

Woodrow Wilson High School LSRT
Minutes
July 22, 2008

Present:

Administration: Pete Cahall

Faculty Reps: Julie Caccamise, Gloria Gibson

WTU Rep: Erich Martel

Parent Reps: Mary Froning (chair), Margot Berkey, Carmen Carrera, Verna Clayborne

PTSA Liaison: Sarah Whitener

Guests: Greg Bargeman, Hanna Mahon (student), Norgie Bigger, Jim Leonard, Harry Travis, Jeremy Singer, Maureen Thompson, Erica Ling, Frederick Carter, Charlette Butler, Mary Beth Waits

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 am.

I. Adoption of Minutes

The June minutes were adopted.

II. LSRT Appointments – Community and Additional

Margot Berkey and Erich Martel tried to determine the current requirements for the composition of our LSRT. They directed us to choose one community member, after which we could choose the “Other” members. Ms. Norgie Bigger, a candidate for community member, introduced herself. The candidate from Asian LEAD had to withdraw, but the program said they would try to send an observer to some of the meetings. Ms. Bigger was voted to be this year’s community rep.

In considering an additional member, several issues were raised. Mr. Bargeman was an additional member last year and could be named again. We have agreed that we need to have more representation from the Special Ed department and from the Asian community at Wilson. Mr. Martel will seek clarification on whether or not the new math and literacy coaches will take up our “other” slots on the LSRT. Members of the Roving Leaders have been suggested. We need to be cognizant of balancing parent and teacher voices on the LSRT as we bring in new appointments. It was agreed that we table the discussion of “other” members until the next meeting.

III. Determination of LSRT Schedule

Because some find the 7:30 am time difficult and others find the afternoon meeting time a challenge, it was decided that we hold the first, and main, LSRT meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of each month (when possible) at 4:30 pm. If at the end of that meeting another one is required, it will be held on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:30 am. Because of reconfigurations, the meeting may be moved from Room 124, but at least the meeting on August 5th at 4:30 p.m. will be held there.

The schedule for the year’s main meetings at 4:30 pm is: Sept. 9, Oct. 14, Nov. 4, Dec. 9, Jan. 13, Feb. 10, Mar. 17, Apr. 14, May 12, June 9.

IV. Principal's Report

a. Introduction of Administrative Team

Mr. Cahall introduced Mary Beth Waits and Charlette Butler, our new Assistant Principals. The third Assistant Principal is Jaime Merlos.

Mr. Cahall explained that he spent last week at the University of Virginia at a School Turnaround training. Principals from DC, Louisiana, Chicago and elsewhere attended. They learned about a tool for monitoring progress during the year – Scorecard. They developed action plans and refined the Local School Plan to two pages. Mr. Cahall is ready to set up project groups, through the LSRT and others, to tackle many different aspects of school life such as school attendance and tardiness, policies on hats and electronic devices, communications, and parent involvement. There will also be groups looking at issues such as math and reading assessment intervention and monitoring Honors/AP enrollment participation and performance, inclusion/co-teaching special ed. Mr. Cahall will be making a 90-day plan and Wilson will be visited in October by a representative from the UVA program. There will also be a 2 year plan. In January Mr. Cahall will take a team of 3 people to UVA for further training.

b. Vacancies/Hiring

Mr. Cahall is working as quickly as possible to fill over 20 vacancies, but can only work as fast as he is supported by the central office. He is still waiting to hear how Special Ed will be staffed and whether the four special ed teachers on our local budget include the teachers in self-contained classrooms [this was later clarified that self-contained classroom teachers are funded by the Office of the State Superintendent]. Ms. Berkey reported that Parents United and Mary Levy analyzed the staffing in the restructuring schools across the city and did not see how the staffing models would meet the needs of the schools. There isn't clarity on whether counselors are 10-, 11-, or 12-month employees. Mr. Cahall reported difficulty in getting clear answers from the central office, with the exception of the Chancellor.

At the time of the meeting: Four of five counselors had been hired. The science department was fully staffed. The math dept. needed 2 teachers. English and social studies were in good shape. We still needed 1 PE teacher, 1 Spanish teacher, and one Latin teacher. The 9th grade Academy was fully staffed. The College Bureau will be staffed.

c. Budget

Ms. Butler is working on the OTPS (Other Than Personnel) items in the budget and clarifying Title I and Title II requirements. The Twilight program might use Title I money, for instance. DCPS is in danger of losing that money if it isn't used according to Federal guidelines. Ms. Butler is also looking for appropriate sources of funds for the Jump Start program for rising 9th graders and the 9th grade orientations.

The total OTPS budget for this year is \$338,000, of which we can use \$10,000 until October 1st. Each department would therefore get \$700. This presents a challenge

because two departments, science and art, have more expenditures to make at the beginning of the year than the others. It was suggested that the departments could voluntarily work out an alternative, voluntary funding formula to reflect differing needs for the departments.

d. Master Schedule

Assistant Principal Waits is working on the master schedule. A decision needs to be made on the lunch period so she can proceed. Mr. Cahall said he preferred the single lunch period if it is highly structured. He presented the LSRT with 4 lunch options, two of which involved a single lunch period. The LSRT reached consensus on a single lunch period using a structure entitled STEP (Student Teacher Enrichment Period), which would include diverse activities for students and help with monitoring by the teachers. Mr. Cahall would like to refine the structural support with a team of 5 parents, 5 students and 5 teachers. Julie Caccamise, Charlette Butler and Hanna Mahon will try to find 5 students who represent different grade levels and backgrounds. The PTSA will be asked for similar suggestions from the parents. Mr. Martel will find volunteers from the teachers. The first meeting of the STEP task force will be Thursday, July 24, at 4:30 pm. The group will meet periodically during the school year as needed.

V. Facilities and Business Report

The idea has been raised previously that the WMC could assist with managing Wilson's OTPS money – not to decide how to spend it but to improve the efficiency with which it flows through the school. The WMC Board represents the diversity of stakeholders at Wilson, and DCPS would provide ultimate oversight. Mr. Martel emphasized how important it would be for the LSRT to get monthly reports on the WMC expenditures, and how important it is that the LSRT, NOT the WMC, retain the function of advising the principal on expenditures. He welcomed the monthly expenditure reports because it has been almost impossible to obtain them before this. Mary Froning will forward the WMC proposal to the LSRT members.

VI. Summer Transition Programs

Three proposed plans, from Mr. Cahall, Ms. Berkey, and Mr. Bargeman, were blended into one. New Parent Orientation will take place August 21. New Student Orientation will take place August 22. Parents will be encouraged during their meeting to send their children to the orientation the next day.

Ms. Butler has been working on the new student handbook which will be mailed home in the summer mailing. It has very specific information on the calendar (including the AP and DCCAS exam schedules) and on other important items such as the dress code, absences and tardiness.

During the first 3 days of school there will be student orientations during which expectations will be made very clear. The students will be assessed afterward, and students who do not understand the new guidelines will have to stay in orientation until they do.

Mr. Cahall suggested that Back to School Night be held Thursday, Sept. 18th.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 am.

The next meeting will be held on August 5th at 7:30 am. If another meeting is necessary, it will be held August 26th at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Sarah Whitener