

Woodrow Wilson High School LSRT Minutes
March 11, 2008

Present:

Administration: Hattie Moore

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

WTU rep: Robert Zugby

Parent reps: Mary Froning, Carmen Carrera, Chuck Samuels, Vanessa Stroman

PTSA liaison: Sarah Whitener

Additional member: Eileen Plumb

Community rep: Erie Sampson

Student rep: Patricia Liverpool

Guests: John Howe (Wilson COO), Mai Abdul-Rahman (parent), Art Siebens, Elaine Smith, Alex Wilson

The meeting was called to order at 4:40 p.m.

I. The minutes of the LSRT meeting of February 12 were adopted.

II. Principal's Report

Ms. Williams was ill so Mary Froning reported on her behalf that Wilson has received 2 extra security people for the hours from 6:30 – 10. John Howe had a different understanding and will check with Ms. Williams about it.

Mr. Whittle, who led our Quality School Review, will be on site as a school improvement facilitator from DCPS. His desk is located in the Vice Principal's office across from the Main office.

Our restructuring proposal has been sent to Tracy Martin and Chancellor Rhee, while the course sequencing memo has been sent to Sherry Ulery. There is no feedback yet.

A. Safety and Security

The new security doors are doing better. John Howe believes we could use 5 x-ray machines, although Mary pointed out that if all 3 of our present machines are working we do not have a backlog of students. It was suggested that we keep 1 machine at the gym for the use of the 9th graders who have lockers as well as classes there. We should also keep one in the horseshoe area for the disabled. The seniors went through the front door on Monday with no significant delay.

After the mention of firecrackers being set off at a 10th grade assembly last week, the comment was made that we should have security guards and administrators who are effective disciplinarians present at all assemblies.

Ms. Wright mentioned that there seem to be teachers assigned with new security tasks, and the rest of the faculty should be told who they are and what they are assigned to do.

Mr. Howe is updating the security cameras in the hallways and elsewhere. They could only focus 1/3 of the way down the hallways, and there was only one camera covering the whole gym. Updating the cameras will be paid for by the DCPS capital budget.

The faculty meeting which concluded just before this LSRT meeting was largely focused on safety and security, and was run by Jeff Schultz. Bob Zugby reported that we will probably be keeping one lunch period, as long as everything goes well. The preexisting agreements between the SBMC and the administration, and the SCAC and the administration, concerning student behavior and tardiness, will begin immediately. Electronics, hats, and tardiness will be discussed at assemblies this Thursday. Disciplinary referrals will go to Dr. Siebens. Responses to disciplinary actions will be expected within 48 hours. Although teachers have heard this before, the situation is different this time: Mr. Whittle has been assigned to our school to help improve discipline, and if improvements aren't seen soon, then the Chancellor's office will impose more severe restrictions on us.

We discussed the possibility that students have not played a large enough part in the disciplinary procedures. On the contrary, it was noted that students were a part of creating the policies at Wilson, but the policies have not been carried out as intended.

The assemblies on Thursday will be led by Mr. Schultz. The student rep thought that there may be a bad reaction to the new regimen, and suggested that additional security officers should be present. Others felt that administrators who were effective disciplinarians should be there as well. Ms. Wright reminded us that the students who are causing problems are a fraction of the student body. A certain number of the same students continuously rotate through the disciplinary process.

It's important that the expectations for the behavior of all students are the same. When the teachers see that they have support from the administration, then they will be more likely to take an active role in discipline.

Ms. Stroman felt that constructive detention must be in place before the school can deal effectively with the misbehaving students. There has to be a place where they can go where they can do something constructive (homework, read a book, write an essay on the student's own future, etc.) without disturbing their peers. Now the only recourse for teachers with a rowdy student is to take the student to Mr. Whittle. It was stated that some teachers are more in favor of suspensions than in-house detention. But different actions should result in different outcomes, and we want to help students learn to modify their behavior. Mr. Bargeman has an active program of constructive detention for 9th graders.

Mai Abdul-Rahman said that suspensions and expulsions do not work. As an example, she said that the offense which resulted in her son being beaten was that he inadvertently walked in front of another student in September while that student was trying to take a photo with his cell phone. This perceived disrespect resulted in an assault on her son because the student did not know how to deal with his anger. He was also an overage 9th grader, turning 18 in March, and was probably particularly sensitive to slights. We need to teach students what is possible and how to make choices. Mai feels that the adults enabled him by not holding him accountable for his actions.

It was mentioned that the Twilight program is helpful for the overage students, but it starts at 3 pm every day, and the students are not in a program before then. They need to be engaged all day. Many of them would benefit from instruction in English so that when they go back to the classroom they have more confidence.

Mr. Martel stated a statistic that 70% of the students who go to Choice and return to Coolidge said that they wish the structure at Choice was present at Coolidge – they prefer structure to lack of structure.

B. Update on Special Ed/ELL Hires

We did have a new Special Ed teacher for a few days but HR took him/her back. This also happened with a counselor. We are still supposed to receive 2 new Special Ed teachers, 2 ELL teachers and 2 aides for our visually impaired students.

III. Facilities/Modernization Update

John Howe reported that Grimm+Parker architects have put a survey online, and teachers, parents and students need to fill it out. The link is: www.gparch.com/links/wwhs/index.html. The deadline is March 21. It takes more than 10 minutes to complete it.

The new security doors have been installed. Mr. Howe hopes to get all faculty and staff card readers so that they can enter.

All electrical work for the AC units has been completed. As of May 1, all classrooms will have AC. A huge diesel generator will be placed outside the building to run the units – they should not be very loud and will not disturb the classes. Mr. Howe is as happy as anyone that the AC will be working soon because he promised that he would not get AC in his own office until every classroom had it first!

We are about 30% of the way through wall plastering, and the work will happen at night and over spring break in order to speed it up. Turner will also work at those times.

Groundbreaking for the pool will be Thursday from 10-12. Parking for teachers may be set up near the trailers on Nebraska Ave., or teachers may be compensated for parking in public lots. Whole Foods did not agree to let teachers park in their lot, but it was suggested that Mr. Howe try Best Buy since their lot is usually half empty and only costs \$10 a day.

Mr. Howe will look into cleaning the dirty windows.

The additional custodian we were promised has not materialized. We have 8 but need 3 more to handle the square footage.

Mr. Howe will be taking over responsibility for building use agreements. Right now, a group like AU does not pay Wilson for the use of our building after school; they pay DCPS Realty. By comparison, we pay AU \$4,000 for the use of Bender Arena at graduation.

It was reported that one of the copy machines does not need a code to operate, and so it is being used by visitors from AU. Mr. Howe will look into it.

IV. Plan for Meeting DC CAS Attendance Goals

Ms. Miller was not present so Sarah Whitener reported on what the PTSA Executive Board had in mind for meeting attendance goals. The Board was not in favor of any incentives which would interfere with class time, such as field trips or getting out of final exams for perfect test attendance. The Board was in favor of holding a raffle in each testing room (10th grade English classes) and each student who attended all the testing days would get one raffle ticket. On the last day of the testing, the teacher would

do the drawing, and there would be one winner in every class. Those students might then go to the School Bank and choose a prize – gift cards to Robek’s, Starbucks, a movie theater or Best Buy, or a Metro pass for the month of May (worth \$26). Tickets to the spring dance are another idea, but it was remembered that dances have been cancelled in the past, and require adequate numbers of chaperones, and good behavior from the participants. Mary Froning said that she would meet with Ms. Williams and the PTSA co-presidents to discuss this.

Ms. Gibson said that she would be coordinating parents who offer to pick up students who need to make up tests. [She sent a notice out on the listserv shortly after the meeting.] The testing days are April 22 – May 2.

Alex Wilson has a list of 391 10th graders who need to take the test. There are an additional 13 students who have been reassigned to the 10th grade who need to be sorted out [this happened after the meeting]. Students who miss 21 days of school are withdrawn and will not be tested.

V. Academic Committee

English. Although Read 180, a reading intervention based program, was initially targeting a larger number of students, there are now only 5 students receiving help because of scheduling conflicts. Ms. Samuels is meeting with 3, Ms. Grymes with 1, and Ms. Cook with 1. The program is not for struggling readers but for those who, with a little intervention, could move up a level from Basic or from Proficient. The students at the lowest level are not receiving extra attention at this time. Ms. Grymes said that Read 180 may not be at Wilson next year, and so far there is no feedback on it.

Math. Ms. Stroman reported that Dr. Smith said that an adequate number of math workbooks will not be provided by the school system. It was suggested that the teachers go online to get questions from the DCBAS test. Although it was suggested that the PTSA help with xeroxing the workbooks, it seemed an unlikely solution because of copyright issues, the copy machines at Wilson can’t handle that volume of material, and the students are not even allowed to write in the workbooks.

Dr. Smith stopped in at the meeting and said that she would write up a description of how the math department is going to “count down” to the DCCAS.

Science. This year the DCCAS science test will be given but will not count toward AYP. The test subjects include genetics, ecology and the human body. Ms. Gibson and other science teachers are giving students about 5 questions a week for practice as well as knowledge. Ms. Gibson is also making a handout for all 10th grade students on the systems of the human body. The science department is eager to see which preparations help and which don’t, because last year’s scores were not particularly good. Next year’s scores should be better because almost all 10th graders will have completed biology as 9th graders at Wilson.

Special Ed. There was no one present from the Special Ed department, but we discussed the fact that there are not enough special ed students this year for that cohort to count toward AYP (the minimum is 40). It was stated that special ed students can be double counted in that they are counted in special ed (if there are 40 or more students) and then can also be counted in another subgroup such as Asian or Latino.

ELL. There are 46 ELL students. Carmen Carrera has still not heard from Ms. Williams or the ELL department on their preparations for the DCCAS. Mr. Martel

suggested that she send the email to him and he will forward it to the ELL department. It was suggested that the LSRT also send a message to Ms. Williams asking to update us on the ELL department.

Counseling. Mr. Booker, the 11th grade counselor, has returned and is working on course selection for his students. He will be meeting with the students in English classes next week to develop their IGPs. The 11th graders are also preparing for the May 3rd SATs. They were given prep books last year, and the test is free. Ms. Geisler and Ms. Hanson have told them that there is a free online test prep. They can even have practice essays graded online.

Mr. Powell is almost done with IGPs for the 10th graders, and the 9th graders are almost done.

For the second time this year, parents will be notified if their 12th grader is in danger of not graduating. Some will be able to fulfill requirements over the summer or in night classes at Roosevelt.

There is a push to expand AVID from 2 classes this year to 5 classes next year. Proof of community services must be in to Mr. Merlos by May 1st.

VI. Brainstorming re scheduling issues for next year

Issues that were discussed were: the need for a committee to help teachers establish a new elective; the need to establish study halls in each department (teachers were interested in running them); the need to establish regular math labs (we need Dr. Smith's input on this); the need for professional development over the summer to prepare for the students needing extra support next year. We also discussed the need to establish a scheduling committee. The following people were suggested as necessary members: Jon Shea, Heleny Cook, Elaine Smith, Erich Martel, department chairs, and Alex Wilson. Mary Froning will write to Ms. Williams about this urgent need.

Mr. Martel announced that there is a Quality School Review feedback session offered by Tracy Martin at Bell on Thursday from 5 – 7.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm. The next LSRT meeting will be held April 8th.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Whitener