

Woodrow Wilson High School LSRT  
Minutes  
June 17, 2008

Present:

Administration: Pete Cahall

Support staff: Hattie Moore

Faculty Reps: Julie Caccamise, Mary Ball, Gloria Gibson

WTU rep: Erich Martel

Parent reps: Mary Froning (chair), Margot Berkey (via phone)

PTSA liaison: Sarah Whitener

Guests: Greg Bargeman, Jon Shea

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 pm.

**I. Welcome to new Principal, Peter Cahall, and introductions**

Our new principal, Pete Cahall, was introduced. He described himself as a listener who works by collaboration. His goal is to do what is in the best interests of students and student achievement. He is excited to be at Wilson because he sees the school as one which has all the necessary pieces to become a model school. He is very happy to be back in a school as opposed to working purely in an administrative role, and he looks forward to daily contact with students, teachers and parents. He is committed to Wilson for the long run.

**II. Appointments of 2 Other and 1 Community Member to LSRT**

No decisions on appointments to the LSRT were made, but the list of names for 2 appointed members and 1 community member includes: Fred Carter, Norgie Bigger, Catalina Talero, Maureen Thompson, and a member of the Roving Leaders. We learned from Mary Ball that the DCPS job descriptions for math coach and literacy coach include LSRT membership. So Mary Froning will try to find out if our new coaches will take up two of these slots or if they are new, additional positions on all restructuring school LSRTs.

**III. Budget Issues**

Different views of how we might tailor the current DCPS budget formulation to Wilson (which would then be presented to DCPS) set forth in a memo by Mr. Martel were discussed. Comparisons were made. Mr. Cahall will study the budgets in the near future.

Margot Berkey said that it is a citywide problem in the restructuring high schools that the positions the principals rely on daily are not described or included in the staffing models. She stated that all high schools between 800 and 2000 students (Wilson has 1550) were given exactly the same budget formulation. There was consensus that in particular this does not address the support staff needs of the school. Mr. Cahall said that during restructuring, his goals will be safety, good staff morale, and good classroom instruction. He said that we have to be ready to redistribute resources and energy to help the students who need it most. For instance, we have to be cognizant of class sizes at both the

advanced and below basic levels. He stated that all teachers should have advanced and grade level classes.

The school psychologist is funded by our local school budget right now, and because of this, she can serve all our students, not just special ed students. Keeping her requires a slight change of the formula budget proposed by DCPS.

#### **IV. Summer Transition**

##### **Faculty changes**

Mr. Martel listed the standing committees that affect faculty: the SCAC, made of 6 elected members and the WTU rep, and the Personnel committee, made of 3 elected faculty members and a parent. [The Cabinet consists of the department chairs.] The teachers' contract, which ran out last September, is still being negotiated.

Mr. Cahall will be hiring his administrative team and counselors next week. He will be solely responsible for hiring and firing from now on, although his official start date is July 10. He will be on vacation July 1 – 9.

**Appeals process.** Mr. Cahall did not participate in the reconstitution of 11 staff members. Those persons will have an opportunity to appeal the decision, in an interview with the principal over the next week or so. Mr. Cahall's decision is final and will have the backing of Chancellor Rhee. Mr. Cahall, when asked about receiving positive parent input about particular people, said that if he reviewed that material he would feel obligated to investigate the negative information that led to their being placed on the list to not be invited back to Wilson. He expressed a preference for making the decisions through an interview process whereby those staff members would speak for themselves about how they can help move the school forward toward meeting our goals under No Child Left Behind.

**Administrative structure.** Mr. Cahall said he is exploring the options with regard to the administration of the school. He is leaning toward keeping some of the Coordinators for this transition year, plus hiring 2 Assistant Principals. He would give the Coordinators more authority and more responsibility, but believed it might be difficult to proceed without the institutional memory of those people. He would evaluate people during the year and perhaps move to a different model next year. He is comfortable with a system where there is one AP in charge of management and student behavior, and one AP in charge of curriculum and instruction. He needs to have a better definition of the role of academy coordinators, and has already spoken with two of them.

We briefly discussed the new double periods of math and English, the 8-period and 7-period day schedules, and the effectiveness of Read 180 and Accelerated Math. No decisions were made.

**1-day orientations for 9<sup>th</sup> grade families.** Mr. Bargeman and Margot Berkey have been working on an orientation plan for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, which will possibly involve a Saturday meeting for each of the three 9<sup>th</sup> grade teams. Mr. Cahall asked them to submit a

proposal and said that he will support the orientation and try to fund it. Some money might be available in the Administrative Premium part of the budget.

**1-week high school prep for FRL students.** This would be for students who scored at Basic or Below Basic on the DCCAS, who can begin to be identified after July 14 when DC CAS data is scheduled for public release. It would serve to orient them to high school student skills and expectations, and also let them know that the school cares about them and their success. To enhance the message and encourage attendance, there would be fun activities included. Strategies to reach these students (and their families) and ensure their attendance were discussed.

**Professional development for teachers of double period math and English.** Funding might be available from Title 1 monies.

#### **V. Scheduling/Staffing issues**

**Changes in 9<sup>th</sup> grade Science.** Double science will not be offered in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. And although a few weeks ago the school was told that all 9<sup>th</sup> graders would be taking Conceptual Physics instead of Biology, Ms. Gibson and Jon Shea explained that now 9<sup>th</sup> graders can take Biology, Conceptual Physics, or Environmental Science. The science department uses the GALT test to help them place students in classes appropriate to their development (For instance, Physics requires more conceptual thinking while Environment Science is more observationally based, concrete and allows more practice in forming hypotheses and testing.)

**Determining teacher hiring based on need.** Teachers will be hired to fill slots based on student population and restructuring needs. Mr. Cahall wants to ensure that if there are small AP classes, this does not result in large grade level classes. The first draft of the master schedule is close to being completed, according to Mr. Shea. Mr. Cahall will review it carefully. He pledged that all schedules will be available the first day of school.

**VI. 10<sup>th</sup> grade teams.** This discussion was tabled.

**VII. Split lunch period.** Mr. Cahall is in favor of the single lunch period if it contributes to student achievement. He emphasized that a single lunch period needs to be well structured to be safe. This will be studied further.

We discussed the idea of moving the LSRT meetings to before school, and because the time then is limited (teachers have to be in their rooms by 8:30 am), we would hold two meetings a month instead of one. No decision was made.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Whitener