

SHEPHERD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Minutes of Local School Advisory Team meeting of SEPT. 10, 2013

Present: Kesha Pendergrast (parent representative), chair; Mark Pattison (parent representative), secretary; community representative: Carl Bergman; teacher representatives: Nicole Pethtel, Elizabeth Guldin, Renee Hamer; Washington Teachers Union representative: Tia Holt; parent representative: Keith White; staff representative: Robyn Brooks; PTA representative: Sherilyn Pruitt; plus Jamie Miles, principal.

Absent: Kamilah Martin-Proctor, parent representative; Robin George, teacher representative.

Minutes: Bergman moved, Pendergrast seconded approving the minutes of the July meeting. Motion carried.

Deal feeder schools meeting: Pendergrast and Pruitt reported on a meeting convened by Deal parent leaders of PTA and LSAT representatives of the elementary schools feeding into Deal. Parents from Bancroft, Eaton, Janney and Shepherd Elementary were there, as well as from Wilson High School. The first part of the meeting was a meet and greet. The Deal principal spoke during the second part of the meeting. The principal detailed the school's "team" concept of teaching. It was disclosed that fifth graders are not prepared for middle-school math, so teachers now should try some sixth-grade material if fifth grade. The language program was also discussed; Deal will add another language teacher to meet demand. It appears that elementary schools get a \$50,000 resource allotment that may be spent in different ways by the different schools. There is also an embassy adoption program available for all schools; Shepherd participates with both French- and Spanish-speaking embassies. The school lists its embassy preferences, but in the end is assigned embassies.

There was feedback that Shepherd students have progressively gotten better in math at Deal; the fifth grade teachers here collaborate with the sixth grade teachers there. There is also a way to track Shepherd graduates' progress at Deal. A contact list of developed for the meeting participants. As for boundary changes, the latest word is that revisions could be announced in December, but not take effect until 2015-16.

End Of Year Testing and Goal Setting: The principal distributed sheets, which were later collected, detailing school results in the End Of Year testing for DC-CAS, DIBELS and TRC. The goal in DC-CAS is to get to 80 percent proficiency, which would make Shepherd a "rewards" school, giving it greater autonomy within DCPS. Shepherd's goals are higher than the DCPS-listed targets. In spotting trend lines in the results, it was noted that 2009-10 represented a decline in schools throughout DCPS, not just as Shepherd, and scores have climbed higher since; teacher evaluations might have been an issue. In response to a question about the timing of the release of test results -- because parents cannot use the summer to address academic shortcomings in their children -- the principal said it is expected that the numbers will be released more quickly in 2014, but a North Carolina shift to computers delayed issuance of results. The D.C. Office of State Superintendent of Education is

responsible for test administration. While DIBELS and TRC tests assume greater skill development over the course of the year, DCPS raised the bar higher here. Shepherd sees a need to focus on students in special education, those receiving free and reduced-price meals, and those new to the school as those constituencies needing the closest attention when it comes to raising test scores. Parent engagement is seen as necessary. Test results also showed that 17-18 students were within three points or less of being judged proficient.

It was noted that the school's truancy rate dropped, and the chronic absence rate is down, but that DCPS later set the bar higher here, too; Friday, Oct. 4, is the annual attendance audit. Some students on extended vacations with family will be unenrolled and re-enrolled so as to not set off truancy alarms elsewhere within DCPS. Enrollment, which has dropped by about 20 students each of the past two years, is now up 20 from a year ago. Shepherd may be able to reach 400 after renovations are complete. Whereas in the past there was much student churn and loss in third grade, it now seems to happen in fourth grade, as parents want assurance they're on the path to Deal. An unusual number of families moved out of D.C. in the past year as well.

LSAT Survey: Discussion on survey results was deferred to October.

LSAT Webinar: A webinar is set for Tuesday, Sept. 24, 7-8 p.m., although its usefulness was judged harshly by those who were on it last year. Pendergrast said she would listen in and hope to collect contact information from other participants to follow-up on the "League of LSATs" concept.

Safety: Pattison talked about parent efforts at promoting traffic safety outside school. Traffic cones, conversations with parents, and the Safety Patrol are all helping. One parent remarked the morning of the LSAT meeting as to how traffic flow, while not perfect, was much improved (despite having 20 more students).

FAST: Holt asked for time to be reserved at a future LSAT meeting to explore what benefits may be gained from FAST (Families And Students Together), which was discussed briefly in June.

Fall Fest: Pruitt put out the call to volunteers to help with the Fall Fest, set for Saturday, Oct. 5, noon-5 p.m. at the school.

Listserv: Bergman reported that Pethel is now a co-moderator of the LSAT Google Group.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting will be TUESDAY, OCT. 8, at 4 P.M. inside the school.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Pattison, secretary
Shepherd Elementary LSAT