

Woodrow Wilson High School LSRT Minutes
April 8, 2008

Present:

Administration: Jackie Williams

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 members: Greg Bargeman Eileen Plumb

Community rep: Erie Sampson

Guests: John Howe (Wilson COO), Venetta Sloan-Akwara, Maureen Thompson, Helane Miller, Jiliann Mode, Mary Giffin, Ajibade Da Silva-Olaghere

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

I. The minutes of the LSRT meeting of March 11 were adopted, with the following changes: in the description of the incident involving her son, Mai Abdul-Rahman said that the incident was not a “fight” but an assault, and the month in which her son inadvertently stepped in front of the assailant’s camera was September, not October. The name of the assailant’s previous school should not have been included.

II. Principal’s Report

Teacher Vacancies

Mary Froning and Ms. Williams sent an email on January 25, 2008, to the Chancellor asking for equalization of our budget, particularly in the areas of Special Ed and ESL. An audit revealed that in order to be in compliance, we needed to add 2 Special Ed teachers, 2 ESL teachers, and 2 dedicated aides. We now have a new Special Ed teacher, Ms. Jiliann Mode, who is a graduate student at George Mason University and will be supporting students in their English classes. Ms. Sloan-Akwara announced that a new ESL teacher is now on board, Mr. Mesfin Hailegebriel. He is from Addis Ababa and is a native speaker of Anharic. Next year the ESL Department will be adding Ms. Sarah Geisler, who is now a counselor for the 12th grade. A new counselor will be sought. Two dedicated aides—contract employees through Tamah, LLC—have been provided to help our visually impaired students. [At the April 9 PTSA meeting, the new social studies teacher, Joe Winpisinger, was introduced, along with Mr. Hailegebriel.]

Ms. Maureen Thompson has been appointed by the College Board as the new coordinator for the SAT Reasoning Test (formerly SAT I), so the test can be given at Wilson in May and June. She is paid by the College Board and will be trained by them at the end of April. She had formerly been an SAT Subject Test coordinator at Wilson. Concerns were expressed about the bad experiences previous students have had taking the SAT at Wilson (e.g., students were made to stand outside for 45 minutes in cold temperatures before they were let in the building, restrooms were not unlocked, and the testing was so poorly proctored that tests were invalidated and had to be retaken.). The hope was expressed that the proctors would be better prepared and more responsible.

Safety and Security

There have been no lunchtime incidents since the one-day lunch lockdown on March 31. An intramural basketball tournament is being held in the gym; the gym is locked when the tournament is not underway. There is a schedule for teachers and staff to cover different areas of the building on a rotating basis. Coach G is collecting names of volunteers and has 17 additional teachers to add to the schedule. The schedule will be followed until the end of the year.

Although some suspensions have been ordered recently, they were not due to violence. There has been a new crackdown on the use of iPods, MP3 players and cell phones during school. The teachers and staff have been collecting them when they see them and have called home to make parents aware of the rule. So far there have been no repeat offenders. Mr. Bargeman reported that there have been some slight disruptions in the 9th grade, but they have been what he called “normal.”

Mr. Martel asked if there is a way to enter this data into STARS so that we can track it over time. Ms. Williams answered that there is such a data field in STARS but that we don't use it now and need training on it. Ms. Miller is inputting suspensions, however. Ms. Williams will follow up with Mr. Thornton, head of HawkOne, to get access to his data. SCAC has requested that teachers get a list of suspended students along with the length of the suspension, and a do-not-admit list so that they are better able to handle situations. Coach Williams needs to send that information to Ms. Miller. Mary Froning said that she would contact Ms. Michelle Johnson, contract officer over HawkOne and would help encourage Mr. Thornton to send us the reports on incidents as they occur.

Our Instructional Superintendent, Pat Tucker, has informed Ms. Williams that DCPS is going to start a credit recovery program at Wilson as early as next week. Through this program, students will be able to make up credits which might allow them to graduate on time. Ms. Gibson saw this program in place at Overbrook High School near Philadelphia. Students there had to take make-up classes either before school or at night. DCPS would fund such a program at Wilson. Already 3 Wilson teachers have signed up to teach in the program. The program will require that the students attend as many hours as the original class that they failed. Only Wilson students will be enrolled, and the hope is that many of the overage students will enroll. There may be a Wilson coordinator on site.

III. DC CAS

Incentives for DC CAS. Ms. Miller reported on her proposed incentive plan which includes extra credit bonuses and door prize drawings for attendance. There also will be prizes for 100% attendance homerooms for students and teachers. Special accommodations are being made for ESL and special ed students. Ms. Miller and Mr. Martel exchanged views as to whether AP teachers with 10th grade homerooms should be required to proctor tests. The Principal shall make the determination.

Transportation for DC CAS. Ms. Gibson reported on the transportation plan, which focuses on careful monitoring of the list of students who fail to appear for the first days of testing and then following up with communications and transportation assistance.

IV. Facilities/Modernization Report

John Howe reported that the air conditioning work is on target for mid-May. He is still working on finding new parking places for the teachers, to replace the ones at the back of the building lost due to construction. The groundbreaking ceremony for the pool has not occurred but digging has started. A group of teachers and staff went with architects from Grimm+Parker to visit Washington-Lee High School and Kenmore School in Arlington. They were amazed at what they saw, including a beautiful auditorium, a black box theater and orchestra pit. The PTSA meeting tomorrow night will feature a 1 ½ hour presentation by the architects to the Wilson parents.

V. Academic Committee/DC CAS related issues

English – Ms. Grymes reported on her experience with Read180, which should be redirected at students 2 grade levels or more behind, but this year is being directed at kids on the cusp of Proficient or Advanced (per DCPS direction). The small classes have been very effective.

Math – Dr. Stroman noted that Dr. Smith reported that she and Principal Williams have a plan in place.

Science – Ms. Gibson reported that biology teachers meet each Wednesday to strategize and develop model test questions

ESL – Ms. Carrera reported that a new teacher has been on board for one week. All students were reviewed in January and special testing accommodations are being made.

Special Ed – Mr. Bargeman stated that, in his view, the math for special ed inclusion model is not working and that there need to be pullout opportunities. Others agreed and Ms. Plumb added that the lack of emphasis on proper calculation skills and learning math tables in elementary school adds to the challenge.

Counseling – No report

VI. Restructuring Proposal Summary for 4-10 meeting. Dr. Froning led the group through a draft summary or distillation of our proposal, as requested by Downtown (final summary attached). She noted that her understanding is that the budget we will soon receive for comment is not based on the weighted student formula, and it is unclear whether it will include any of the additional funds our proposal or even what DCPS mandates require.

VII. Recruiting for LSRT for next year. Dr. Froning stated that soon faculty and parents will need to consider candidates for next year's LSRT.

VIII. Data Requests re: graduation. Messrs. Zugby and Martel described the SCAC requests to the Principal which is under discussion.

IX. Principal Selection Update. Mr. Samuels reported that the Principal Selection Panel has seen a number of good resumes and is hoping to start interviews in the next few weeks. We are working closely with Downtown and are still advocating some type of Wilson meet-and-greet and reception for the semi-finalist candidates

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Whitener and Chuck Samuels

