

## **SHEPHERD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

### **Minutes from Local School Advisory Team meeting of MARCH 12, 2013**

**Present:** Sherilyn Pruitt (parent representative), chair; Mark Pattison (parent representative), secretary; parent representatives: Lisa Connor, Kesha Pendergrast; teacher representatives: Tia Holt, Joele Michaud, Nancy Ulba, Valena Valentine-Nelson; PTA representative: Toby Susse; community representative: Carl Bergman; plus principal Jamie Miles

#### **Follow-Up/Follow-Through**

**Liaison with Shepherd Park Citizens Association:** Lisa gave Sherilyn parent Dionna Glover's contact information.

**Filling teacher vacancies:** Expediting searches without teachers having submitted all retirement paperwork is illegal.

**TV Turnoff:** Mark to get in touch with Pam Marable about getting the bulletin boards set up.

**Gala:** Will be held May 18 at Wilson high School. There will be room for people to sit down and eat dinner.

**Bike Rodeo:** Information on plans for the bike rodeo as part of the April 20 Earth Day event shared by email.

#### **Budget**

The LSAT gave its advice to the principal regarding budgetary matters.

Shepherd has an increase of \$76,159 over last year. But last year's budget did not count on us getting a third second-grade teacher, which arrived after the school year started, and is slotted at about \$96,500.

At the moment, we have money for both three kindergarten teachers and three kindergarten aides. Can we keep the aide money even if we go to just two kindergarten teachers?

DCPS headquarters has more required positions. DCPS HQ also locks in the money to avoid manipulation by principals.

Even though we had an audit in October, we still enroll students afterward, but get no additional funding for them. Our current estimate is eight new students from charter

schools, which keeps that student allotment money; other DCPS schools have even more. Some school systems conduct quarterly audits.

History: We lost a lot of students in 2011-12 when Shepherd dropped sixth grade. Otherwise, our numbers bear out against projections.

DCPS has upped the ceiling for its “small school” designation from 300 to 400 students. This changes budgetary allotments.

How do we create five specials jobs with money for only three? There are ways to cobble together funds from different sources, but it still leaves us short.

The budget sent from DCPS HQ leaves no money for a counselor position, which is not a required position and was zeroed out.

Assistant principal money is used to fund the International Baccalaureate coordinator position.

Previous request for a waiver for the social worker was denied, but we’ll try again. Our numbers are the same for special education with a part-time social worker. The superintendent is in agreement with Shepherd on this.

Currently there is art every other week for pre-K and kindergarten. The schedule is the same for the Spanish teacher.

We will have to be more flexible in sharing specials teachers.

The principal is trying to maintain a full-time counselor, a full-time language person and a half-time librarian slot. The DCPS chancellor got grief in eliminating librarian spots before.

Language does not have to be taught in pre-K, kindergarten or first grade.

Every year it becomes a hassle getting a second language teacher. Does it come down to: “Parents, if you want it, raise money for it”? Can we find grant money to fund a language teacher each and every year?

Deal has 1,200 students, and three jobs for language teachers in French, Spanish and Chinese, plus IB.

One school had its annual auction in the school cafeteria and raised \$20,000 in just five minutes by asking for contributions at \$1,000 a throw (later down to \$750) to pay for a computer cart.

Shepherd is in the middle ground where our relative affluence and high test scores do not qualify us for Title I federal money to supplement DCPS' budget, but not so rich that we can snap our fingers and raise \$100,000 to pay for a teacher.

At this spot, the school's square footage and student population are the only variables taken into account by DCPS. The budget is done via a very different process – top-down.

The chancellor knows what we offer, but doesn't give us the money to pay for it.

Money is given only for audited enrollment. Even if you grow, there is no guarantee you'll get the proportionate allocation.

About 34 percent of Shepherd students qualify for free or reduced-price meals, less than half required to tap into a funding source.

It was offered that most students switch languages when they go to middle school.

If we offered just one language, it would be once a week for 45 minutes, the same with the other specials teachers.

Just to continue as we are now at the same staffing levels, we'd need another \$193,000.

The principal is in conversation with other principals over the possibility of sharing half-time faculty, with the niceties of scheduling to be worked out.

The principal has fielded three calls this week from parents at Stokes Charter School who are looking to move their kids out of there because they teach too much language.

The PTA is not in a position to fund jobs. The PTA can, though, fund programs like the Wolf Trap partnership, which costs \$2,500 and has provided substantial enrichment.

Despite the teacher cost "averaging" done systemwide, there is no incentive to look for younger, less experienced teachers to save a few thousand bucks here or there.

Carl will talk to Catholic University about a library science student placement now that a half-time librarian is returning. It seems that CU prefers some kind of supervision of its students in an off-site practicum situation.

Custodial adjustments reflect renovation and expansion, but schools of similar size get by with fewer janitorial staff.

Although elementary schools have no formal petition process, there is an informal process to seek redress.

The risk remains that DCPS will reject or revoke our hopes for some measure of budget and personnel justice.

LSAT chair Pruitt will deliver her electronic signature signifying that the LSAT performed its due diligence and gave advice to the principal on budget matters.

### **New Business**

**LSAT vacancies:** Both Pruitt and Connor will be ineligible to serve on the LSAT for 2013-14, as will Michaud and Ulba. Replacements will be needed and should be recruited.

**Funding:** Pruitt was given contact information for Shepherd parent Margaret Goletiani so she can pursue her quest to find stable grant sources to cover school budget shortfalls in a targeted manner.

**SPCA labels:** Bergman won't use the March 12 SPCA meeting to ask for labels, but make the request

**League of LSATs:** Pattison indicated his willingness to head up this effort.

**Traffic safety:** Bergman noted the presence of the upcoming HAWK signal at the intersection of 16<sup>th</sup> and Jonquil, which could make it easier for students and families to cross the street and stop traffic.

**Minutes:** Bergman moved, Connor seconded, approving the February meeting minutes. Motion carried.

In the interest of time, consider of other agenda items were deferred to the next meeting.

**Next meeting:** The next LSAT meeting will be Tuesday, April 9, 4 p.m., at the school.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark Pattison, secretary  
Shepherd Elementary LSAT