

Woodrow Wilson High School, Washington, D.C.  
PTSA Meeting  
March 19th, 2008  
7:00 p.m.  
Held in the Wilson High School Auditorium

Columbus Spruell, Co-President  
Mary Giffin, Co-President

***Columbus and Mary opened the meeting at 7:15 p.m.***

**DCPS Chancellor Michelle Rhee**

Columbus and Mary opened the meeting. Michelle Rhee was welcomed.

Chancellor Rhee: Thank you for having me. I wanted to discuss some changes that will be implemented after spring break. These changes are in response to recent events at Wilson, including 13 arrests this week in the school.

A letter will go out to Wilson families during spring break to announce the changes.

- 1) Mr. Whittle will serve as the advisor and administrative point person on safety, security, and discipline on the site at Wilson.
- 2) Jeff Schultz will help communicate with parents about safety and security issues.
- 3) The lunch period will be changed. The cafeteria holds only 350 students. All students will eat in the classroom. This change will be implemented immediately.
- 4) There will be a zero tolerance policy. Students with chronic discipline problems will be notified that if they commit one infraction, they will no longer be at Wilson.
- 5) There will be three police officers here during the day. An administrator will be posted at each door so that if a child has been suspended or expelled, he or she will not be allowed in. Administrators know the students.
- 6) Wilson will be staffed to the right level. Six teaching positions will be filled, especially ESL positions.
- 7) We are going to close enrollment for the school. When you have a school that is over capacity, enrollment must be closed off.
- 8) Students coming from alternative settings (such as Oak Hill) will be given help to transition into Wilson. Across the District we are working to put together a transition program for children from alternative settings. This program will be in place for next year. For now, we are using zero tolerance and working with families of students from the alternative settings.

Parent: What type of incidents are we discussing for zero tolerance?

Chancellor Rhee: Violent incidents. Fights.

Mr. Whittle: We will have a program in place to help the kids.

Parent: Lunch — Is it a good idea to keep children confined to the classrooms for the entire day?  
Chancellor Rhee: In the short term, we need to have a very structured lunch. All the violent incidents have happened during lunch. Know that I understand that it is hard that the children cannot go outside at lunch. We will review the lunch program and begin to lighten up on the well behaved children.

Parent: I want to emphasize the positive experience at lunch. Clubs meet, such as debate team, it's academic, other clubs, it is very positive.

Rhee: I do not want children who are well behaved to be penalized.  
The students who cannot be responsible will be identified.  
The students will stay in the classroom and eat in the classroom.

Assistant Principal Miller: We used to have even more activities for the students at lunch. We had basketball. We would like to have more.

Chancellor Rhee: Right now we have a group of students who are not able to act appropriately during lunch. \

The vast majority of students are well behaved. But, 13 arrests this week, and it is only Wednesday.

Parent: Zero means zero. As the kids leave who are badly behaved, we will have the better behaved students left.

Parent: We will need more custodians as we will have to clean all the classrooms due to students eating in all the classrooms.

Chancellor Rhee: This is a short term plan only.

Parent: What is happening with the principal selection process?

Chancellor Rhee: Every candidate will meet with me first. We are carefully screening candidates.

Parent: Will the teachers be paid for the supervision time during lunch?

Chancellor Rhee: This will be discussed.

Parent: How long do you anticipate this (lunch policy) will go on?

Chancellor Rhee: We will see how this is solved.

Parent: Can we start with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and then use the lunch period to meet with troubled kids or kids from alternative schools?

Chancellor Rhee: It has to be school wide. We have to send a message. There have been 9<sup>th</sup> graders in every fight, but other grades have been represented, too. It is not just 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

Parent: What will the discipline process be?

Chancellor Rhee: Kids will be put on notice, then, zero tolerance.

Parent: There have been incidents on Metro involving Wilson students.

Chancellor Rhee: We have been in touch with MPD and we have a plan to address the problems on Metro.

Here is my contact information. I am good on e-mail. [Michelle.rhee@dc.gov](mailto:Michelle.rhee@dc.gov). Or call my office at 202-502-4004.

### **Metro Transit Police**

Principal Williams: Now the Metro Transit Police will tell us about guidelines.

Metro Transit Officer: We are plain clothes officers. We were put in place in 2003. We meet with high school and junior high school students to gain the children's interest. We give them t-shirts with the logo and the laws. We educate the students on safety and behavior on the metro.

Parent: Thanks for doing the educational bit. But what about attacks on metro after school? There are things happening between here and the metro.

Metro Transit Officer: We used to have a detail at the Tenley metro. The school resource officers say we need the detail. Today, there was a detail there. There is an officer upstairs and one down in the tunnel. If you see anything on metro, call 202-962-2121, this is the metro police communications number.

If there is a complaint, uniformed officers will go, but if it is ongoing, we will send a detail.

Metro Transit Officer 2: We have MPD officers walk with the kids after school to the metro, then we take over from there, when the kids come on the metro.

We do not get a chance to talk to parents a lot. Thank you for having us. I would like you to know what I am doing before any trouble arises.

When a student does something wrong on the metro, we can give a warning notice or we can lock the student up if they are not going to change their behavior.

We have more problems with safety, such as train-surfing. The train surfer rides the outside of the train through the station. Some kids walk between the cars.

You cannot eat on metro.

Metro Transit Officer: It helps us if you tell your children how to behave on metro.

Principal Williams: We have Wilson staff at the metro. We want to have the school resource officers (MPD) on the paths at Wilson.  
Thank you, Metro Transit Officers.  
Metro Transit Officers handed out t-shirts.

### **Grade Level Updates - 9<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Principal Williams: We will give updates by grade. 9<sup>th</sup> grade first. Dr. Bennett has been on sick leave, and Mr. Bargeman is on leave this week. Here is another 9<sup>th</sup> grade administrator.

Parent: How many 17 year old 9<sup>th</sup> graders are here?

Administrator: This year we had students socially promoted, only due to age. We got our share of children unprepared for 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

Parent: We were told there are 60 kids.

PTSA Co-president Columbus Spruell: At the end of the first advisory, 60% of the students were failing Algebra 1. Who cares? No one cares! If someone cares, why haven't the parents been told what the students' options are? What are they doing for summer school?

Administrator: We sent a letter home to 9<sup>th</sup> grade parents of students who were failing a class or who had absences. These students are in danger of not being able to return to Wilson. The parents who really respond, of course, their children are not in as much trouble. We sent another letter, and Dr. Bennett will meet with the families and let the students know what they can do.

Columbus: But we have 60% of the algebra 1 kids failing. We need a recipe for success.

Administrator: It is a combination of problems. It is not one thing. If you have a suggestion, we will listen.

Parent: How are you working with the socially promoted 9<sup>th</sup> graders?

Administrator: We were not prepared. We found we had students who did not have the skills to be in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. We have tutoring, but we cannot force students to go to tutorials.

Parent: If these students are the ones who are roaming the halls, banging on doors, being disruptive, will they be expelled?

Administrator: This policy is new.

Principal Williams: They will get one warning and then if there is 2<sup>nd</sup> offense, they will move to

another school.

### **Grade Level Updates - 10<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Assistant Principal Miller: There's a lot of pressure on us for DCCAS attendance and proficiency. DCCAS testing is 2 mornings of reading, 2 mornings for math, and biology. The testing dates are April 22<sup>nd</sup> through May 2<sup>nd</sup>. We must test 95% or lose AYP and safe harbor. We are working on incentives to get the students in. 85% will be here. It is that last 10 to 15% who we need to get in here.

They will get bonus grades, extra credit, for two coupons related to DCCAS attendance.

We are working with tardy and truant students; we want the students to come. They have to come in for testing.

We want to fund an outing for classes with 100% DCCAS testing. I am looking for the money donor.

"Think Green" for DCCAS testing proficiency.

Students will be involuntarily transferred next year if their attendance and on-time record is not good. If it is really bad, there will be an immediate involuntary transfer.

There is a student support team. Also, we have had Saturday classes.

### **Grade Level Updates - 11<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Mr. Dickerson: I am the 11<sup>th</sup> grade administrator. You have to recognize these are children. Do not give up on these young people. We have to give them the opportunity to advance. This is an outstanding school. I do not believe in punishing the innocent. We will try to talk to the lunch solutions.

We are still going chalk to the chalkboard, but the kids, our clients, are computer savvy. They are modern. They want to be invited to the table.

This is not a prison.

I am on the front lines of Wilson security everyday. Please contact me, [kenneth.dickerson@dc.gov](mailto:kenneth.dickerson@dc.gov).

Mr. Booker, 11<sup>th</sup> grade counselor: It is good to be back. I was gone for 2 years. I was home due to injury. We have hit the ground running. Students know 11<sup>th</sup> grade is important. Students need to do well in English and History, We are in the 3<sup>rd</sup> advisory. Some students will have to go to summer school. There is a tentative list of 150 students who will be recommended for summer school.

SAT Registration is free for all juniors. I would like to see 98% of the students take advantage of the May or June SAT. Students should see me to register.

Parent: They can't come down at lunch, there will be a lunch time lock-down.

Mr. Booker: Students can come during class time to register. I know they do not want to leave class. The deadline is March 31<sup>st</sup> for the May 3<sup>rd</sup> test. June test registration deadline is later.

Parent: Can't you go to the classrooms to register them?

Mr. Booker: This is faster. The students should come down. All the 11<sup>th</sup> grade students are my children. We now have 67% registered.

College Night will be in April. HiScip, internships, summer school and other opportunities will be discussed at College Night.

My contact information is [edward.booker@dc.gov](mailto:edward.booker@dc.gov); 202-282-0514.

## **Modernization Report**

Chief Operating Officer John Howe: Grimm+Parker are acting on the education specifications for the new Wilson High. They are sitting down with the department heads and administrators. We will be presenting with the architects at the April 9<sup>th</sup> PTSA meeting.

Emergency exit doors have been completed.

Students will learn that there is a limited number of doors to enter and exit. Right now, I am going around with my key to turn off the alarm when it goes off.

All air conditioners will be in place by May 15<sup>th</sup>. We will get power lines and an extra generator.

We are working diligently to replaster. We will finish by the end of the year and then repaint over the summer.

The groundbreaking for the new pool has been postponed, but permits have been obtained, and the 2009-2010 school year will have a pool.

Parent: What is the time frame for modernization?

Mr. Howe: We are on the books for 2010.

Parent: We are due to begin in 2010, but there's a revised plan due out in May. Maybe late 2009. I do not think we can slow the train down.

Mr. Howe: The architect is working hard to have the design done by the fall.

## **PTSA Nominating Committee**

Jude Landis, PTSA Nominating Committee: Hello, our nominating committee includes Carmen Carrera and me. We need to find candidates for PTSA board positions.

## **Restructuring**

Mary Froning, LSRT: There are kids that are 4 years behind; there will be double math and double English for the kids who are behind. We have not had resources.

We submitted the restructuring proposal to Tracy Martin and Michelle Rhee. You can see it on [www.wilsonhs.org](http://www.wilsonhs.org).

We do not want to take away from things that work, but we want to help kids who are behind.

The next step in restructuring is an LSRT meeting with Chancellor Rhee.

There is another large meeting for all schools in April.

**Meeting Adjourned**

Columbus stated that the girls' swim team had won first place and the boys' had been runners-up.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellen Leander

Wilson HS PTSA recording secretary