AMERICAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY

RUTHERFORD

The Rutherford Weekly

NEWS FOR THE FAMILIES OF ACAR · WEEK OF NOVEMBER 9, 2026 · VOL. 1, NO. 4

SPECIAL ISSUE · THE PARENT SURVEY, FALL 2026

FROM THE HEAD'S DESK

Dear Families, **the Parent Survey closed on Friday**, and this issue is given over to what you said in it. Ninety-one parents answered for a hundred and twenty-three children, in every grade in the school — the largest number we have ever heard from at once. We are publishing our own marks rather than keeping them.

I am writing this week from **Hillsdale College** in Michigan, where I am with our own ACAR school board and with board members from schools across the country for the **annual board governance conference**. **I look forward to being back on campus Monday.**

Warmly,
Dr. Thomas Covington
Assistant Head of School

OUR MISSION

The mission of American Classical Academy Rutherford is to train the minds and develop character in students through a content-rich classical education in the liberal arts and sciences, utilizing instruction in the principles of moral practices and civic virtue.

HOW YOU RATED US

HEAD OF SCHOOL

4.5
OUT OF 5 · 85 PARENTS
89% rated 4 or 5

ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

4.5
OUT OF 5 · 83 PARENTS
88% rated 4 or 5

OUR TEACHERS

4.5
OUT OF 5 · 110 RATINGS
85% rated 4 or 5; 72% gave a 5

Every family rated their own child's teacher. The figure above is all twenty classrooms pooled together; no teacher is ever named in a published result, and each one receives her own.

LEADING THE WAY

Teachers have logged **839** virtue wins since August, up from 768 a week ago. Leading the school: **Ryan Mastalski** (Grade 5) on twelve, with **Jonas Edwards** and **Payton Dunlap**, both Grade 5, on eleven.

This week's **win of the week** goes to **Kindergarten**, for responsibility: every child in the class learned and recited *Tommy* on Friday.

AND THE SCHOOL ITSELF

Parents who agreed or strongly agreed, of those who answered:

The school takes the virtues seriously	93%
Drop-off works for my family	92%
My child is safe at ACAR	90%
I expect to be back next year	90%
My child is happy at ACAR	88%
News reaches me in time	84%
My emails are answered promptly	82%
My child is challenged academically	82%
Discipline here is fair	79%
My child's teacher knows my child well	78%
Unkindness is dealt with	76%
Pick-up works for my family	76%

WHAT YOU SAID WE DO WELL

One thing came up more than any other: **the classical curriculum and the virtues** — that the school is forming a person and not only a student. Nearly as often, **the teachers and staff**: that your child is known by name by almost everyone in the building, and plainly cared for.

Then the **small school and small classes**; **safety**, and that we know who is and is not authorized to collect a child; **structure and high expectations**; the **community**; being **kept inside your child's education**; and the **Hillsdale** curriculum behind it all.

THIS WEEK AT ACAR

TUESDAY · NOV 10

Coffee with the Head of School, 8:15–9:15 AM, in the cafeteria. No registration needed. Grade 2 recites *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*.

WEDNESDAY · NOV 11

Veterans Day. School is in session; Grade 4 recites the *Marine Hymn*.

THURSDAY · NOV 12

Costume entry cards are due — only five are in.

THURSDAY · NOV 12 · 6TH & 7TH GRADE

Greece and Italy — the one informational meeting, 5:00–5:45 PM in the cafeteria, on a student trip to Greece in 2028 and Italy in 2029 over spring break, through EF Educational Tours. This is not a school-sponsored trip. Nothing is decided on the night, and no money is collected. Spots are limited. RSVP at **rsvp.eftours.com/tc9fw99**

SATURDAY · NOV 14

The Classical Fall Festival — "Dress Like History!" Free for every family. Grades K–2 at 12:00, 3–5 at 3:00, 6–7 at 6:00 PM. No masks, no weapons.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Nov 23–27	Thanksgiving break — school closed
Dec 1	Musicals & Plays fund closes
Dec 18	End of semester — ½ day for students

WHAT YOU ASKED US TO FIX

1. News from the classroom.
More regular word on how my child is actually doing, and earlier notice of events. → Phone alerts are being tested in The ACAR Account, and a short weekly note from each classroom.

2. Parents who do not know each other.
The big events are good; families still leave not knowing their child's classmates, and putting the PTO groups behind a paid membership shut some of you out. → A meet-and-greet per classroom, and a way into the community that costs nothing.

3. Getting here.
The drive from Murfreesboro and Nashville; a bus or one drop point; an earlier drop-off; the car line. → Transport is a board question and we are taking it up.

4. Stretch, and children who need more.
Enrichment sooner for those ready for it; tell us when a child is behind, not at the end of a term. → RTI² is running this year; we are working on telling families sooner.

5. Recess and PE.
More minutes, more supervision, more physical training. → Added supervision at recess, and the outdoor play area is in hand.

6. Consistency.
Teacher absence, new teachers each year, a dress code enforced the same way in every hall. → Faculty continuity and uniform enforcement are both on this year's list.

And one more, honestly: a few of you wrote that discipline this year has gone too far and that the joy has gone quiet; others asked for it to be firmer still. We are listening to both.

FESTIVAL GIVING — THE BOARD

$415 from **12 families** across **11 classrooms**. Each class is aiming at **$300**, and the top homeroom in each band wins a pizza party.

3rd Niedzielski — leads 3–5	**$75**
6th Andrade — leads 6–7	**$75**
K Morrison — leads K–2	**$55**
1st Grimwood	**$35**
2nd Booker, 2nd Cross, 1st Potter, 1st Youngblood, K Day, 4th Shelton, 5th Young	**$25 ea.**
Nine classrooms, not yet on the board	—

Give to your child's own classroom on the **Fall Festival** tab at **theacaraccount.com**. Grades 3–5 earn a can of silly string for every **$25**, and grades 6–7 a pie to throw for every **$50** — your child picks whether it is aimed at Dr. Covington or Dr. Norton.