



Tuesday Scoop

Shepherd Elementary School, Washington, DC

<http://www.shepherd-elementary.org>

Editor: Kimberly Brandon

January 15, 2008

From the Interim Principal

Happy New Year to the Shepherd ES staff, students, and families!

During the past four days I have had the opportunity to visit every Shepherd classroom and introduce myself to the teachers, students, and staff members. I have truly enjoyed being with the children in the lunchroom and on the playground. When you have the opportunity, please feel free to join me. We can't have too many eyes watching our dear ones.

Last Friday, I met several of you wonderful parents at the Friday Coffee and shared my goal: "For every child at Shepherd ES to reach his/her highest potential." This will require the total cooperation of teachers, staff, parents, students, and the entire Shepherd family. I am confident that we will succeed in this endeavor.

Yesterday, I was pleased to witness the Shepherd Spelling Bee. The proud winners were: Summer Durant (Ms. Thurber's class) 1st place and Leia Terrell (Ms. Chambliss' class) and Alexandra Lewis (Mr. Leonard's class) tied for second place. All three will continue on to the next round in mid-Feb. We wish them good luck and know they will work hard to prepare for that event. Thanks to Ms. Thurber, Ms. Ulba, and Ms. Michaud for their help in making this a good experience for all.

The next competition is the Geography Bee this Friday, the 18th, followed by the James Martin Science Fair on the 23rd.

Don't forget the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday on the 21st. and early dismissal (12:15) on the 25th.

Dr. John Sparrow

From the PTA

Last Wednesday, PTA President Yvonne McIntyre hosted a parents' meeting in the library with Mr. Francisco Millet, DCPS Instructional Superintendent for Shepherd. The room was packed as eager parents listened intently as Mr. Millet briefed the room on next steps regarding an interim and permanent principal. Most parents left feeling very comfortable that DCPS is being attentive to Shepherd. For those parents who could not attend, a summary of the discussion is provided below from Yvonne.

More on this and other topics will be discussed at tomorrow's PTA Meeting.

Summary: Millet noted that there will be no major programmatic changes at the school. The dual language program and the path towards IB will remain. He noted that he has been through the application process for IB and that it is very difficult to receive approval. While we may not ultimately achieve IB designation, he noted that components of the program could still be implemented throughout the school and that DCPS will work with teachers and staff to determine the way forward on this.

Regarding the dual language program, Millet will be sending Dr. Hartstock, the new director of the bilingual education program, to evaluate the program at our school and determine what is needed to make it more effective. Assessment

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NOTE: PTA meeting is TOMORROW at 6:45pm—the first one of the new year. All families are encouraged to come!

The Sports Report

On December 13th, the Shepherd Mustangs took on the Janey Jaguars. **Nikko Preece** had 8 points and 2 assists as **Christopher Saulny** topped 9 points and 3 rebounds. **Joshua Page** had 4 points and 2 assists. Shepherd beat Janey [41-36]! This win brought their record to 2-0. Their first game on Tuesday, Dec. 11 was a blow out against West. **Matthew Solberg** made 8 points and 3 assists; and Nikko Preece had 4 points and 1 assist; the score was 27-4!

~Justin Hinnant, 5th Grade

Fostering a Love of Language

Before our beloved Madame Faten Gaffere left Shepherd School last month, she passed along to all parents several web sites that can help facilitate your child's learning a first or second language. No registration is required for any of the following sites, although one will ask you to use a Flash player. These links are also available on the PTA Listserv. Be sure to bookmark these sites for the children!

- * BBC website for languages:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/spanish/>
- * Spanish, English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a First Language (EFL) games for basic vocabulary:
<http://www.apples4theteacher.com/foreignlang.html#spanishgames>
- * Songs and games:
<http://www.juegosycanciones.com/>
- * Scholastic Books classroom site for its new English/Spanish magazine:
http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/classmags/sn_esp.htm
- * Playing and learning in Spanish:
http://www.literacycenter.net/lessonview_es.htm#
- * Learning how to read: <http://www.starfall.com/>
- * PBS information & programs: <http://pbskids.org/>
- * PBS site for parents on teaching your child to read:
http://www.pbs.org/parents/readinglanguage/preschooler/reading_milestone_preschooler.html

~Mark Pattison

From the Art Room . . .



Ms. Michaud will have dozens of colorful, expressive, paper sculptures ready for sprucing up our beautiful library. However, **volunteers are needed to help her mount the artwork.** Since she is unable to use a ladder (Doctor's orders), she needs assistance from anyone who can mount a ladder—just contact her at Joele.michaud@dc.gov.

The library is used frequently by the children as well as for numerous meetings, so the goal is to make it into a real showplace for zany, wonderful, 3-D art forms created by Shepherd students in grades 1-6.

Art support for the international music concert on February 13th will follow. Every child will be working on some culturally specific art or craft beginning the week of January 22nd.

Volunteers are always welcome and very much needed, especially Tuesday and Wednesday mornings at 8:55am when K and PreK have art.

Mrs. Michaud has tons of art work to hang and needs volunteers to help mount it. **Do you have an hour or two?** See her Tuesday through Thursday between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m., or midday to set up a time. Again, no expertise needed—just willing hands. **And, it's fun!** Give yourself a right-brain treat and come help the kids create!

REMINDER: Parents of 4th through 6th graders, your child has weekly art homework due on his or her art class day. Make sure you see that work is done every week.

IMPORTANT: Bringing you the Scoop every week requires a dedicated team of parents, precious time from the main office—especially Ms. Confer—and lots of paper. The school provided paper for the first half of the year, and now we need parents to donate paper for the second half. **If every class donates 4 reams of paper, we will have enough paper to print the Scoop in the main office for the rest of the school year.** You can buy a ream of paper for less than \$5.00. Please deliver paper directly to Mrs. Brooks in the main office. On behalf of the Communications Committee, THANK YOU!

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tools are currently available for evaluating our children's target language competence and those assessments will be conducted very soon. He noted that it was unusual for a school to have 2 different target languages at the same time, but saw no reason why it couldn't work. In order for the program to succeed, however, it needs support from parents, teachers, and the community.

Regarding finding a replacement for Ms. Gaffere, the recently departed 1st grade French teacher and IB coordinator, he said they found that there are no qualified French teachers in the DCPS HR system at this time; but they are looking to see what can be done. As such, he noted that one of the greatest challenges for maintaining a language program is finding and keeping language teachers who are also qualified as early childhood educators, especially French.

Regarding our interim principal, Millet stated that Dr. Sparrow is an experienced elementary school principal, who knows the possibilities for schools, can make decisions, and has experience with dual language programs. Sparrow will have the power to make staffing and planning recommendations to Millet who will then make the final decisions. Millet will be looking to identify an aspiring assistant principal within DCPS who can shadow Sparrow for the remainder of this school year.

For the new principal search, a panel will be created consisting of representatives from the LSRT, PTA, the community, teachers, and the teacher's union. The panel will not convene until Millet has identified 5 strong candidates. He is hopeful that this could happen by March and that 2 final candidates can be presented to Chancellor Rhee soon thereafter so that a new principal for '08-'09 is identified prior to the end of this school year.

Regarding test scores and staffing issues, Millet said he is aware of the many concerns raised and that he will be working with Sparrow to assess what is going on and what actions need to be taken. He noted that Chancellor Rhee has told him that whatever resources are needed to make things right at Shepherd, she'll provide them. Millet also

noted that any teacher can serve as a union rep designee on the LSRT and the search panel, so the WTU will no longer have an outside representative participating in LSRT meetings.

Going forward, communications to the school community about principal search activities will be sent from Millet via the interim principal. Ms. Dobson (whom Millet sent to assist with administrative functions during Mr. Robinson's absence) will remain at the school and serve as the conduit for communications with Millet. Parents wishing to voice comments about any school issues can send them to Dobson at sandra.dobson@dc.gov. Your PTA President will be communicating frequently with Millet as well and will forward concerns to him as needed. Email her at yvonne.mcintyre@calpine.com.

Reader's Digest Fundraiser Update

As I was out of town during the Reader's Digest delivery on November 29th and would like to thank all those parents who volunteered time to help on that day: **Donnell Jones, Therese Lowry, Marcia Morrow, Patricia Nicholas, and Chantale Swanson.**

I'd especially like to thank my wife, **Juliet Marrkand**, who was there in the morning during delivery and then all afternoon as our many households came by to collect their orders. Thank you also to **Mr. Huff** who reserved the auditorium for this event; hopefully, it was a nice enough day that recess took place outdoors.

I also have at my house the orders of four families: two families from **Mr. Byers'** class; one from **Ms. Kuawagai's**; and one from **Mr. King's**. If I am unable to reach you this week, feel free to contact me by email or phone.

Finally, we unfortunately had a few checks returned to us by banks—someone from the PTA will be in touch with those households. Thank you again for everybody's support on an important fundraiser for the school.

~Jack Marrkand, jmarrkand@pfd.org,
246-1448

Giving Teachers a TAP!

Each month, Shepherd Elementary's Local School Restructuring Team (LSRT) gives a TAP to a teacher. TAP stands for "Teacher Appreciation Program". Here's how it works: Write a letter about the great work your child's teacher has done, and submit it to LSRT Chairperson Rhonda Davis Smith at championco@aol.com. Each month, a new teacher will be TAPped at the PTA meeting. Who will be next?

In December, First Grade teacher **Kia Kinsler** got TAPped! Here's what two delighted parents had to say:

Dear Ms. Davis Smith,

I know Shepherd parents are often viewed (wrongly) as overly critical. But this time, we're writing to commend a teacher's exemplary performance.

My daughter Jordan Mitchell is in Mrs. Kia Kinsler's 1st grade class. We and Mrs. Kinsler really talked when she called all parents in the class at the beginning of the school year to discuss her plans for the first graders. She impressed us at the time as open, bright and enthusiastic.

As the year has progressed we've talked periodically and inevitably the issue of behavior arose as it will when discussing a six-year-old. Earlier in the year, Jordan was talking more than paying attention in class. Mrs. Kinsler and I worked out a plan for addressing the behavior and she (Mrs. Kinsler) has updated me regularly on Jordan's progress both academically and behaviorally. Jordan has blossomed under her teacher's patient, guiding hand. Jordan's academic performance and behavior have both improved markedly since the beginning of the school year.

Teachers don't often get enough credit when they do it right. We want to say that Mrs. Kinsler is amazing and does it quite right. She is an exceptional and obviously talented teacher and is a shining example of what every classroom needs in our opinion. Kia Kinsler is not only bright, but passionate and clearly invested in her students and their success. A bonus is that Jordan gets up every day excited to go to school in part because she loves her teacher who has in turn inspired in her a love of learning. A parent can't ask for much more. Shepherd found a true jewel when it found Mrs. Kinsler, who should serve as a role model for all hires District-wide in the future.

Sincerely,
Niki & Darvl Mitchell

We appreciate the Mitchell family taking the time to document and share positive news and acknowledge the hard work of one of our wonderful teachers.

>> MARK YOUR CALENDAR <<

January 16	LSRT meeting, 3:30 pm; <i>and</i> PTA Meeting, 6:45 pm
January 18	Geography Bee
January 21	Martin Luther King Holiday, NO SCHOOL
January 25	Early Dismissal

*This is the first Tuesday Scoop for 2008. The next issue is scheduled for Wednesday, January 23. The editor will be **Celeste Moneme**. Submissions should be emailed by 3:30 pm on Friday, January 18 to cmone1@yahoo.com, or placed in the Tuesday Scoop mail box in the Parents' lounge across from the main office. HAPPY NEW YEAR!!*