

Woodrow Wilson High School LSRT
Minutes
January 15, 2008

Present:

Administration: Alex Wilson

Faculty reps: Gloria Gibson, Erich Martel, Sandy Wright, Lisa Grymes

WTU rep: Robert Zugby

Parent reps: Mary Froning, Chuck Samuels, Vanessa Stroman

PTSA liaison: Sarah Whitener

Additional Member: Eileen Plumb

Community rep: Erie Sampson

Student rep: Angelica Gregory

Guest: John Howe (Wilson COO), Mary Giffin, Ginny Callanen, Jack Koczela

The meeting was called to order at 4:45 pm.

I. The minutes of the December meeting were adopted.

II. Principal's Report

Ms. Williams was in another meeting and the report was not given. Mr. Wilson reported that a replacement for the 11th grade counseling position has been found and is ready to start work but is waiting for a document from Howard University to be forwarded to DCPS. Dr. Froning is drafting a letter to the Chancellor that will include a request for help on expediting this situation.

III. COO Report

Mr. Howe reported that the contract with architectural firm Grimm + Parker will be signed this week. We will ask them for a schedule of site visits to their previous projects. Some parents have already visited Washington and Lee High School, which was described as containing beautiful spaces. Grimm + Parker will direct the process of receiving input from us; for instance, there may be regular bi-weekly meetings with the community.

There is heat in the gym as of yesterday.

The hardware is in for the new security doors and the cameras will be installed in mid-February. Shortly after that the new system will be up and running.

Very soon the re-plastering and painting of all the holes in the walls and ceilings will begin. The money will come from downtown. All bathrooms will be painted as well.

Fencing is going up at the corner of Chesapeake and Nebraska Ave. This corner was the only available space for pool construction trailers to be set up. A driveway will be constructed running between the old small parking lot off Nebraska and Fort Drive, running across the pool area. This drive will enable the trucks bringing cement, among other things, to queue up on Fort Drive rather than Nebraska Ave. The fenced in area on Chesapeake and Nebraska will also provide some additional faculty parking which will help compensate for the fact that soon the teachers will not be able to park in the back parking lot. A system will be worked out so that teachers may get a stipend for parking in commercial lots if enough spaces are lost.

Wilson has been assigned a project manager for emergency repairs. He will have a small fund for repairs. There is no formal procedure yet.

After we get the results of the DCPS audit we will be able to proceed with the plan for the COO to have more oversight of the business functions.

Telephones in the faculty lounges may be rewired. If that does not provide sufficient lines, we may get some cell phones which the teachers and counselors could sign out to call parents.

Ms. Callanen reported that there was a meeting with Mary Cheh, the Hughes Group architects and Siegel Construction about the pool construction, with the schedule including a June 2009 estimated time of completion.

IV. AP Committee update

Mr. Wilson reported that the Assistant Principals and counselors are the drivers for the upcoming grade level meetings. They will be encouraging parents to have their children sign up for rigorous courses. The grade level meetings have been very well publicized.

AP Night will be during the PTSA meeting on Feb. 13. On the same day or slightly earlier the students may have an AP and Honors course fair during an assembly so that they can talk with current AP students about the classes. One of the most important things that we can publicize to the prospective students and their parents is the support system for students in these courses. The supports include:

1. free tutoring resources (LAYC in the library after school)
2. possible addition of senior TAs for some of the classes
3. possible institution of study groups for every practicable AP class (maybe not English?) by the AP teachers on the first day of class so that all students feel supported immediately
4. pairing students with student mentors (similar to TAs but one-on-one, and a mentor could be taking the class along with the mentee)

Ms. Morton, the chair of the faculty AP committee, will be working with the department chairs on what the prerequisites for each class are. This will be translated into Spanish, and handed out on AP Night.

The point was made that the first few weeks of an AP class are critical for students to gain enough confidence to stay in the class, and that the plan should include support for students during that period.

AP Potential information will be available this week. AP Potential is determined by the College Board and indicates that the student has a 50% chance of getting a 3, 4 or 5 on the AP exam. In fact, 47% of our AP students get a 3, 4 or 5 on their exams. There is a 2–3 hour training for interpreting AP Potential.

The WISP academy's requirement that all its 10th graders take AP Human Geography was discussed. Apparently some teachers feel that the students should better understand what they are getting into, and actually commit themselves to do the work. At the same time, the teachers need to understand that achievement includes the student gaining more knowledge of the subject and having the experience of taking the exam, even if he/she only gets a 1. At Coolidge, every 11th grader is now required to take AP US History. It should be recognized that at Wilson even regular classes can be challenging and rewarding. Mr. Samuels felt that having APs migrate downward to the 10th grade is not a great idea – many 15-year-olds are not developmentally ready for the classes. On the other hand, with the exception of Human Geography, the 9th and 10th graders who are in APs are very unusual and have had to prove that they are ready. Ms. Wright pointed out that in some ways 10th graders are more open to the challenges of an AP class.

It was suggested that we reinstate the previous practice of having students obtain the signatures of their sending teachers in order to register for APs. This signature process can be helpful for the receiving teacher when he/she does not know the student. Ms. Gibson will ask the department chairs how they feel about this. The point was made that teachers should not have the ability to deny access to an AP class just because a student did not have a good experience in one class. Perhaps a conversation between the sending and receiving teacher should be required.

V. AYP Planning

Attendance – Ms. Gibson wants a list of parents who would be willing to pick up 10th grade students and drive them to Wilson on the days of the DCCAS exams. This recruiting effort will begin the 2nd week of February. The list of 10th graders who have been at Wilson since October 5th is still being verified by central administration (Erin McGoldrick). An indication of our unplanned growth is that there were 372 10th graders Oct. 5th, and now there are 407.

The PTSA Executive Board would like to offer incentives for attendance during the days of the DCCAS. One idea is to enter every attending 10th grader into a drawing for something like a gift card. It would be best if one student from every homeroom would win a certificate. The homeroom teachers need to tell the students why it is so important for them to take the exams. There was also talk of rewarding something special to the homeroom with the highest attendance.

VI. Academic Committee Reports

Math – Dr. Stroman stated that math students would benefit from a Saturday Academy to prepare for the DCCAS, especially since the percentage requirements for passing AYP will be higher this year. [Dr. Froning later learned that the school system will be running a Saturday Academy, but only for elementary school students.]

English – Ms. Grymes reported that 86 students have been identified as being able to score at the Proficient or Advanced level with a little focused tutoring. The English Department has started to pull out students to work on their specific issues. This is happening by Ms. Grymes and other willing teachers giving up their planning periods to meet with students.

ESL – It was reported by Dr. Froning that ESL Liaison, Carmen Carerra, is concerned about whether or not the ESL department is focusing on those students who are in danger of missing the new AYP cutoff, if the ESL students are included this year. We should assume that there is a cohort of ESL (i.e., 40 or more students is the cutoff) which will be tested this year. It might be helpful if Mr. Spadafor would attend some English departmental meetings. Ms. Plumb (an ESL teacher at Eaton) and Mr. Wilson will meet with him to familiarize him with what diagnostic material is available online from the DC BAS testing of our students.

Counseling – Ms. Sampson and Ms. Samuels met with Jon Shea. The 11th grade counselor has been identified and is available but cannot start work because central administration needs a paper from Howard proving her certification. The mandate from downtown that all 9th, 10th and 11th graders will have their 4-year, 3-year and 2-year plans by the end of January will be difficult to achieve, especially when there is no 11th grade counselor. In the near future 75-85 seniors will be informed that they will not be graduating. About 50 of that number will be able to participate in the graduation ceremony if they take night or summer classes to fulfill their requirements. Central has changed its position on whether or not students can take, concurrently in night school, courses which have prerequisites which the students are taking during the day. Students will now be allowed to do this.

The counseling department is planning a meeting about Historically Black Colleges, and they are also planning a May meeting to encourage families to visit colleges over the summer.

VII. Budget Committee

The budget needs to be in early this year, despite the fact that our population estimate is likely to be off. Alex Wilson reported that we have enrolled 14 additional students since Jan. 1st, and about 60 since October 5th. We are planning to have 375 in each class next year for a total of 1500. There will be 75 students from out of boundary (15 per academy). There have been record numbers of visitors at our open houses. Mr. Wilson reminded us that DCPS policy is that students who move during the school year are to finish their present year where they are, then transfer the next fall. Failure to follow this policy has resulted in overcrowding and disruption in our classrooms. With 60 extra students we should also pursue extra funding for more counseling services. We would like equalization to result in more teachers when our population goes up (we could easily use 3 more teachers). In addition, our ELL and Special Ed numbers are up, and those students come with funding different from the regular ed students. Dr. Froning will draft a letter to the Chancellor about this issue and will run it by the LSRT and Ms. Williams for approval.

VIII. Restructuring

Dr. Froning will give a grid (worked on by Jude Landis) of proposals of the restructuring proposal to the faculty when the small groups have completed their work. She feels that the grid format will be accepted by central because that was how they preferred the Local School Plan to be formatted. She said that so far, 40-50 people have attended each Think Tank meeting. The Quality School Review will take place at Wilson on January 23rd. Student and staff focus groups will meet with the reviewers during the day. In addition, there will be classroom observations and document reviews. The LSRT will be meeting with reviewers (some of whom are Wilson parents and teachers) from 2:45 – 3:15 p.m. A parent focus group will be identified by the PTSA co-presidents and will meet at 4 pm. After the Review a report will be written and will be given, @ Feb. 1, to Ms. Williams for her approval. It will be sent to the Chancellor @Feb. 4.

IX. Principal Selection Committee

The committee is going to try to solicit more resumes. Ms. Giffin is personally contacting schools in the DC area to recruit more candidates.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Whitener