the humanity of our kids to ensure our students and families are well-supported. Students must be healthy and whole.
- **Building acquisition** update:
  - o Buildings 1 and 2 (former preschool): We are planning to lease these for now while we determine our future usage plans. We will generate a passive revenue stream.
  - o We continue to identify opportunities to purchase more buildings in the complex as we have needs around parking, a sports field, Senior work spaces, etc. Stay tuned for more info!
- **Alumnae Fire:** Database allows alums to volunteer to talk to students about their areas of expertise. This will be incredibly helpful especially in the area of independent study. Vickie shared the QR code for sign-up during the meeting and we’ll also include it in the EPS Weekly.
- **Heads Table Meetings:** Please attend!
- **Fall Harvest:** Please RSVP. See the link in the EPS Weekly.

**5. Q&A**

- **Why aren’t we having this meeting in person?**
  - o Parking is an issue. Also, MS Teams affords flexibility for people who want to tune in at work.
- **Would you please talk about the cell phone policy in the MS vs. US?**
  - o In middle school, cells must remain in the student’s backpack in the locker between 8:30 and 3 PM. Instructors are not to use them as a teaching aid in class. Students should use their IDs, not their cells, for their lunches.
  - o We are establishing clear guardrails in middle school. If kids need to communicate with parents, they can do so via email on their laptops or call from the front desk.
  - o In upper school, we relax the rules. When students graduate, we want them to know how to manage their technology in a world where these guardrails do not exist. We are teaching students what it means to be courteous with technology vs. distracting.
- **Are there any resources available to help students balance their workload?**
  - o Hack: Have periodic check-ins (e.g. every Saturday) and have real, open communication about when there’s too much happening
  - o Open a dialogue with student’s teacher and advisor if you notice things are taking the student a long time or are adding stress
  - o Be in the moment and listen to your kids express themselves as they experience spikes in emotion (e.g. I’m not smart, etc.)
  - o Let your student know that their wellness is just as important as their achievement Encourage your student to understand where they are in their wellness journey and to make trade-offs that prioritize their mental well-being.

**6. Key Fall Dates:**

Date	Time	Event	Location
9/11-13	TBD	Middle School Play Auditions	TALI Theater

EPS APG GENERAL MEETING

9/12	7 – 8:15 PM	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Meeting: College Counseling	TBA
9/13	8 AM	Faculty and Staff Appreciation: Back to School Bagels	LPC Conf Room
9/13	2:00 - 3:30 PM	APG Hosted Ice Cream Social	Sports Courts
9/13	5:30 PM	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Orientation / Picnic	LPC and TALI Theater
9/19	6:15 – 8:45 PM	MS and US Back to School Night	EPS
9/27	6:30 – 9 PM	Fall Harvest Event	LPC
10/1	8:30 – 9:30 AM	9 <sup>th</sup> / 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Meeting	MS Teams
10/1	8:45 – 9:45 AM	EPS Admissions: Sibling Session	TALI Theater
10/2	8:30 – 9:30 AM	11 <sup>th</sup> /12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Meeting	MS Teams
10/3-4	All Day	No School: Fall Break	
10/8	8:30 – 9:30 AM	9 <sup>th</sup> /10 <sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Meeting	In Person – TBA
10/8	2:00 – 3:00 PM	11 <sup>th</sup> / 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Meeting	In Person – TBA
10/9	8:30 – 9:30 AM	11 <sup>th</sup> /12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Meeting	In Person – TBA
10/9	6:30 – 7:30 PM	5 <sup>th</sup> / 6 <sup>th</sup> Parent Meeting 7 <sup>th</sup> / 8 <sup>th</sup> Parent Meeting	MS Teams MS Teams
10/10	TBD	Class Reps Meeting	TALI 405
10/16	6:30 – 7:30 PM	5 <sup>th</sup> / 6 <sup>th</sup> Parent Meeting 7 <sup>th</sup> / 8 <sup>th</sup> Parent Meeting	MS Teams MS Teams
10/17	3:45 – 6 PM	Homecoming Games (Boys Ultimate and Girls Soccer)	TBA
10/18	7:30 – 10 PM	Homecoming Game: Girls Volleyball	TBA
10/19	7:30 – 10 PM	Homecoming Dance	TBA
10/24- 10/25	All Day	No School	
10/31	Evening	Middle School Social	LPC
11/7	Evening	MS Fall Play: Matilda the Musical	TALI Theater