



WILSON NEWS

December 2007

- 12/1 SAT Testing
- 12/4 Deal/Wilson Night
- 12/6- Wilson Players Fall
- 12-8 Play
- 12/7 Parent Teacher
Conf: WWMC
voting. No School
- 12/10 Think Tank mtg.
- 12/11 LSRT Mtg. 4:30-
6:30
- 12/12 PTSA Mtg. 7pm
Jefferson JHS
- 12/14 Juice & Tea for
Parents with
Principal 8a-9a
Library
- 12/18 PSAT Info Session
- 12/19 Winter Concert
- 12/21 Open House for
prospective
students
- 12-24- Winter Break
- 1/4
- 1/11 Juice & Tea with
Principal Williams
- 1/14- Semester Exams
- 1/17
- 1/16 PTSA mtg.; 7pm
library
- 1/18 End of 2nd
Advisory
- 1/21 MLK Holiday
- 1/25 12:15 dismissal;
record keeping
- 1/26 SAT testing

DCPS Requires Restructuring at Wilson In July, 2008

Wilson High School faces significant restructuring next year, based on recent actions taken by DCPS to comply with the Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. NCLB, which was implemented in 2002, requires every school to improve student performance. Schools must conduct testing each year to measure the proficiency of students in different subgroups, e.g. by ethnicity and economic status. Attendance goals for the testing must also be met. Although Wilson has met some of the multiple testing targets each year, it has not met others in each of the past five years.

Schools that fail to meet NCLB targets for five years in a row are required to be “restructured”. Although in the past four years there has been little or no support for such schools in the District, several weeks ago Chancellor Rhee announced the process by which she will determine the restructuring approach for District schools that have not met NCLB targets. This process has an aggressive timeline for reviewing each school. The review timeline will take place in December and January. According to Chief of Schools Tracy Martin, during this process DCPS will be “looking for a community that works together; that continually tries new solutions to problems; a community with a culture that encourages doing things differently. They will be looking for a vision and a substantive program.” In addition, Ms. Martin stated that schools are welcome to submit their own recommendations and should do so as soon as is possible given the tight timeline

In response to DCPS’s plans for school review, Wilson staff and parents have initiated a “Think Tank”. Announcements of the Think Tank effort were distributed to all Wilson families by phone and on the Wilson website (WilsonHS.Org). The “Think Tank” is an effort to work together to explore ways of restructuring that will meet the unique needs of Wilson and that will capitalize on Wilson’s strengths while aggressively addressing its weaknesses. While the Chancellor will determine how each school will be restructured, the Wilson community is hoping to develop a strategy to propose to the Chancellor. The community seeks to develop a strategy that will be consistent with NCLB’s requirements for significant change but also consistent with the unique strengths and resources that Wilson’s diverse brings to the goal of educating students.

To help you learn more, this newsletter includes articles on:

- What is NCLB, and what is “Restructuring”?**
- How Will the Chancellor Determining How Schools Will be Restructured?**
- What Think Tank activities have happened to Date and How Can I Contribute?**

January Meetings at Wilson!

There is a lot of activity going on at Wilson including planning for restructuring, the principal search, and master facility planning. The January 16th PTSA meeting will focus on the outcome of the restructuring planning, and will also provide updates on other activities, so be sure to join us at 7:00 pm in the library. Spanish interpretation and light refreshments will be provided. Other meetings in January may also be announced via phone messages or other mailings, so please check your phone messages, the Wilson website (www.WilsonHS.org) or call the school or the PTSA if you want to find out about possible meetings.

Elections to Wilson Management Corporation Board

On December 7th, we had a good turnout of votes for 2 parent and 2 staff representatives to the Wilson Management Corporation Board. Their terms will begin January 1, 2008. Congratulations to 9th and 12th grade parent, Jack Koczela, and 11th grade parent, Ginny Callanen who were elected. Also, kudos to 9th grade parent Barry Summer, who came in a close third. The staff vote had some minor irregularities in a very close race, so will have to be re-done. Look for those results soon.



Can You Make the Call?

WHAT? The Wilson PTSA Phonathon is the once-a-year call for contributions to the PTSA in addition to dues payments. Over the course of three evenings, volunteers telephone the parents or guardians of all 1,500+ Wilson students to request their support for the work of the PTSA.

WHY? The Phonathon is the single biggest fundraiser for the PTSA. Money raised goes to support many activities that Wilson students enjoy, including academic clubs, sports programs, drama, art, and music, faculty grants, security for special events, and much more. Last year, through your generous support for this fundraiser, the Phonathon received more than \$27,000.00 in contributions. Donations are fully tax deductible.

WHEN? The 2008 Wilson PTSA Phonathon will be held the evenings of February 3, 4 and 5, 2008. We will once again be hosted by the office of W.T. and A.N. Miller on Connecticut Avenue.

HOW YOU CAN HELP? Volunteers are needed to make calls and stuff envelopes for about two hours on the evenings of February 3, 4 and 5, 2008. We are especially in need of volunteers who are fluent in Spanish, Vietnamese and other language spoken by Wilson parents. Student volunteers are welcome too!

Please call or e-mail one of the co-chairs TODAY to volunteer for this simple, short, and successful activity that raises much needed money for all of the wonderful programs supported by the Wilson PTSA.

Phonathon Co-Chairs:

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The Passing Of A Wilson Tiger

Reginald Lewis, a Social Studies teacher at Wilson since 2005, was killed in a car accident the weekend of December 7-9, 2007. He was an active member of Ninth Grade Academy for the 2007-2008 SY.

Mr. Lewis' funeral was held on Friday, December 14 in Hempstead, LI, NY. at Faith Baptist Cathedral, 145 North Franklin Street, Hempstead, NY, 11550 (1-516-538-3335).

Mr. Lewis has family ties in North Carolina and New York. His parents are both educators and principals. Our thoughts go out to his family and friends.

If you would like any further information please contact Hattie Moore at 202-282-0454.

Restructuring Planning at Wilson: What Has Happened So Far and How Can Parents Contribute?

When Wilson staff and members of the LSRT and PTSA became aware of Chancellor Rhee's announcement about restructuring, plans were made to convene meetings to discuss how this will affect Wilson. It quickly became clear that staff and parents felt that Wilson should provide the Chancellor with input about what restructuring approach would best capitalize on Wilson's unique strengths while at the same time addressing its weaknesses. Plans to meet were announced to the Wilson community by automatic phone messages from Principal Jackie Wilson as well as on the Wilson website and PTSA list-serv.

An initial "Think Tank" meeting was held at Wilson on November 26, and a second meeting on December 10th. A list-serv was established for anyone interested in sharing information and research about different approaches to improving student performance and restructuring.

At the November 26th meeting, attendees participated in small group discussions and reported out to the whole group what they felt were key problems and weaknesses at Wilson, what they felt the possible solutions or structural changes might be, and what additional information or research they needed to address the problem. In addition, invited experts provided their ideas about Wilson and school reform. Among others, experts included past Wilson principals and administrative staff (Wilma Bonner, George Arlotto, and Frank Durso).

The subsequent December 10th meeting provided additional information and group deliberation. Information was provided about significant reform work conducted at Wilson in recent years. This work resulted in major improvements in Wilson's control over its facilities and business activities, but also included broader research related to improving academics, governance, and accountability.

Then the attendees at the meeting divided into three work groups based on the three categories for review by DCPS: Academics, School Climate, and Parent and Community Involvement. These three work groups began the process of: reviewing weaknesses, identifying tactics and strategies for addressing those weaknesses, and identifying structural reforms for implementing the strategies. The work groups selected coordinators and plans for subsequent meetings to review relevant research, consider its applicability to Wilson and to work on their plans. In addition to any other meetings they may schedule, the work groups plan to convene on Monday, December 17th. Work Group reports and proposals are due on January 9th, with plans to present a consolidated draft proposal to the SCAC, LSRT, and parents during the second week of January. The coordinators for the work groups include: Mary Ball for Academics, Coach G (Mr. DeSilva) for School Climate, and Jan Shaw for Parent and Community Involvement.

In order to identify the most effective ways to improve Wilson through restructuring, we need to hear from as many staff, parents and students as possible. There are several ways that you can participate. First you can monitor information and updates provided on the special "restructuring" section of the Wilson website (WilsonHS.org). If you are interested in learning more about individual work groups, contact Mary Froning (maryfroning@compuserve.com), or 244-9194). Finally, be sure to attend the PTSA meeting on January 16th at 7:00 pm in the library to learn about the work group results.

What is “No Child Left Behind” and Restructuring?

(Much of the following article was provided by SHAPPE)

In 2001 the federal government passed a law called No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The main idea of this law is that all children are able to master the knowledge and skills that are important if all children are given the help to succeed. Each state defines what it means to master the knowledge and skills (reach “proficiency”) for each grade level.

No Child Left Behind also includes the idea that all children in the United States can be proficient by 2014. States (including Washington, D.C.) set goals for the percentage of students that will be proficient each year so that 100% will be proficient in 2014. This is called “adequate yearly progress” or AYP. Because the law expects all children to reach proficiency, each school’s test results are evaluated yearly to see if students in each racial and ethnic group, the English Language Learners, the students with disabilities, the economically disadvantaged made AYP. If even one of those groups did not achieve the proficiency goal or have 95% of the students take the test, then the school fails to achieve AYP. (However, under a “safe harbor” provision, schools may also make AYP by improving by 10% in the subgroups (95% participation required). In DC high schools, the test is given to 10th graders.

If a school does not make AYP then the school district and state are supposed to provide help to improve the school. Each year that a school does not make AYP, there are increased sanctions that should be accompanied by an increase in support from the school system. Schools that have failed to make AYP for five years in a row are required to be “restructured.” Unfortunately, in Washington, DC there has been little or no support for schools in need of improvement over the years. Now the schools in restructuring are facing a dramatic change next year.

The law says that there are five ways that a school can be restructured. The Chancellor of DC Public Schools will decide which of these options will take place at each school. They are:

Chartering: Under this option, the district closes a school and re-opens it as a public charter school that students can attend by choice. The district chooses the group or company that will operate the school and monitors its performance.

Zero Based Staffing and Reconstitution: In zero-based staffing all the staff is replaced; another option is to replace some of the staff. The process is sometimes referred to as “turnaround”.

Contracting: Under this option, the District partners with an outside entity with a demonstrated record of effectiveness, such as an educational management organization (EMO) to take over and manage the school’s operations. The district chooses the EMO and monitors its performance.

State Takeovers; Districts have the option under NCLB of turning over failing schools to the state. In Washington, DC this would mean that the newly-created Office of the State Superintendent of Education would take over the schools.

Other Major Restructuring: The fifth option is choosing another form of major restructuring. This does not mean the school can make a few smaller changes. It must be dramatic reform. This option specifically calls for fundamental reforms in governance with “substantial promise” of enabling the school to make AYP.

How Will the Chancellor Determine How Schools Will be Restructured?

The Chancellor will decide which of the 5 restructuring options will be implemented at each school. In making her decision on which option she will choose for each school, Chancellor Rhee will look at the results of a Quality School Review. In January a team composed of Central office, the Washington Teachers Union, an external partner, parent and community members will visit each school to see what is happening in each building. They will spend one day looking closely at the teaching and learning, school climate, and community and parent involvement. The results of this review will be shared with the school and then presented to Chancellor Rhee.

December 10th a self-assessment tool will be distributed to the school community. It will give the school a chance to say what is working and what is not working.

On December 18th principals of restructured schools will go through all the documents outlining the process, protocols and rubrics of the quality school review.

Information from this self-assessment will be submitted by January 4th.

From January 7th through the 22nd the quality review teams will visit the schools in need of restructuring. The teams will present their findings to the school and then to Chancellor Rhee, probably by the end of January or early February.

The chancellor is planning to make her decision by the end of January or in early February in order to have time to plan for any staffing implications.

Schools are welcome to submit their own recommendations and should do so as soon as is possible given the tight timeline.

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Wilson Looks for more Advanced Placement Students

One of the goals in the Local School Plan this year is to increase the minority participation in our Advanced Placement (AP) classes. Many minority students who are fully capable of doing AP work choose not to try an AP. Research shows that experience with AP classes is a great preparation for college level work, regardless of the grade received. And the new mantra is: AP's are for hard workers, not necessarily A+ students. Grades of 3, 4 or 5 on the AP exams can save thousands of dollars on college tuition. Ms. Shauna Leung, from the College Board, has been working weekly with our school to strengthen and grow our AP program. A parent committee of the LSRT, chaired by Sarah Whitener, has been looking for ways to spread the word on AP's and remove barriers to greater participation. A faculty AP committee, chaired by Ms. Morton, is meeting monthly. In February we will hold an AP Night, with an introduction to the AP program and presentations by AP students and teachers.

Congratulations to Mrs. Lori Williams-Chisholm, recipient of the Wolf Trap Foundations Teach Scholarships for Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. The \$2500 scholarship supports arts education that parallels Wolf Trap's performance and education priorities. Scholarships are awarded to individual public high school teachers/classes in the performing arts for instruction leading to student performance.

Saturday Academy Algebra I and Geometry on Track!!!

The Saturday Academy for Algebra I and Geometry are review sessions which were designed to help students received classroom instruction not initially covered due to the lack of an instructor during the early weeks of the first advisory. Our thanks go out to Principal Jacqueline Williams, Academy Director Greg Bargeman, Math Department Chair Dr. Elaine Smith and New Teacher Justin Burner for making these review sessions possible. The sessions are providing our students additional time to improve their skills and review material covered during the regular school day. There will be one more review session prior to the semester examination. Please encourage your students to attend and take advantage of this opportunity

Saturday, January 12, 2007

Algebra I

9:00-10:30 am

Geometry

10:45 am—12:15 pm

**NEXT JUICE & TEA WITH THE
PRINCIPAL**

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 2008

ALL ARE WELCOME!

*Wilson Senior High School
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