



LSAT Meeting Minutes - Northeast Branch Library October 3rd, 2017

Attendees: Attending: Mercedes Salazar, Principal Comeforo, Tom Guglielmo, Samah Norquist, Allyson Kitchel, Ebon McPherson, Principal Bell, AP Jackson, AP Croft, Jeff Seltzer, Nakisha Winston, Lona Valmoro, Katherine Moxley, Sherry Trafford and Ann Brigioli. Approximately 15 other parents.

Stuart Hobson - Principal Comeforo's Updates

1. Staffing, Enrollment, and Audit Procedures

- SH is 98% enrolled and no longer pulling students from the waitlist. No anticipated budget impacts. Outgoing 8th grade class is smaller than next year's anticipated 6th grade class.
- The Attendance Counselor position has been filled by Ms. Hargrove. The clerk position is now vacant.
- DCPS will no longer have a physical count day where students have to be physically present at the school on "count day" to be considered enrolled. This year, DCPS will conduct a desktop audit where student residency and supporting documents will be used to verify enrollment. Enrollment forms will be crucial to the enrollment count.
- SH has completed at least one mock audit. November 2nd will be Stuart Hobson's in-house auditing, which will spot check, not verify every student.

2. Social Emotional Academic Development

- SH continues reviewing all 504 plans.
- Students are receiving the support needed as outlined in the 504 plans. Conducted an audit to verify all required support being provided.
- Principal Comeforo talked through the "Kindness Challenge" at SH which will take place from October 16th- November 9th.

3. Honors Programming

- Honors program development at SH will continue with focus on clear entry criteria, including the evaluation of student data (test scores, grades, and input from teachers, etc).
- After reviewing the data, SH determined many more students actually qualified than were previously scheduled (81 additional students in ELA and 48 additional students in Math.)
- Such review not only lead to clarification of entry criteria for honors programming, but also lead to inclusion of larger numbers of fully qualified students of color.
- SH will continue to amplify these courses with more enriched instruction instead of simply a greater workload

4. Auditorium Repair

- According to DGS, it is safe for students/faculty to be in the auditorium.
- DGS has relayed that two areas have two different reasons for the water intrusion.
- Peter MacPherson provided the following: He has compiled the last several years



of DGS repairs and studies and feels the issues are multiple and include cracks from the bricks, missing mortar, windows, and changes in HVAC system, among other things. He also noted, as a practical matter, a true repair is large undertaking and there are other schools/playgrounds in the queue “ahead” of us. Firm advocacy is necessary to fix our building and is likely a much longer term project than the two-months DGS suggested. In his view, there is consensus that substantial work is required - need advocacy for a bigger “pie” for DCPS so schools who need modernizations can stay on track.

5. Comprehensive School Plan

- Principal Comeforo reviewed the SH Comprehensive School Plan (CSP) in its entirety. He noted portion of the \$50K Excellence through Equity Grant provided by DCPS will be used set up Saturday Academies.
- Everyone is encouraged to look at the CSP as a working/living document
- Feedback on the CSP is requested from the LSAT members. LSAT members, along with admin, will determine best method for feedback from the larger Cluster community - document is technical and principal presentation is necessary to understand it.
- Principal Bell echoed these sentiments, encouraging LSAT members to use a template she later handed out to provide their feedback on the WE/PP CSP.

Watkins Elementary & Peabody Primary - Principal Bell's Updates

1. Comprehensive School Plan

- Principal Bell reviewed the Watkins/Peabody CSP in its entirety. CSP was reviewed with teachers - their feedback was solicited.
- Main goals:
 - Rigor - focus on supporting teachers in two “essential practices” (on which teachers are reviewed) - student ownership of their work and rigorous content.
 - Social Emotional Learning - focus on building relationships. Responsive Classroom is one strategy that helps support this.
 - Differentiation: guided reading, flexible math groups on daily basis to differentiate content based on student need. Data shows this is key to growing students who are above or below grade level.
- She notes, with regard to teacher evaluations, that teachers are typically evaluated three times per year and not always by the same person. As established by DCPS, the number of times a teacher is evaluated may differ from teacher to teacher, depending on past performance.
- When asked what happens in the event the classroom temperament, schedule, plan, etc. is abnormal, administration explained they try not to perform evaluations on days there are holiday programs, half days, fire drills, etc. Teachers also have a chance to discuss any differences in their classroom or plans with their evaluator after their evaluation.
- Teachers should receive data points before the observation day, during preceding informal observations, so they know what their evaluators are looking



for and evaluators know what teachers are focusing on.

- Addressing Social-Emotional Needs
 - Re addressing student's social needs that arise from situations beyond the classroom (dealing with familial changes, trauma, etc.), admin noted we no longer have a partnership with the Wendt Center.
 - Social worker noted we just went through training to address kids who have gone through trauma and asked we keep in mind that Watkins isn't as high need as other schools who feed into SH.
- Principal Bell noted small group instruction is crucial for development - direct correlation between consistent small group instruction and student growth. Not all teachers practice small groups on a regular basis. Admin will support teachers and work with them to correct.
- Do The Math* curriculum (funded by PTA) not yet purchased - there are unexpected training expenses. Trying to partner with another school. Don't want to purchase until training plan is in place.
- Last year's remaining PARCC resources will be used for Saturday training academies in the spring.

2. Student Satisfaction Survey

- Ms. Dickinson discussed the results of the Student Satisfaction Survey
- The survey is taken by students in 3rd - 5th grade
- Goal is 90% of students "like their school"
- It was noted some of the downward trending results, such as safety and cleanliness, could be skewed due to being in another building
- Next steps include aligning teacher language and response to misbehavior with Responsive Classroom, and implementing the Second Step curriculum to help with social emotional learning.

3. Enrollment

- Principal Bell noted Watkins is doing their mock audit this week and will follow the same guidelines and procedures as SH.
- Enrollment Data between Peabody and Watkins show retention as K transitions to 1st grade is weak. Also noted is the DCPS-wide issue where retention is low as students transition from 4th to 5th grade. It was suggested students traditionally leave during this time to join charter schools that go from MS through HS and students apply to MSs that follow desired HS feeder patterns.
- When asked what is done to address attrition at the aforementioned grade levels, Principal Bell stated she calls families to understand why they might be leaving and if anything can be done to cause them to stay.
- General consensus from LSAT members and community members present is enrollment can be an ongoing but not monthly conversation, specifically to address why to families leave. Also noted is families will have a panoply of reasons for changing schools as DC is a very transient city, with many options available to address many individual needs.

4. Professional Development

- DCPS has three buckets of PD.
- 1) DCPS requires district-wide PD days when students do not have school; 2)



weekly PD sessions called LEAP days. These happen at times that least impact students. For example during lunch, nap, and/or Specials periods. PK3 and 4 have LEAP sessions on Tuesdays while Kindergarten and Watkins staff have theirs Wednesdays and Thursdays; and 3) DCPS approved CDI – Curriculum Development Institute – which requires teachers to be out of the classroom for a full day to review curriculum implementation. CDI occurs approximately four times per year.

- ❑ Concern expressed about substitute coverage/class management during PD. Requests were made from LSAT for families to know in advance when teachers will have a pre-planned CDI and therefore expect a substitute in the classroom. Principal Bell agreed this could happen.

5. Communications

- ❑ LSAT complimented admin for the communications plan and asked how it was going. Principal Bell said that class wide communication is working well and is fairly consistent across the board. A few kinks are being worked out. Some lessons learned though, i.e. some parents didn't know their children were performing at Hispanic Heritage Night.
- ❑ Principal Bell will be working with Alison Kaufman to create a survey that will be disseminated in November further evaluating how parents feel about communications from their teachers and administrators.
- ❑ Specials - at Peabody, teachers include a blurb about what's happening in Specials. At Watkins, Specials teachers are working on disseminating a monthly communication.
- ❑ Also discussed was the overall Cluster calendar and coordination with the administration and PTA. Admin noted a great deal of effort goes into updating the master calendar and you can easily click links there and save events. Families who are long term planners should be checking the calendar regularly - dates a month or more out can move around a bit.

Meeting adjourned at 8:14pm.