

**North Cross School
Parents' Association Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2016**

Attendance: Donna Batzel, Tonya Benson, Meschelle Bibby, Allison Bloomfield, Molly Burns, Susan Card, Julie Carey, Elise DeMoss, Kirsten Erwin, Cheryl Glose, Ashley Harlow, Kim Hansen, Maggie Lenkowski, Ellen McGimsey, Linda Morgan, Marlo Pearson, Karen Pruitt, Kristina Sommer, Heather Taylor, Angela Thomas, Fiona Tower, Susan Wenk.

Welcome: Susan Card called the meeting to order at 12:03. Everyone was welcomed back to a new year. Our new members were especially welcomed and introduced: Ashley Harlow, Julie Carey, and Kimberly Hansen. Marlo Pearson is now the Vice President, Karen Pruitt is Secretary and Linda Morgan is now Treasurer. Susan met with Dr. Proctor over the summer where he complimented the PA on doing a great job for the school.

President's Report: Susan Card- Susan went over the money passed out at the end of the last school year to the divisions on campus along with the IT and Maintenance Departments. She received many thanks for monies distributed but she shared one thank you note in particular from Zach DeMoss in the IT Department. He noted that the monies given to IT allowed them to buy some new computers to use with projectors in common areas and also provided the funding needed to upgrade the library computers to gain a few more years of use out of them. We were reminded that Kroger cards de-link as of August 31, 2016. A link was sent today to the PA board showing the link to Kroger. Class reps can send that link to their classes or the division assistants for the parents to re-link their cards. It was also mentioned you can link North Cross to your Amazon Smile account where a portion of your purchases will come to North Cross School. Everyone is getting acquainted with the new onCampus site. Soon, we should have access to the parent directory online instead of using the Raider Digest booklet.

Susan presented an idea for a school event this year. A new ice hockey team is going to be at the Berglund Center– the Railyard Dogs. She would like to have a North Cross School night at an ice hockey game during their season. Tickets are \$12 per person. Part of the money from ticket sales would go to a charity or organization of our choice. The calendar is being looked at to find a date that would work the best for everyone.

Treasurer's Report: Linda Morgan – Our ending balance last year was \$2,799.38. We received a Kroger check in the amount of \$3,457.47 during the summer. Our current balance is \$6,256.85. We gave out approximately \$21,000.00 at the end of last year. We deposited around \$17,000.00 last year from the Kroger card monies. A reminder for anyone needing reimbursements to please give Linda receipts in order to cut a check.

Ellis Hall: Fiona Tower- The Lower School has begun the 2016-2017 academic year with some new faces, and some old faces in new roles. Rehearsals for the second LS musical have begun, and the teachers continue to learn how to best utilize our onCampus system.

- New faculty
 - Miranda Greear, Second Grade
 - Amy Hanson, ECP 2 instructional aide
- New roles
 - Terri Craig, ECP 2 instructional aide (Terri moved from assisting last year's only section of First Grade; when the class became two sections, Terri moved to ECP 2)
 - Sharon Daly, Second Grade (Sharon taught an ECP 2 class for many years; when the rising Second Grade split into two sections, Sharon moved to Second)
- Victor Lamas, Director (I will still teach A.P. World History in the Upper School)
- The Lower School needs used/retired tennis balls for their chairs and desks and tables. We can always use donations of them. Bring them to me and I will cut them to fit over the bottoms of chair and desk legs.

- NCS Volleyball once again initiates PACK THE GYM WITH PINK for Breast Cancer Awareness and their community donation to Carilion Clinic – Every Woman's Life program for uninsured and low-income women. The Lady Raiders are asking that the faculty, students from all three schools, and family support the Game on September 30, 2016 for the NCS Middle School game at 4:30 and the Varsity game at 6:00, which will be PACK THE GYM IN PINK and attend their game against Parkway Christian School.

- The LS continues its various new initiatives, like the LS Garden, The 100 Books program, and the LS musical. Rehearsals for the musical, *Alice in Wonderland*, have begun. Anna McLaughlin is the director, under Andrew Miller. The performances are scheduled for November 11th and 12th.

- The LS Garden is under the supervision of Betsy Cook. Sarah Brooks, a Roanoke College graduate and Virginia Master Gardener, is helping out Fridays in fourth and fifth grade science. Her primary focus will be on the garden. Last week she prepared a presentation and activity about composting, and she will be helping us get our campus composting system up and running.
- The Lower School has finished administering the ERB's CTP-4 assessment. This is the second year that the tests have been administered in the fall instead of the spring, to better inform parents of student progress and the faculty in regards to instructional efficiency.

Eaton Hall: Kirsten Erwin - Eaton Hall began the 2016-17 school year with a total of 111 students (6th:37, 7th: 27, 8th:47). It was a very active spring and summer with perspective students, and we were happy to add a number of great students to the Middle School. We began using the new *OnCampus* system this summer to replace our NetClassroom software. *OnCampus* allows us to integrate more information on one site including scheduling, grades, teacher sites, advisory, and athletics.

II. New faculty assignments:

Chris Brandon will be joining the World Language Department as our new French teacher. Mr. Brandon began his teaching career at Tulane and taught multiple levels of French at Fordham University and Lehman College. Mr. Brandon will be teaching French I-V this year, and we are sure that the students will enjoy his enthusiasm for French language and modern culture.

Rachelle Phillips will also be joining our World Language Department and will be teaching our Introduction to Spanish class as well as Spanish II and III. She is a graduate of Randolph-Macon College and received her M.A. in Spanish Literature from the University of Virginia.

Lindsey Meyer will be joining our Fine Arts Department and will be teaching our Art 7 and 8 classes in the Middle School. Ms. Meyer is a graduate of Virginia Tech and received her M.A. from Hollins University.

III. Fall Events and News

- With the help and guidance of Amy Holley, we have used some PA funding to help maintain our media and research capabilities. We have continued *Discovery Education Streaming*, which offers teachers a wide variety of educational videos and information. We have also continued our subscription to *Issues and Controversies*, which provides an excellent database for research.
- Robin Garrett and Carrie Greer (and their spouses), along with the SCA, constructed a lovely art board in the lobby of Eaton Hall to display student art. It is a very attractive attention to our building!
- During the 3rd and 4th weeks of September, all students in the Middle School will take the ERB standardized tests. We have decided to add the ERB Writing Test for the 7th-grade students this year to allow us to ascertain the strength of writing of a sample group of our students.

IV. Fall Trips:

- On September 7 and 9, James Brown is taking the eighth-grade students on their annual trip to West Virginia where the students take a tour of the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine and challenged themselves on a rafting trip down the New River.
- On September 16, Sandy Patterson will take the sixth-grade students to Camp Roanoke for their fall orientation trip. This is always a great opportunity for the students to work in small groups, get to know the new students, and enjoy an outside experience as a class.

Thanks for all of your help this year!

Willis Hall: Gay Pollock- We had a very smooth opening to the year. There are 18 or so new students in the upper school and 4 new teachers (Dr. Dresser, Mr. Brandon, Ms. Wang - from China, Ms. Phillips) - both new students and teachers are adjusting very well and making good contributions already.

We have had several special assemblies including one for the US on honor and the honor code, a video assembly focused on NASA and Katherine Johnson and her contributions to space exploration, and today the US will discuss the summer read - All the Pretty Horses with a panel of teacher speakers and then advisory discussion of the book. Next week we have an activity period with Community Service reps from different organizations that will visit with the upper school next Thursday.

The annual 9th grade trip to Wilderness Adventure is this Sunday and Monday - a highlight of the fall.

Our new grading and communication system, OnCampus is off to a good start. There are still some small issues to work on, but this new platform should enhance and improve student, parent, and teacher ease of use with grades and school information and communication.

The video, "We are the Greatest" - NCS version - was a great way to start the year. It highlighted the strong community here at NCS and the energy and talent of students to put that video together!

Thanks to PA for all they do! I look forward to another great year. US Parents night tonight! 6:30 in Fishburn.

Community- Kristina Sommer – Friday, September 30th is the first faux bonfire. (There is a fire ban in the County, so there will be no actual bonfire!). There was discussion about the start time since girls' volleyball has a big game that night at 6:00, which is well attended. It was decided that 6:30 would be a good compromise. People are on campus for the volleyball game and more likely to come to bonfire. Discussion about moving the event from Hooper Field to the area near the CAC. Kristina will check into that. There will be three teacher appreciation months during the school year. The first will be on Nov. 3rd. The Upper School is slotted to provide food and drink, but it was discussed and decided that Middle School will switch months due to the fact that the FOTA coffee house is the next day. The Upper School parents provide a lot of the baking for that event and it would be better if those parents are not baking for two events. Kristina will check with Reed about the switch.

Development: - Cheryl Glose - Rebekah Bradley was introduced. She is the Associate Director of Development and she will be attending our meetings. She is here as an observer and a resource to try to answer any questions we may have about the school.

Annual Fund appeals will be mailed the week of the 19th, Development's messaging will be more sensitive to our donors who are asked in many areas to support the school, while explaining the need and use of the gifts. The goal is \$320,000.

Gala is off to a great start led by committee chairs Amy Lowman and Robin Sells, they have a theme, and are working on the details. It's a fun committee but they still would love to have anyone else who is interested join their committee. (If any of the chairs are there, ask them to say something). The goal is \$120,000.

Donations to Big Flea have our storage building filling up, and Meet Me Mondays starts this coming Monday. Elise DeMoss, the Big Flea chair had a few comments: She is looking for help in manning pickups and picking up large items. Our goal is \$34,000. Elise made a plea for men to help with pickups during the year. She will designate once a month as a pick up day and will be reaching out to FOTA and Boosters for help, along with the Upper School students. Dates will be publicized, which will be Saturdays for a couple of hours. Upper School will get community service hours for helping. Meet Me Mondays is from 3pm to 4pm and is the time slot to take donations. The location is at the shed at the bus lot. There will be a sign up for these Mondays. Help is needed to take in items, sort, and hand out tax receipts. Part of our PA responsibility is to help with Big Flea, so signing up for a Monday would be big help.

Cheryl continues: If you attended Back to School night you heard Dr. Proctor, Susan, Ellen, and Marlo all talk about the need for volunteers. We are a stronger school when everyone is involved, and our goal this year is to have 100% of our families serving in some volunteer role. Forms were handed out, but they are also online. Grade representatives, Please ask your families to complete those forms.

I am the volunteer coordinator and will be working with each of you, as well as FOTA, Boosters, and Rebekah to see we have sufficient volunteers for every need.

Rebekah stated the forms are already very helpful for collecting info and giving names to organizations that are interested in. Collecting list from the forms of people who can help with reception desk, etc. IF you receive a name of someone interested in helping, please reach out and call them.

Admissions: - Deena Lugar - Admission activity continued at a strong and steady pace through the summer, finalizing both re-enrollments and new students. We are pleased to report that on the **opening day of school 491 students heard the bells ring** in our 2016-17 academic year, our highest opening enrollment in 6 years. Our **current enrollment is now 495**.

Our goals this year are to increase enrollment, improve re-enrollment, increase outreach efforts, improve admission processes and streamline procedures, and determine the optimal staffing plan.

Opening Day

The 2016-17 school year opened with 90 new students for a total opening enrollment of 491. Previous opening day enrollment history is included in the chart, below:

Year	Total	Returning Students	Retention %age	New Students	Lower School Enrollment	Middle School Enrollment	Upper School Enrollment
2011-12	482	420	88%	62	222	103	157
2012-13	457	378	86%	79	205	101	151
2013-14	482	394	92%	88	222	107	153

2014-15	484	395	90%	89	210	109	165
2015-16	486	403	90%	83	223	99	164
2016-17	491	401	91%	90	220	110	162

Transition, Summer 2016 ad Personnel

I assumed the Director position effective 7/1 and transitioned quickly from development to admission. I hit the ground running, conducting interviews, tours, and reaching out to re-enrolling and inquiring families. **Stephen Alexander**, the Associate Director of Admission, continued in his role through Labor Day and **will officially transition to help recruit teachers for China**. As he did all year, this summer Stephen was an invaluable asset to our staff because he was able to share so many responsibilities as he toured inquiring families, followed up on families who had not yet re-enrolled, arranged and conducted much of the needed testing, updated department reports, communicated with parents through application and enrollment. Lauren Horner scheduled testing, kept our Blackbaud records, communicated with parents through application and enrollment processes, and supervised the International Student Admission process as Admission Coordinator. Amy Jackson continued working with the Tailored Tuition families as she also readied herself and her classroom to be the Upper School art teacher this fall. We also relocated everyone except Lauren into new offices.

Blackbaud Upgrade - Summer and Fall 2016

We are pleased to have an upgraded admission administration system – OnBoard - part of a suite that included the OnCampus module parents, students, and faculty are using. This summer, we were trained on this system, then helped build what our office required, tested it, and began to use and adjust our new Blackbaud admission module when launched in mid-August. **We appreciate the efforts of our IT team** who, at the same time, were also installing new modules for our Development Office, Faculty and Administration, and Business Offices. It was truly a very busy summer and the staff is to be commended for handling the volume, stress, and pressure so professionally and with such noteworthy results.

Re-enrollment

Retention was approximately 91%, a slight improvement from last year. Forty-one students of the 442 eligible to reenroll did not return. The largest drop-off was ECP-3, where we retained 67% of the class (8 did not re-enroll), followed by Grade 9 with 75% retention (7 did not re-enroll). These 2 classes accounted for 3.4% of the students who did not re-enroll. We do think we need to evaluate the reasons behind the ECP-3 drop and determine how best to retain them. **A continued effort to increase the retention percentage will be emphasized, especially to urge families to re-enroll for 2017-18 in a timely manner** instead of so many waiting to enroll in the summer.

Current Activity - Potential New Students

The admission office continues to work with families who are interested in a fall move due to potential relocation to the area or dissatisfaction with their current school. On average, we are currently averaging a new inquiry each day.

Marketing

Chris Moore, Jessica Schindhelm, Rebekah Bradley, and I have been and currently are working closely together to coordinate admission marketing through print, social media, and word-of-mouth campaigns. We continue to hear positive feedback about our website and the information people find helpful as they learn about our school and the ease of its navigation. We continue to make it better as we receive feedback or find ways to add or revise content.

This fall, we are beginning to explore and are hoping to develop a web-based video presence to give site visitors an actual “day in the life” of North Cross students. While our website gives accurate and compelling information about all that happens here, a video presence will be more appealing and give visitors a taste of membership in the North Cross community.

Outreach to Increase our Pipeline

At this point, we have focused on re-enrollment and enrollment for the 2016-17 school year and will soon shift to determining the best ways to create a “waiting list” school. Outreach will be one of the ways we will do that, and we’ve taken some initial steps in that direction.

We’ve begun to reach out into targeted communities and encourage them to come visit our school. This summer, we reached out to the Excalibur lacrosse program for a lacrosse day in admission (received 4 inquiries and 2 enrollments). We did the same with the CCA Marlins (no results to date, but people noted our outreach). We will also reach out to organizations such as travel athletic teams, dance clubs, and programs such as Scouting to attract more students to our school.

If you are aware of families who may be interested in NCS, please contact the Admission Office. We look forward to sharing the school with them. I also encourage you to share your personal story of how *More Happens Here* with friends in the community – your voices of positive experiences are among the best “advertisements” for the school!

FOTA: Ellen McGimsey- Coffee House is Nov 4th and we will be hearing more about that at a later date. It will be held at North Cross this year in the auditorium. She has challenged her committee to come up with fun ideas for this year’s event. They will be adding different acts to extend the life of the event. The Lower School musical is the weekend after the coffee house, so there are some challenges with the stage space. Volunteers will be needed to clean up after the coffee house and to re- set the stage area for the musical. She worked with Coach Lawrence in the spring of last year for a date that would be best with all the activities slotted around this time. There have been around 275 people attend the coffee house the past two years, which makes this a healthy event for the school.

Boosters: Marlo Pearson – Boosters if off to an amazing start. There were 17 parents at their first meeting, which represented all the Fall sports. Scott Smith, President of Boosters is staying

on in that capacity even though his son graduated this past year. Boosters was able to purchase the pink volleyball team jerseys for the September 30th game and also paid for the Middle School football team jerseys.

Education: Angela Thomas - She was following up with educational dates set up this past Spring on the calendar, but discovered from Reed, who does the event scheduling that there would not be any education dates for this school year. Susan Card will check on the reasoning behind that decision.

New Business: Susan Card- Please look closely at future emails for upcoming PA meetings announcing our meeting place. The Multipurpose Room is not available any more this year, so we do not have a specific meeting room. Due to the size of our Board the only areas that can accommodate us are the Fishburne auditorium or Mr. Robillard's classroom in the Upper School. So please pay special attention to the email for the October 13th meeting.

Homecoming festivities begin the week of October 11th. The Powder Puff game will be Wednesday, October 12 in the afternoon where the freshmen and sophomores play the juniors and seniors. The Pep Rally will be held Friday, October 14 at 1:15pm. The Pep Rally will have their own Olympic Events with Fall sport teams competing against one another. To keep the energy alive, the individual team members will not be announced since we have a sports assembly recognizing each individual at another time. The football game will be held at 4:00 after the Pep Rally. The Middle School Dance is also that Friday Night. Along with several sporting events on Saturday, October 15th, Cook Field will be dedicated that afternoon. The Homecoming dance is being held Saturday night, October 15th at the Taubman Museum from 8-12pm. The dance is for the Upper School, grades 9-12. This will be a weekend of fun and sports, please come and participate.

Old Business: Minutes from May, 2016 were approved via email at an earlier date.

Meeting adjourned at 1:16 PM.