

Woodrow Wilson High School LSRT
Minutes
June 3, 2008

Present:

Administration:

Faculty reps: Erich Martel, Lisa Grymes, Sandy Wright, Mary Ball, Julie Caccamise

WTU rep: Robert Zugby

Parent reps: Mary Froning, Carmen Carrera, Vanessa Stroman, Verna Clayborne,
Margot Berkey

PTSA liaison: Sarah Whitener

Additional Member: Greg Bargeman

Guest: John Howe (Wilson COO)

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 pm.

I. The minutes of the May meeting were adopted. The suggestion was made that, instead of using square brackets [] to indicate something that was said or happened after the meeting, the information be entered in a footnote format. Sarah will try this out. [Brackets will have to be used – to be posted on the listserv, the minutes have to be copied, and the footnote format would not copy easily.]

II. Farewell to leaving members and welcome to new members

Mary Froning welcomed the new members to the LSRT (Mary Ball, Julie Caccamise, Verna Clayborne, and Margot Berkey), and congratulated Mr. Martel for his election as WTU building rep to replace Mr. Zugby. She then thanked the members present who were leaving (Bob Zugby, Sandy Wright, and Vanessa Stroman). Bob Zugby and Chuck Samuels (in absentia) were presented with gift certificates and cards as thank yous for their tremendous service to the Wilson LSRT. Sarah Whitener read the following:

Bob Zugby—Bob has served on the LSRT for 8 – 10 years. In this role, as well as many others at Wilson, he has shown great wisdom and judgment in moving projects forward in a civilized manner. He has been able to keep negotiations going when others couldn't. In this difficult year, when there was plenty of bad news being covered in the media, one constant source of good news was the accomplishments of the WMC. We have Bob Zugby to thank for that. When the autonomy effort was halted by one vote, Bob decided to make sure that it didn't die, and because of him, the WMC was born. We all owe him a debt of gratitude, and wish him well in his retirement.

Chuck Samuels—Chuck served on the LSRT for 4 years and was chairman for 3. He was deeply involved in the work of exploring autonomy, and went to countless meetings with people throughout the school to thoroughly understand how our needs could be better met with more control over our budget. As chairman of the LSRT he made it his practice to collect feedback from all stakeholders before making a decision. Chuck also found ways through new initiatives of the LSRT to support all students.

III. Election of Chair and Secretary

Mary Froning was elected chair of the LSRT. Sarah Whitener, appointed by the PTSA as the LSRT liaison to the PTSA, was elected secretary of the LSRT.

IV. Appointment of 2 additional members (2) and a community member

Greg Bargeman, Fred Carter (a Wilson parent), and Rene Meddaugh (a special ed. teacher at Wilson) were put forward as possible additional members of the LSRT. Greg Bargeman served as an additional member last school year and would take an administrator's slot on the LSRT. Ms. Meddaugh is knowledgeable about IDEA and is on the special ed. task force of the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE). She has attended many of this year's LSRT meetings and could fill in a gap in representation of special ed needs on the LSRT.

Ideas for community rep were Eileen Plumb, who served last year and whose daughter was a 2008 grad; an unnamed representative of the Asian LEAD program known by Mary Ball; Norgie Bigger; and the two "roving leaders" who have been working at Wilson this year. Members agreed to contact the persons mentioned and provide resumes in a parallel format to Mary Froning by June 17.

V. Facilities Update

John Howe gave his facilities report next.

--The architects are finishing up their preparatory work to completing the education specifications for the modernized Wilson building by meeting with the visual arts and performing arts departments, the counselors, science department and administrators.

--The building is now fully air conditioned, with some of the old units that are not functioning properly being rotated out.

--The main focus on facilities for the summer is the buff and scrub project and the summer "Blitz." Anyone with plastering and painting needs should contact him.

--He is also working on clocks, and on new tables for the conference room.

--The Lowe's grant came through to rehab the guidance suite.

--Rooms L13 and L14 need lockers, and they will be installed before school starts.

--The women's bathrooms will get better doors.

--A functional refrigerator will be put in the faculty lounge.

--Water fountains on the 2nd floor should be operational by September.

There was some discussion about whether or not the bathrooms on the 3rd floor can be locked because of a lack of supervision. It was agreed that this was an administrative issue, not a facilities issue, and the new administration will handle it.

Julie Caccamise requested a classroom door which can be locked from the inside, but that may not happen until we get a new building. There is a deadbolt lock on the outside of an L room, and Mr. Howe will take care of that, even if it means buying a new door.

VI. Principal Selection

Deputy Chancellor Kaya Henderson told Mary Froning right before the meeting that central was very close to an agreement with a candidate. The delay had been salary negotiations. [Although the referenced candidate and DCPS did not come to terms, a different person was interviewed on June 11 and agreed to serve. The new principal, Peter Cahall, will begin work on July 10.]

The plan was for a new principal to interview all teachers by next week. The backup plan if the principal is still not on board by then, is that interviews would be conducted by John Davis and Tom Whittle. The LSRT recommended that existing evaluations not be used. They are either non-existent or of questionable validity. The personnel committee includes Ms. Benjamin, Ms. Sloane-Akwara, and Ms. Watts-Martin. The LSRT thinks that this committee should be involved in the process. There were criteria mentioned that could be used besides an interview—such as benchmarks, failure rates, and portfolios. The teachers would have a chance to explain demonstrable failures in any of these areas. The personnel committee would not be allowed to look at the personal files of the teachers, however.

The final agreement was that Dr. Froning (Mr. Martel requested to be included as WTU rep) would talk to the person who would be doing the interviewing (either the new principal or Mr. Thomas Whittle, a former turnaround principal who has been working at Wilson since March 2008). A summary of the process to be used by that person would be transmitted to the rest of the LSRT. If it seemed fair and reasonable, we would defer. If there were some concerns, we would ask for a meeting to discuss the process. [What actually happened was that from June 11-13, Mr. Whittle interviewed all of the faculty, with an observer present from the Personnel Committee.]

VII. Budget Issues

Dr. Froning related that the categorizations in the budget formula mandated by the central office did not provide for personnel necessary to manage a school the size of Wilson. However, the Petition for Change meeting necessary to argue moving funding from one personnel category to another had not yet been scheduled, pending a decision on a new principal.

There was a brief discussion of the drafts of the Other than Personal Services (OTPS) and Title I parts of the B Budget. Dr. Froning emphasized that no decisions had been made and agreed to email the current breakdowns so staff members could ensure that their fellow teachers had input into these important parts of the budget. Generally, though, it was clear that there was consensus for new copiers for the school, whether that be

provided by the central office or from our local budget (through leasing). Title I monies would focus on students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch, particularly in the areas of Reading and Math.

There was no consensus on summer math programs. A decision on support of the Summer Math Enrichment program (LEAP) was tabled pending Dr. Elaine Smith's response to the questions by the PTSA (joined by the LSRT) re: the effectiveness of the program in increasing the participation of students of color in advanced math classes (the stated goal). A 3-week summer math program for students whose grades were just short of failing was also being considered. [After seeing the data on students attending the summer math enrichment program, and their outcomes, the PTSA Executive Board later voted in favor of funding the program. Dr. Smith reduced the scope of the program from 3 teachers to 2.]

VIII. Standing LSRT committee proposal

It was agreed that we would establish standing committees to address the following areas in more depth than has been this year:

Special Education
English as a Second Language
Diversity

IX. Summer Bridge status

Mr. Bargeman indicated he was told that this would not be implemented until next summer.

X. Orientation for 9th grade students and families

Ms. Berkey, who reported considerable experience in orientation programs, distributed a draft plan for orientation of the 9th grade families. It was suggested that it be on Saturdays, one for each of the three teams (although depending on family plans, it would be flexible). Ms. Berkey and Mr. Bargeman (Freshman Academy Coordinator) agreed to discuss this further. The funding would be minimal, but the source could not be identified until the budget negotiations have been completed.

XI. 10th grade teams

It was agreed that while it would be good to get a start on 10th grade teams for next school year, without an identified principal to make decisions, it may be too late to implement. The proposal was for teams of English and social studies teachers as the least complicated way to begin the implementation.

XII. AP courses for 2008-9

Mr. Martel expressed his concerns that students continue to be enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses without proper foundation. There was no time to discuss this, but it was agreed that this would be an area to address with the new principal in the face of recommendations by the AP Committee that there be standards developed and implemented.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Froning and Sarah Whitener