

Principal's Newsletter

Principal Diana Abdi

Assalaamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatahu,

Dear Parents,

Happy New Year! Welcome back to APA for the second half of the 2018-2019 academic year. We pray this will be a successful and blessed semester ahead.

As we move forward into the second part of the year, encourage your children to take this opportunity to begin anew with a fresh plan for success. The spring term requires the same level of focus and preparation, if not more, as the fall semester in order to succeed.

To be more productive and successful, we all must make that sincere intention at the onset, pray for it, and overcome obstacles throughout. Having a support network to help you work towards your objectives is key.

May this New Year bring happiness, hope and peace in our hearts and homes. May it also be a time for renewed intentions and purpose.

JazaakumAllahu Khair,

Principal Diana Abdi-M.Ed

5110 Manor Rd.
Austin, TX 78723
Phone: 512-926-1737
Fax: 512-926-9688
principal@apacademy.org

Contents

- ◆ Parenting Advisory, p. 1–2
- ◆ Reflecting on Character, p. 3
- ◆ APA in Action, p. 4–10
- ◆ January Calendar, p. 10

Offer tips, not answers

Some kids arrive at a hard question in their homework and immediately look to parents for help. Instead of providing answers, help your child learn how to find it themselves:

1. **Have them skip** the difficult question and answer all the others that they can. Then they should think again about the one they skipped. It may be clearer now.
2. **Ask**, “Where could you find out about that? Was there a class handout?” Show them how to use resources like the encyclopedia, too.

The new year is a new chance to achieve goals

If your child set some goals in September, but didn't really follow through, January is the perfect time to start again. To make this the year your child learns how to achieve his goals, encourage him to:

1. **State** his goal. Have your child write it down and post it where he will see it.
2. **Plan** how to meet the goal. What specific steps will he take?
3. **Talk** about the goal with others. This builds commitment. Have your child tell the teacher his goal.
4. **Carry out** his plan, one step at a time. If problems arise, your child can discuss possible solutions with you.

Review the rules together

Sometimes children get in trouble at school because they don't remember the rules. Review the school rules with your child. Talk about how they are needed to keep the school a safe, peaceful and orderly place where kids can learn. Let your child know that you expect them to follow the rules.



3 Ways High School Students Can Capitalize on Second Semester

The final semester of high school is an excellent chance to take advantage of key opportunities that can help you prepare for the college transition. Take a look at these tips shared by college students for maximizing the last few months of senior year.

- **Keep yourself challenged.** You may be used to certain study tactics and test-taking strategies that worked well for you in high school, but that doesn't mean those same approaches will necessarily work in college. A great way to fend off any schoolwork complications is to find ways to keep yourself challenged during the last semester of high school.
- **Foster connections with your teachers.** It will likely be easier to stay in touch with teachers, who were instrumental in your growth, after graduation if you foster your connections with them now. Recommendation letters and references are important when it comes to pursuing opportunities in college and beyond, and high school teachers can be excellent points of contact for these.
- **Lay out a plan.** The final semester of high school is an opportune time to start making decisions about what you'd like to do in college and how you're going to pursue these goals. Take this time to review the resources your high school has available to help guide you in such decisions – such as picking your college major – as well as the resources your college has to offer.

Bring out the leader inside your elementary schooler

Children who are leaders at school develop important skills, such as problem-solving, communication and responsibility. These students are often self-confident, creative, helpful and friendly. That makes their classmates want to work with them.

All children have the ability to become leaders. To nurture your child's leadership skills:

- **Point out leaders of all kinds.** Talk about successful group efforts, from winning basketball seasons to community food drives. Remind your child that someone led those groups. Discuss what makes a good leader.
- **Teach them to look at things** from other people's points of view. Good leaders aren't bossy or mean. They make people want to work together.
- **Offer them leadership opportunities.** Athletic teams, clubs, Scouts and many other activities can provide chances for your child to lead. At home, let your child lead a family meeting or manage a family project.
- **Don't push.** Too much pressure can backfire. If your child seems stressed or unhappy, it's time to lighten up.
- **Set an example.** When you take a leadership role, talk to your child about what you are doing and why.

Are you encouraging resilience?

Failure is scary for kids—and parents. But learning how to bounce back from a failure is a valuable lesson. Are you teaching your child that failure isn't the end of the world? Answer yes or no to the questions below:

___1. Do you allow your child to solve problems on her own, even if she may fail?

___2. Do you encourage her to think about what she can do differently next time, when things don't go right?

___3. Do you admit your own failures, and talk about how to fix them?



___4. Do you help your child put setbacks into perspective? "You didn't ace your test, but you earned a higher grade than last time!"

___5. Do you teach her to win graciously and lose cheerfully?

How well are you doing?
More yes answers mean you are showing your child how to rebound from failure. For each no, try that idea.

Stay flexible when your child solves problems



When you find yourself stuck in traffic, you can sometimes choose another route. Getting to your destination matters more than which road you take.

When your child has a problem to solve, instead of giving him a road map (first do this, then do that), remind him of his destination: "You need to find a way to finish your report even though your classmate has the book you need." He may not select the solution you would. But if he arrives at his destination honestly, let the solution stand.

Reflecting on Character



Empathy, the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes -either cognitively or affectively - has been described as "The Mark of a True Believer."*

A couple of ahadith to ponder in this regard:

Al-Nu'man ibn Bashir reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, **"The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever."** (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

...and **"None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself."** (Al-Bukhari)

Prophet Muhammad (saw) had an amazing sense of empathy. Allah said about him:

"There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful." Qur'an, 9:128

How was this exemplified? He would hasten the congregational prayer when he heard a baby crying, saying "I stand in prayer, then I hear a child crying so I make my prayer brief because I do not want to cause hardship for his mother." (Nasa'i)

He didn't scold or beat the Bedouin who urinated in his masjid (out of ignorance). Rather, he explained the proper manners in a calm and beautiful manner. (Ibn Majah 529). There are numerous examples of the Prophet's (saw) empathy.

Our own fasting during Ramadan enables us to relate affectively to the way those who don't have food, or enough of it, feel all the time. We experience what hunger feels like for the less fortunate among us which, in turn, causes us to be more generous than we may have otherwise been.

*<http://aboutislam.net/reading-islam/living-islam/empathy-mark-true-believer/>

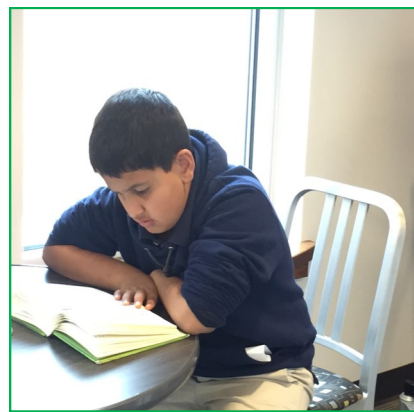
APA in Action



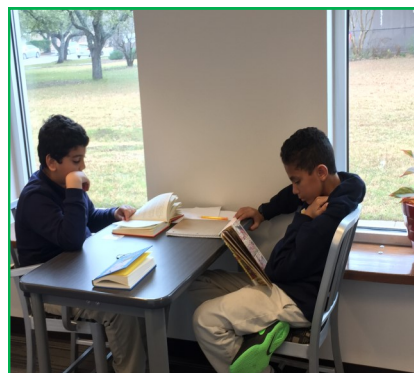
Pre-K 4 in the Spotlight!

Sorting is a beginning math skill. By sorting, children understand that objects are alike and different and that they can belong and be organized into certain groups. Getting practice with sorting at an early age is important for numerical concepts and grouping numbers and sets when they're older.

5th Grade Science Research Trip



Ms. Casey's 5th grade class went on a walking field trip to Windsor Park Library. The library is newly reopened and the students were able to take a tour of its facilities.



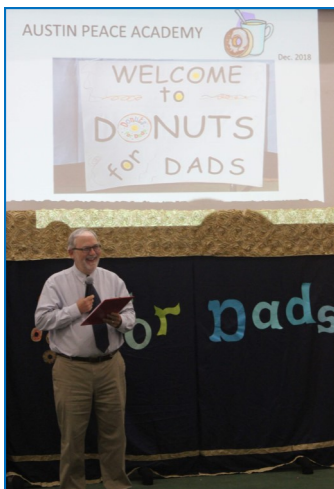
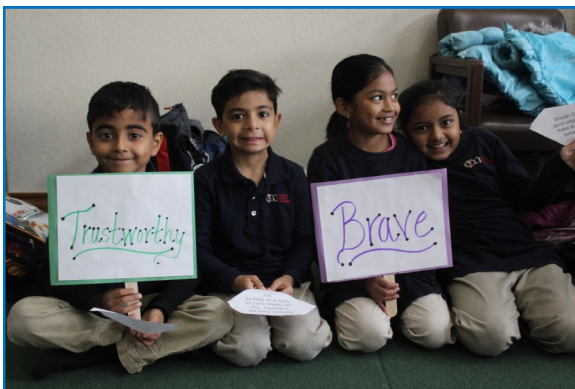
Students had the opportunity to explore and read up on different topics as part of the science research prep for their science fair projects.

APA in Action

Donuts for Dads

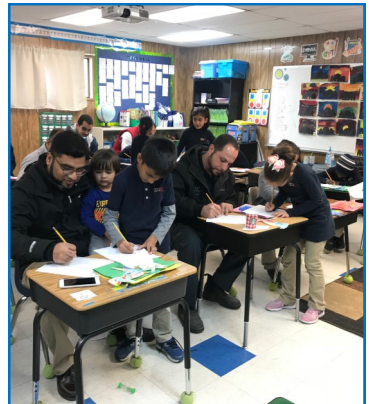
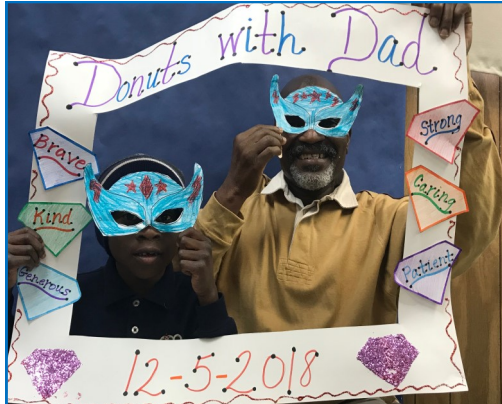


Austin Peace Academy's Elementary School honored their fathers with the Annual Donuts for Dad event. The students, teachers, and administration delighted in the day's performances and the opportunity to connect with the children's dads during the school morning hours. After the wonderful performances, the fathers accompanied their children to the classrooms for a donut breakfast.



APA in Action

Donuts for Dads



APA in Action

Interfaith Dialogue



Austin Peace Academy continues to host Interfaith dialogue sessions with St. Andrews Episcopal School. These meetings allow us to grow, enrich and develop mutually. Interfaith dialogues provide a safe space for religions to communicate in a co-operative, constructive and positive manner. It is a great opportunity for students can learn how to be aware of religious/non-religious stigmas, strengths and differences.

Austin Peace Academy's Annual In-School Spelling Bee Competition for grades four through eighth was administrated by Ms. Casey Garcia and Ms. Amna Rahman, with the support of Elementary and Middle School staff members. The young spellers were excited to show off their skills.

- First Place:** Zuhair Khondker (6th)
- Second Place:** Amina Monk (6th)
- Third Place:** Sadien Hirzallah (7th)



The winning word was "tergiversation" and the championship word was "auf Wiedersehen".

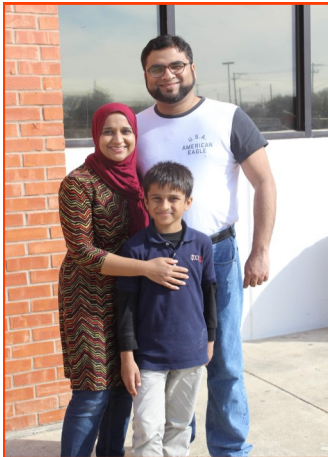
Congratulations to all students who participated and offered a valiant effort and thank you to our wonderful staff. The first place winner qualifies to attend the Regional Spelling Bee.



APA in Action

APA Construction Cookout!

On December 18th, Tim Edwards, Project Manager of APA's new student building, kindly planned a BBQ Cookout for APA and its students along with parents!



APA in Action

APA Construction Cookout!

Tim also arranged small group tours for the parents to walk through the new building. Alhamdulillah it was a great event, which everyone enjoyed thoroughly.



APA in Action

Debate Excellence in Salado

On Saturday, December 15th, Salado High School hosted one of the most competitive tournaments in the Greater Austin region. 21 teams competed in varsity debate. Two APA teams tied for first place and one team took third place. All three teams went undefeated throughout the tournament.

Varsity Debate:

1st place: Varisha Masroor and Wajiha Masroor

Imaad Thakur and Ahmad Elessawy

3rd place: Sumeya Aliyu and Minha Barkatullah

January 2019

January 3	Second Semester Starts
January 7	Basketball Game
January 10	Elementary In-School Science Fair & Basketball Game
January 14	Basketball Game
January 17	Middle/High School Science Fair
January 21	Martin Luther King Jr. Day — No School
January 23	Basketball Game
January 25	Basketball Game

* More Information can be found via email *



Like us on Facebook — Austin Peace Academy

Follow us on Instagram @austinpeaceacademy

