

Woodrow Wilson High School LSRT Minutes
August 5, 2008

Present:

Administration: Pete Cahall

Faculty reps: Lisa Grymes, Julie Caccamise

WTU rep: Erich Martel

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

PTSA liaison: Sarah Whitener

Community rep: Norgie Bigger

Guests: John Howe, Katharine Lum (AALEAD), Maureen Thompson, Hanna Mahon (student), Henry D'Esposito (student), Al Cacoza, Harry Travis, Greg Bargeman, Frederick Carter

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 a.m.

I. The minutes of the LSRT meeting of July 22 were adopted.

II. Agreement on Ground Rules

Copies of the Rules of Civil Discourse and Ground Rules were passed around and discussed. Mr. Martel stated that in achieving consensus, we want to ensure that we allow people to vocalize their concerns and not stifle what appear to be extreme positions. Dr. Froning added that our emphasis on ensuring that all members speak has led to finding middle positions that have allowed consensus. Mr. Cahall stated that we are moving from being primarily an advisory group to being a collaborative action-oriented group.

III. Additional Members - update and discussion

Mr. Martel stated that according to WTU President, George Parker, there has not been an agreement that the new math and literacy coaches will be members of the LSRT, as it states in their job descriptions. However, Lisa Grymes, a member re-elected by the WTU chapter at Wilson, was hired as the literacy coach after her election. Mr. Cahall stated his preference that the math and literacy coaches remain on the principal's Instructional Leadership Team, rather than the LSRT.

Katharine Lum, who is observing from AALEAD, a support group for Asian students, introduced herself. AALEAD is located at 1323 Girard Street, NW., and about 40% of the students who go there after school are from Wilson. They are usually ESL students who move into mainstream classes after 2 or 3 years. AALEAD offers tutoring, youth leadership classes, community service, and SAT and college prep. Katherine or another representative will be joining us at LSRT meetings this year to ensure coordination of curriculum, given that a majority of the Asian subgroup was identified in the DC CAS testing as below Proficient in Reading. Dr. Froning also pointed out that the deficiencies in the Nep/Lep cohort might also be some of those same Asian students.

A working group to provide recommendations on additional LSRT members was formed. Lisa Grymes volunteered and will ask Mary Ball to join her.

IV. Principal's Report

Mr. Cahall was told that our new instructional superintendent is John Davis. He also learned today that our school will have an after school coordinator. He hired Jamie Josephson who was a student

teacher at Wilson last year in Social Studies. Mr. Cahall is still filling about 11 positions. New teachers will report on August 11 and old teachers on August 18. A faculty meeting will be held at the 4H Center. The meeting will include a state of Wilson report, brainstorming about new initiatives, and directions for staff about where information can be found. Different seminars will be available so that teachers can learn what is relevant to them (e.g., how to enter attendance in STARS). Teachers will be given as much time as possible to prepare their classrooms. New teachers will have a social gathering outside of school, will be assigned mentors, and will have brown bags with the Principal once a month.

The 90 Day Strategic Plan which Mr. Cahall wrote as a part of the UVA course was passed out. It will be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Cahall has held one focus group for students and will hold two more. The 7 students who participated in the first one (including a freshman, a junior and 5 seniors, 3 African Americans and 4 Caucasians) all felt that diversity was one of the best things at Wilson. They also agreed that teachers at Wilson care about their students. What the students wanted to improve was consistency, communication, and the security guards. They also discussed Honors and intermediate classes—e.g., in 11th grade, students have to choose between AP English and regular English with nothing in between. Mr. Cahall is also planning to meet with students at The Mary Center to ensure Latino student participation.

V. Facilities and Business Report

John Howe reported that the new lights in the main hallway are a great improvement and will be installed throughout the first floor. DCPS has bids out for lighting classrooms, and lights are being tested in stairwells. The new lights actually draw less electricity, while providing more illumination. This summer he is trying to catch up on all work orders related to safety, health, and fire code violations going back to 2002. It has been a challenge to work around the summer school students. The main hallway will be painted. Also, there has been a large amount of graffiti this summer so the stairwells will need repainting. Air conditioning units which are not working are being replaced.

Room changes: The conference room will become Mr. Merlos' office. Rm. 104 will become the conference room. The registrar will move to the Guidance suite (Room 105), which will be refurbished. The college bureau will stay where it is. The room next to 104 will become a teacher work room, with copiers, mailboxes and tables.

Pepco will soon connect electrical power from the road to the building, which will obviate the need to use the generator which is currently powering the new air conditioning. Landscaping has been neglected because we do not have the manpower to do it. We used to have 15 custodians, now have 9, but are adding 2 more later on. The Dept. of Public Works is in charge of landscaping at the schools. We will have a school beautification day on August 28. Ms. Bigger and Katherine Lum will look into finding help at the Dept. of Agriculture and at UDC to see if they have resources to upgrade the landscaping.

There was a discussion of the Wilson COO's taking on more business functions for the school in the future. The actual language from the preliminary letter contract signed August 2, 2007 stated that "the Contractor agrees to undertake in cooperation with DCPS, an initiative utilizing local self management to complete facilities related improvement and repairs, with possible future expansion into other

business functions, and to work with DCPS to create a school governance model for high achieving DCPS high schools that includes providing such schools with greater fiscal responsibility, resources, and increased governance authority.” In addition, WMC’s contract renewal proposal seeks to receive the OTPS funds into its accounts for dispersal. Neither the WMC, nor Mr. Howe, would be making decisions about *how* the money would be spent, but would simply disperse OTPS funds approved by the LSRT/Principal/Instructional Superintendent. This should improve record-keeping, transparency, timely handling of expenditures, and accountability. Mr. Cahall will speak with the Chancellor later this week about the necessary authorities for this change.

VI. 2007-2008 Local School Plan

Erich Martel, Julie Caccamise and Sarah Whitener volunteered to work on the evaluation of last year’s LSP.

VII. 2008-2009 Local School Plan

This year’s plan will be a blending of the 90-Day-Plan, the 12 page restructuring proposal written by Wilson stakeholders, Chancellor Rhee’s restructuring plan for Wilson, and goals of Mr. Cahall’s Instructional Team. The volunteers are Mary Froning, Mary Ball (if she agrees), Verna Clayborne, Margot Berkey, and Lisa Grymes.

VIII. Office and Lab Assistants

The parameters of the office and lab assistants will be discussed by Julie Caccamise, Hanna Mahon, Jaime Merlos, Sandra Wright (if she agrees), Gloria Gibson (if she agrees), and Erich Martel. Julie Caccamise will contact Ms. Wright and Ms. Grymes. Mr. Bargeman said that office assistants are not being put in the schedule this year, but Mr. Cahall said that they would be exceptions decided on a case-by-case basis. Also, there will be no early dismissals for students this year, with some exceptions. Recommendations will be made at the next meeting.

IX. Test Score Distribution Plan

Mr. Schultz and Mr. Martel will provide further data on the distribution of students in AP classes. Mr. Cahall’s goal is to push students forward; he is less concerned about their achieving high scores. He asked about AP Psychology. Hanna Mahon, who is taking the course online this summer, said that she thought there is a fair amount of student interest in the class, and Mr. Cahall said that it is a good gateway course, so he would like to offer it if possible. Mr. Martel said that we should track the percentage of students in each class who actually take the AP test. Last year 1020 students were enrolled and 952 took the tests. Mr. Cahall would like to know how many individual students are taking AP courses. Mr. Cahall will be appointing an AP project team at a later time.

X. LSRT, SCAC, Personnel Committee

Mr. Martel’s delineation of responsibilities for these three groups was distributed in order for it to become a part of the record.

The following agenda items will be covered at the next meeting:

XI. Update on Master Schedule

XII. Update on STEP

XIII. Update on Summer Transition Programs

XIV. LSRT Mission Statement

Plus/Delta

The Plus items that went well in this meeting:

1. The timekeeper made us move through the agenda.
2. Best practices, such as having a BIN for items to be discussed at a later date, were used.
3. Student input was very helpful.
4. We had participation from all members.
5. There was good openness and comfort level.
6. We are moving toward accomplishing projects.
7. Everyone respected the rights of others.

The Delta items were:

1. Groups should be formed before the meeting.
2. Some would like to see the agenda on a wall or whiteboard during the meeting.
3. We should keep to the agenda better.
4. We should prioritize the agenda - it's too long.
5. We should have written reports ready to hand out.
6. We need to know timelines and chairs for committees.

The next meeting will be held August 26, 2008, at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Whitener