

**Summary Report on Wilson Restructuring ThinkTank #3**  
**Monday, December 17, 2007**  
**Prepared by Margot Berkey, facilitator and 9<sup>th</sup> gr. Parent**

36 people attended ThinkTank #3 including 10 parents, 2 students, 1 community member, and 23 teachers/staff.

**The meeting began with brief updates:**

- 32 people have joined the ThinkTank listserv. Please sign up. You have to respond to the invitation in order to confirm your membership in the yahoogroup.
- Wilson HS has not received the self-assessment instrument that the central admin promised would arrive during the week of Dec. 10. We have a copy from another HS. Principal Williams will work with WTU building rep Bob Zugby to develop a process that will ensure that 100% of Wilson teachers & staff & the LSRT complete the assessment and that it will be an equitable one-person-one-assessment process. Parent and community feedback is also sought by the central administration. This is to be collected in a focus group at “an upcoming date” yet to be determined. Self-assessments must be completed by Jan. 4 and will be accomplished at Wilson during that week, when teachers and staff return from winter break.
- In a meeting of the Wilson Management Corporation with Chancellor Rhee on Dec. 14, the group had an opportunity to ask Rhee about restructuring. These were briefly reviewed with the group for the benefit of those who are not on the ThinkTank listserv. (See a previous posting on the ThinkTank yahoogroup dated Sun. Dec. 16 for the summary.) It was noted that the posting describes Rhee as stating that a proposal under option 5 would have to involve “real structural change.” Another participant in the meeting with Rhee felt that her comments spoke to “radical change” rather than “real structural” change.
- Principal Williams is scheduled to attend a meeting of all principals of restructuring schools on Dec. 18. The purpose of that meeting is to receive a data packet & additional guidance from the Central Office that is to be used for the school’s evaluation.

**The purpose of the ThinkTank session was reviewed:** Subcommittees on Academics, School Climate, and Parent and Community Engagement are to continue working on strategies to address Wilson’s weaknesses—thinking both in terms of what it will take to achieve AYP in all subgroups and what will constitute “radical change” or “real structural change” for our proposal to Rhee. Groups were asked to keep good notes, including comments that articulate the rationale for their recommendations as these will be useful in writing the proposal. Also, groups must set the next date for their work. Any requests for data that the group needs are to be submitted to Principal Williams who will in turn identify whether Wilson staff can compile the data or whether it must be obtained from the Central Office. It was noted that Wilson’s data issues—a policy on data—ought to be part of our proposal since it was an identified weakness in ThinkTank #1.

**Subcommittees worked for approximately one hour and 15 minutes.**

**Academics:**

- The focus was on strengthening the 9<sup>th</sup> grade academy with an expansion of AVID or another approach to provide increased guidance and support to students.
- It was suggested that Wilson would do away with Academy admission until the 10<sup>th</sup> grade and would enhance the programs in 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade with smaller learning communities. Caring adult-student relationships are one of the keys to improving academic outcomes for all students.
- In Mary Ball's peer mediation group of 28 diverse students in grades 9-12 the students felt that certain things would be useful: longer school day, more authority from adults, a JROTC-like program for all 9<sup>th</sup> graders, and life skills education emphasizing both financial and family issues.
- The group will meet again on Wed. Dec. 19 at 7 pm to continue working on how to create small learning communities.

**School Climate:**

- The group identified 8-10 topic areas that have helped to give focus to the range of issues. Those include:
- Attitude and Culture—lack of mutual respect
- Student to Student relationships—assaults and fighting
- Physical Appearance and Plant—being handled by Wilson Mgmt Corp but not enough custodians
- School Community—teachers not available or amenable to meeting with parents
- Safety--
- Faculty and Staff Relationships—lack of trust and collectivism; poor morale
- Learning Environment—inconsistent communication of support available to students
- Discipline and Environment—e.g. lack of mediation; inconsistent application
- The group focused on defining the issues and will continue working on strategies. The next step is to research models that are working to address these issues.
- They will meet again on Thurs. Dec. 20.

**Parent and Community Engagement:**

- The group discussion yielded a variety of ideas and clarification of issues related to two primary aspects of parental engagement:
  1. The need to strengthen initial contact with parents to create a more personal, welcoming atmosphere with communication of roles, rules and mutual responsibilities for student success at Wilson.
  2. The need to establish successful back-up systems and approaches to engaging with parents who do not participate in supporting their children's education.
- The group included the voices of two students and hopes to obtain more student input.

- One guiding principal is to ensure that all parent engagement efforts are attentive to multicultural needs.
- Also need to find ways to increase the connection with guardians of students who are in group homes or living with relatives other than “parents.”
- The group discussed that the way Wilson is organized has an impact on engagement and parents need more clarity on where exactly to go for support/assistance.
- The Wilson Parent Involvement Team (a teacher group) would like to survey parents to get more input.
- The next meeting will be on Jan. 3 from 9 am-12 noon.

**It was decided that the next full group ThinkTank at which each group will present it's proposal for restructuring will take place on Wednesday, January 9 from 4:30-6:30 PM.**