

# Get Caught READING!



## THE MUSTANG

Home of the Shepherd Mustangs

December 3, 2012

### A Word from Mrs. Miles!



Greetings Shepherd Families!

#### Get Caught Reading

This week we started our lunchtime read-alouds with students in grades 2-5. We are planning to add the other grades in the upcoming weeks. Each

Wednesday, during students' lunch period, a special guest reader comes and shares a 10-minute reading with the students. They interact with students by asking questions and distributing raffle tickets for correct answers. Students are encouraged to hold on to those tickets. During the week, random numbers are called and students with the winning ticket number are encouraged to stop by the main office to receive special prizes. In addition to the lunch read-alouds, students receive tickets when they are caught reading around the building and when they are able to share what they are reading.

#### Get Caught Reading Logs

Please help your student complete their reading log each evening. Students in grades PK-1 are expected to read 15 minutes each night and second- through fifth-grade students are expected to read 20 minutes each night. Students in grades 2-5 grade are also required to complete a journal entry. Logs should be turned into the classroom teacher once they are complete. Students will be provided with extra forms as they are needed; however, they are also kept on the door in the display next to the door of the main office.

#### Reading Strategy for Home

This week we will introduce you to our final reading strategy. In the next edition we will provide you with a summary so that you can refer to each of the strategies when reading with your student at home. When reading with your student at home, encourage them to make a prediction about the text.

- ▶ Wednesday, Dec. 5: Holiday Concert, 6:45 p.m.
- ▶ Tuesday, Dec. 11: Local School Advisory Team meeting, 4 p.m.  
Family Literacy Night, 6:30 p.m.
- ▶ Wednesday, Dec. 12: Family Dinner Night, The Society Restaurant, 8229 Georgia, 4-9 p.m.
- ▶ Friday, Dec. 14: Professional development day, no school
- ▶ Thursday, Dec. 20: International Day
- ▶ Monday, Dec. 24-Sunday, Jan. 6: Winter Break



Consult the school website, [www.shepherd-elementary.org](http://www.shepherd-elementary.org), for a full array of events and happenings throughout the school year!

After making their prediction, encourage your student to read/read with them to help them confirm or refute their prediction. You can even have your student to justify their predictions, discuss or write their explanations, and make new predictions based specific evidence from the text. Your student can also determine whether predictions came from their own prior knowledge and which predictions were based on evidence from the text.

#### **Before Reading:**

What do you already know about this subject?

Looking at the title, what do you think the story is about? Why?

Looking at the pictures, what do you think the story will be about? Why?

#### **During/After Reading:**

What do you think now?

Can you prove your predictions, or do you need to modify them?

What do you think will happen next? Why?

#### **After Reading:**

What did you find in the text to prove your predictions?  
(see MILES, p. 14)

### Annual Holiday Concert Is Wednesday

It's the event where every seat in the house is taken: Shepherd's annual Holiday Concert. This year it will be held Wednesday, Dec. 5, starting promptly at 6:45 p.m. in the auditorium.

The concert will feature the playing of Shepherd's violin and recorder students, all of whom take their lessons INSIDE of school but OUTSIDE of school hours. A mass chorus of students from pre-K through fifth grade will be singing songs of peace and holiday joy in several languages.



Christylez Bacon

The undeniable highlight will be a performance of Pachelbel's "Canon in D" by select instrumentalists playing under a rap by Grammy-nominated rapper and human beatboxer Christylez Bacon.

And it's all free! Come early for the best seats.

### PTA President Resigns Over Health; Alicia Anderson Succeeds Bostic

PTA President Bianca Bostic, in her second one-year term as president of the Shepherd PTA, has had to resign her position over medical issues.

Under the PTA's bylaws, the first vice president succeeds the president in the case of a vacancy. Alicia Anderson, who also had been in her second year as PTA first vice president, automatically succeeded her.

With the resultant vacancy in the first vice president's job, Anderson used her power under the bylaws to appoint Toby Susse as the PTA's new first vice president. Toby has been chair of the PTA's communication committee this year, and served on last year's gala committee.



### Loose Change Collection Nets Winners All Around

During most of November, parents were emptying their pockets of loose change and giving it to their children to bring to school as part of the annual Loose Change Collection.



Most years, the money is split between the PTA to fund certain projects, and the principal to give to Shepherd families needing a hand. But this year, the PTA decided to turn over the entire contents of the collection to Mrs. Miles.

The total "take" was \$367.70. One parent upped the figure to round it up to \$390. The principal identified three families, so each will receive \$130.

And two classrooms were judged to be winners in the contest. Ms. Gibbs' pre-K class collected the most money overall, and Ms. Valentine-Nelson's fourth-grade class collected the most money in coins. Students in each class will get a uniform-free day on the first day back from winter break (Monday, Jan. 7) as their reward for their stellar participation.

### Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF Collection Nets \$212-Plus

About 50 Shepherd students turned in their Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF collection boxes to Shepherd during November. All told, they collected \$212.39 from people on their trick-or-treating routes. A check was mailed last week to the U.S. Fund for UNICEF in that amount to thank them for their efforts at making some of the world's desperately poor children a little better off.



Maybe our young trick-or-treaters can retrace their steps from Halloween night and thank all of the kind folks who dropped coins into their collection boxes. Many donated dollar bills – and there was the occasional five-spot and ten-spot as well!



Ho, Ho, Ho! Merry Christmas (almost)! Hi! First I want to remind everyone that the holiday concert is on December 5 -- this coming Wednesday. The concert will start with the violins (I will be playing) and recorders playing four songs! First "Jolly Old Saint Nicholas," then "Jingle Bells," and then "Ode to Joy," and -- last but not least -- Pachelbel's Canon, which Christylez Bacon will be rapping to! Next comes the singing, which you (the Shepherd students) have been preparing for. Come one, come all! Bring everyone in your family!

Another thing I would like to say is how busy the month of November has been. We had BWL Band tryouts, and I would like to congratulate everyone who tried out, even if you didn't make it.

We also had the reading pep rally and Wilson students came to our school for that event. Everything was great! There were cheerleaders a marching band and the flag-twirling people (I do not know what they are called)!

We also had the walk for homeless people, and if you returned your signed permission slip you got a T-shirt with a picture on it designed by kids.

Okay, there's probably more but I am going to move on. I know many people are excited about winter break so I just wanted to remind you when it starts and ends: It is from the 24th of December to the fourth of January. That is all I have to say! Thank you for reading!

--Colyar Trimble, fifth grader

## Movie Night Postponed

The Family Movie Night at Shepherd, originally planned for the last day of school before winter break begins (Dec. 21), has been postponed. Consult the Mustang and the school website, [www.shepherd-elementary.org](http://www.shepherd-elementary.org), for rescheduling information.

## A Thousand Cans? We Can -- and Will!



**Martha's Table**  
EDUCATION • FOOD • OPPORTUNITY

As this issue of the Mustang went to press, Shepherd Elementary was still about 250 cans short of its stated pledge of collecting 1,000 cans of food for a canned goods drive to benefit Martha's Table.

The next time you go grocery shopping, pick up some cans of nonperishable food. Boxes are OK, too. You can either have your child bring them to school for pickup, or you can make your own dropoff in the main office.

Please help needy families in the D.C. area whose only crime is being poor. Help them enjoy a happier holiday.

## LSAT Meets Dec. 11

The Shepherd Local School Advisory Team will meet Tuesday, Dec. 11, at 4 p.m. at the school. Two items to be covered at the meeting include "Community Engagement" and "Culture and Climate," identified by the LSAT as two of its priority areas for the 2012-13 school year.

Parents who are not members of the LSAT are welcome to attend, but they may be asked to leave if confidential matters arise. To see more about the work of the Shepherd LSAT in particular, LSAT guidelines throughout D.C. Public Schools in general, and for a catalog of Shepherd LSAT meeting minutes, go to the school website at <http://www.shepherd-elementary.org/parents/school-advisory->



## Shepherd IB PYP Corner

Hello, Shepherd Community! I hope everyone had a very happy Thanksgiving. This week, students will be doing the Paced Interim Assessments and wrapping up and reflecting on Unit 2. Our next unit will begin the week of Dec. 10.

### Celebrations

The Month of December brings our Holiday Concert and International Day. The Holiday Concert will be on Wednesday, Dec. 5, at 6:45 p.m. This concert will feature songs in English, Spanish, French and Hebrew, and will represent peace themes appropriate to the season. The holiday concert will also include violins and recorders, accompanied by D.C.'s rapper and beat boxer Christylez Bacon. International Day will be Thursday, Dec. 20. The celebration will begin in the auditorium with a small set of international dances arranged by Mr. Giles and Ms. Conte. It will continue throughout the day, and classes will participate in educational and interactive holiday displays from around the world. Please join us.

Each class will highlight a different holiday around the world. The breakdown is as follows:

1. Gibbs and Holt- Christmas USA
2. Pethtel- Christmas (Eritrea or Canada)
3. Guldin- Las Pasadas (Mexico)
4. Goldman- Hannukah (Israel)
5. Hill- Ramadan (Muslims)
6. Johnson- Mardi Gras
7. George- Diwali (India)
8. Ulba- St. Lucia's Day (Sweden)
9. Mackenzie- St. Nicholas' Day (Holland/Dutch)
10. Wren- Christmas in Africa -
11. Valentine-Nelson- Eid
12. Charles- Kwanzaa (African American)
13. Miranda-Mulligan- Epiphany/ Three Kings Day
14. Thomas- Chinese New Year (China)
15. Leonard- Lunar New Year
16. Laughinghouse- Winter Solstice
17. Gadie- Christmas in France
18. Martinez-Christmas in Spain

Parent volunteers are needed, if you are able to assist, please contact your child's teacher.

### Learner Profile

This month, the Learner Profile trait is Open-Minded.

An open-minded person is someone who understands and appreciates their own cultures and personal histories. They are open to perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.



### Becoming More Internationally Minded

An open-minded person is comfortable with differences, and has a variety of lenses to view issues. Throughout the month of December, I challenge you to exercise your mind in order to stimulate new ways of thinking about the world around you. I encourage you to do things differently and randomly. I dare you to be and to do ridiculous things. Here are a few ideas of which will help you to see things in a unique light:

- Stimulate your ears differently. Try different music you haven't tried before like: Classical, New Age, Zouk, Rap, Mariachi, Country, Afro-Blues, Calypso, and Reggae.
- Stimulate your eyes in new ways. Go to art galleries and read comics. These can be stimulating and thought-provoking.
- Try foods you have never tried.
- Try building ridiculous things with Legos, like radios, robots, trebuchets.
- Watch movies in genres that you normally don't partake in, such as cyberpunk, horror, anime, documentaries, and stand-up comedy.
- Learn about different people and different lifestyles. Read about a wide variety of practices and celebrations.

Have a Great Week!

—*Ms. Sandra Hart*, IB Coordinator



### "Duke Ellington is on the D.C. Quarter"

Duke Ellington and his piano are on the D.C. quarter. Each state was permitted to choose a famous person for their quarter, and D.C. chose Duke Ellington. Other notable D.C. residents considered but ultimately not chosen for the quarter included Benjamin Banneker and Frederick Douglass.

Duke Ellington was born at 12th and T Street, NW, in 1899. He grew up in D.C., learned to play piano, and wrote his first jazz tunes in Washington. Ellington formed his first jazz band in D.C., and then he moved to New York City where he became the music leader at the Cotton Club in Harlem. A weekly radio program broadcast nationwide made Duke Ellington famous. His music endures today, testifying to his quality as a composer and performer. For his musical contributions and his roots in our D.C. community, Duke Ellington is honored on the D.C. quarter. The quarters were minted in 2009, but the U.S. Mint no longer sells them. They are available only from coin collectors or, if you're lucky, in your change pocket.



## No School Dec. 14

There will be no school on Friday, Dec. 14, which is a professional development day for Shepherd faculty and staff. If you can't take the day off yourself, go to <http://www.shepherd-elementary.org/resources/no-school-days-for-kids/> for a list of places where you can send your child to a one-day camp. Or take them holiday shopping!

## ART CORNER

Dear Shepherd Parents and Caregivers-

It's December and the art room work has now shifted into winter holidays. As always students are preparing decorative wall panels for our gymnasium-auditorium. We plan on making the Holiday Concert more festive-looking than ever. Look for glitter and metallic paint. I have had the pleasure of witnessing the squeals of joy coming from first- through fifth-grade students as they glitter up for the big concert.

And rightly so -- we are in a season of joy. However, lessons around our art have had some seriousness as well. I have been telling students how great our country is because although many countries go to war over religion, here in America the highest law of the land allows all of us to pray (or not pray) to any god we choose. Although the majority of Americans are Christian and we see Christmas advertised everywhere, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and nonbelievers are no less American. The Constitution ensures that for us.

As an artist and art educator, I am very grateful for that right. Artists can celebrate any religion and not be censored. So the Shepherd student holiday display will be as diverse as we can possibly make it, with a lot of Christmas included.

For students in third, fourth and fifth grades, there is homework due the week of Dec.3rd.

Email me with questions, comments, and concerns at [joele.michaud@dc.gov](mailto:joele.michaud@dc.gov).

Happy Winter Holiday Season!

--Ms. Joele Michaud, art teacher

## December PTA Meeting Called Off

The December meeting of the PTA has been canceled. The next meeting of the PTA will be held Wednesday, Jan. 16, at 6:35 p.m. in the auditorium.



## New on the Website

Have you taken a look at the school website, [www.shepherd-elementary.org](http://www.shepherd-elementary.org), lately?

You'll see new photos throughout the website, including some great ones on our banner, which graces every page.



There's a new dropdown on the "For Parents" toolbar with the new school (and aftercare) disciplinary policy.

You'll also see a new dropdown on the "Star Achievers" toolbar with minutes of the latest Star Achievers board meeting. Future board meeting minutes will also appear on this page.

The homepage has links to the PTA's fundraising survey and response logs for the school's Get Caught Reading initiative.

And we've restored the event-countdown calendar in the right column of the homepage.

You'll like what you see.

## Joyeux Noël

Looking for a French event for kids? Consider this:

**Saturday, Dec. 15, 2-5 p.m.**

A full afternoon of activities

- Storytime
- Special Christmas craft
- Snack
- Movie hour "L'apprenti Père Noël"



**Where:** Alliance Française in Dupont Circle, 2142 Wyoming Ave. NW.

Also a children's book sale continues Saturdays 9 a.m.-4 p.m. through Dec. 15 at the Alliance Française. Books are available for children of all ages. Stock up now and get some holiday shopping done!

-- *Madame Gadie*, French teacher

FAMILY DINNER NIGHT

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THE SOCIETY  
LOUNGE

8229 GEORGIA AVENUE  
SILVER SPRING

Wednesday, Dec. 12  
4-9 p.m.

→ **SAY "I'M WITH SHEPHERD!"** ←  
The PTA gets 15% of your pre-tax bill!

*Classic American fare with  
subtle Caribbean flavors.*

**Good food. Good people. Good will.**



PH: 301-565-8864 • [www.societyss.com](http://www.societyss.com)

## TV-Video Game Turnoff Club Membership Keeps Growing

Thanks to Shepherd's "Get Caught Reading" initiative, more students are ditching the video game console and the boob tube for the pictures they can make in the minds that can only come from reading a book.



They've joined the TV-Video Game Turnoff Club, and the benefits of limiting or eliminating "junk food for the eyes" is apparent, even for our youngest members.

Here are the names of our latest Club members, and what they say they'll do with their new-found free time.

*"Play Uno, get active outside, do my homework and go to sleep."*—Godloves Tata, fourth grade

*"Play basketball, board games, read chapter books, the playground."*—Kayla Muir, third grade

*"Homework, read, help my little sister with her homework and help my mom with anything around the house. Also go outside, exercise and play."*—Nana Sissoko, third grade

*"Playing Scrabble, create artwork, read, ride my bike, play with my doll, play cards, do homework."*—Shaina Adams, third grade

*"Swim, cook, play basketball or tennis, read, or play in my room."*—Jean-Pierre Roberts, third grade

*"Swimming lessons, playground, and cook with my mom."*—Samuel bush, third grade

**NewsLetter  
DEADLine**

Deadline for the Dec. 17 issue  
– our last newsletter of 2012 –  
is 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 14.

Please send all items to  
[sesmustang@gmail.com](mailto:sesmustang@gmail.com)

## Toys for Tots Drive Continues!

Let's join together to give a happier holiday to children in our area who are poor. Shepherd is taking part in the annual Toys for Tots drive.

There is a big collection bin in the main office, and there's room for more toys. Even if we fill it, we can call the Toys for Tots people and ask them to make a pickup.



What do you as parents need to do? Buy a toy or a similar suitable holiday gift item costing at least \$10 and bring it to the school. You don't even have to wrap it!

Go to your favorite toy store, and while you're doing some gift-shopping for the tykes in your life, pick up a gift for the Toys for Tots drive.

## The SIT-uation Room

Shepherd's School Improvement Team has spent the last month crossing the T's and dotting the I's of the document it's submitting to DCPS outlining the school's priorities for a Phase 1 renovation project. Shepherd is in line for \$5.295 million of improvements this summer. In the summer of 2017, Shepherd will get another \$7.5 million, and perhaps when 2021 rolls around, the school will receive some \$12 million more to improve the building and facilities. When the document is finished, it will be posted on the school's website.

The School Improvement Team will meet next on Wednesday, Dec. 12, at 5:30 p.m. inside the school. If your child is going to be attending Shepherd next year, then you may want to consider joining the team. And if your child is young enough to be attending Shepherd in 2017-18, then you may want to think hard and long about being a part of them team, as your kids will benefit from two rounds of improvements.

To learn more about the School Improvement Team and its work, call team chair Mark Pattison at 202-829-9289.

## The Handbook Says: The New School Disciplinary Policy

Be Respectful! Be Responsible! Be Safe!

### Shepherd Elementary School-Wide Behavioral Expectations

*(A Guide for Teaching School-Wide Behavioral Expectations)*

Included in this plan is a set of strategies and systems to increase the capacity of the Shepherd staff to (a) reduce school disruption, and (b) educate all students including those with problem behaviors.

#### FEATURES OF SCHOOL-WIDE BEHAVIOR PLAN

- ▶ Establish regular, predictable, positive learning & teaching environments.
- ▶ Train adults & peers to serve as positive models.
- ▶ Teach and model behavioral expectations.
- ▶ Create systems for providing regular positive feedback.
- ▶ Acknowledge students when they are “doing the right thing”.
- ▶ Improve social competence.
- ▶ Develop environments that support academic success.

#### SHEPHERD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SCHOOL-WIDE BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

This guide provides specific goals, behavioral expectations, teacher and staff responsibilities, strategies for acknowledgement, procedures for handling infractions of behavioral expectations, and specific routines to be followed.

##### School Goal:

Students at Shepherd Elementary will demonstrate excellence by following the three behavioral expectations.

#### Shepherd Elementary Behavioral Expectations:

##### Teacher & Staff Responsibilities:

- ⇒ Teachers and staff will teach, model and practice each of the behavioral expectations throughout the year.
- ⇒ Teachers and staff will acknowledge student behaviors that meet behavior expectations.
- ⇒ Teachers and staff will implement I–HUM strategies.
  - I – interact with students
  - HU – heads up, always looking around at students
  - M – moving constantly in and around students

- ⇒ Teachers and staff will follow procedures for infractions.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT SYSTEM

The acknowledgement system is a feature of the Shepherd behavioral expectation system. The behavioral expectation system focuses on acknowledging students who demonstrate Shepherd behavioral expectations. This program works in conjunction with classroom goals.

##### Specific verbal feedback

- ⇒ When you observe students being, respectful, responsible and safe, acknowledge them by giving specific positive verbal feedback such as:
  - “That was so helpful the way you held the door open for your classmates.”
  - “Thank you for walking with your hands and feet to yourself.”

##### Mustang Bucks

- ⇒ Acknowledge students who are meeting behavior expectations by giving them specific positive feedback along with a Mustang Buck. Students earn a buck each day for receiving no infractions. Students may earn additional bucks for being recognized outside of their classroom for demonstrating excellent behavior.
- ⇒ Each grade level team will establish a guideline for the number of Mustang Bucks needed to earn specific incentives. Incentives could include: extra recess, free time, rolling chair races, sit by a friend at lunch or in the classroom, field trip, lunch with the principal, etc.

#### HANDLING INFRACTIONS OF BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

Shepherd Elementary will maintain a level system for handling infractions of behavioral expectations. Outlined below is the level system along with the instructions for handling such behaviors:

##### Level 1 Behaviors Include:

- ⇒ Inappropriate language (cursing and name calling)
- ⇒ Pushing/Shoving
- ⇒ Behaviors that interfere with teaching and learning
- ⇒ Defiance, disrespect, insubordination, non-compliance
- ⇒ Lying, cheating
- ⇒ Running in classroom, hall or building
- ⇒ Leaving class without permission
- ⇒ Use of toys, cell phones or other portable electronic devices during school hours
- ⇒ Communication with staff and peers that is not polite, courteous or respectful

(see LEVEL 1 p. 9)

## Family Dinner Night Dec. 12

*"I like this Family Dinner Night. It forces you to go out and try new restaurants in the neighborhood."*—Overheard from a savvy Shepherd parent

We've been getting great turnout in our recent Family Dinner Night outings. Our October Family Dinner Night at the Outback Steakhouse at PG Plaza netted the PTA in excess of \$300. And our Veterans Day Family Dinner Night at Ledo Pizza earned the PTA \$360 — which the management was rounding up to \$400. And remember, there was no school that day!

We don't have returns yet from our doubleheader Nov. 16 at Nando's Peri-Peri and Color Me Mine, but we'll let you know as soon as we get details. By the way, we're working on a second doubleheader for sometime in the spring at two Connecticut Avenue favorites on the same block: Comet Ping Pong plus Politics & Prose.

Our next Family Dinner Night will be Wednesday, Dec. 12, 4-9 p.m., at the Society Restaurant at 8229 Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring. The Society features American and Caribbean dishes in an elegant setting.

What's more,



Wednesdays are old-school R&B nights featuring a live band playing at 7 p.m. playing soul classics from the 1970s and '80s. So you can go early, or come later on purpose to expose your kids to the jams you grooved on at their age. The restaurant also has a \$5 valet parking option you can take advantage of.

Go online to [www.societyss.com](http://www.societyss.com) to check out the restaurant's offerings and make an online reservation. You can check them out on Facebook, Twitter and Foursquare, too. For further details, call Society at 301-565-8664. Your hosts, the brother-and-sister team Jason and Samantha, will do right by you — and by us. Their motto: Good people, good food, good will." The Society comes recommended by a Shepherd mom who's taken her children to the Society.

The PTA will get 15 percent of the proceeds from Family Dinner Night at the Society. So let's pack the place!

## Recycling Poster Contest: Act Now! Dec. 14 Deadline!

The Energy & Sustainability Division of D.C. government's Department of General Services is holding its first-ever recycling poster contest open to all elementary school-age students in D.C. Public Schools.



Contest details and rules are on the homepage of the school website at [www.shepherd-elementary.org](http://www.shepherd-elementary.org). But act fast, because the entry deadline is Friday, Dec. 14 – less than two weeks away!

## Fundraising Committee

There's still time to take the PTA's Fundraising Survey before the Fundraising Committee meets later this month.

But there's not much time left. Let your voice be heard. Go to the homepage

of the school website, [www.shepherd-elementary.org](http://www.shepherd-elementary.org), and it's right up top there in the middle column. You can't miss it!



### WHAT'S NEW

Take the PTA Fundraising Survey!  
Click [here](#) to take survey.

**LEVEL 1** from p. 8\_\_\_\_\_

- ⇒ Teasing/Taunting (physical and/or verbal)
- ⇒ Littering/Loitering
- ⇒ Disruption, excessive talking

**Step 1:** Level 1 behaviors are to be handled by the classroom teacher or staff member witnessing such behaviors. The behaviors should be noted on the Staff Handled Problem Behavior Form (A) and an FYI email or note (B) should be sent to the parent each time a teacher completes a Staff Handled Problem Behavior Form.

Note: Special area teachers and other staff members who witness Level 1 behaviors are responsible for completing the Staff Handled Problem Behavior Form (A) and giving it to the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher will send the FYI message to parents; however, the special area teacher is responsible for maintaining their own records and taking the appropriate actions if the behavior persists.

(see BEHAVIORS p. 12)

## Shepherd Parents Step Up, Testify on School Boundaries

*Editor's note: As with the previous issue of the Mustang, we are including testimony from Shepherd parents regarding the proposed School Boundary Review Act of 2012. The D.C. Council heard testimony at hearings Nov. 15 and 19, and is still accepting written comments through Monday, Dec. 3. To submit written testimony, send it to Erika Wadlington at [ewadlington@dccouncil.us](mailto:ewadlington@dccouncil.us).*

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By **PATTI RASMUSSEN**

1) Deal provides academic continuity to Shepherd Elementary students

- ▶ Deal is Shepherd's neighborhood middle school
- ▶ Deal and Shepherd students have comparable test scores
- ▶ Deal and Shepherd have International Baccalaureate programmes

2) Shepherd provides demographic diversity to Deal

- ▶ Shepherd is one of the highest performing majority-African American schools in Wards 3 and 4
- ▶ Shepherd is a key provider of diversity to Deal
- ▶ Don't segregate our schools

3) No one wants to be turned away from Deal

- ▶ Deal is successful (and overcrowded) because of the lack of solid middle schools in Wards 3 and 4
- ▶ Don't push out students from Deal's feeder schools, find ways to accommodate them
- ▶ DCPS: Don't make your problem our problem

4) Out-of-boundary students need to be served, too

Until DCPS can provide comparable schools to students across the city, don't push out families that seek the best for their students

5) Don't let politics get in the way of educational parity

The timelines established in the School Boundary Review Act are unrealistic, especially given the longevity of the resulting decisions and impact on District students and families.

Thank you,

**PATTI RASMUSSEN**

By **MARK PATTISON**

First of all, thank you for allowing citizen input as this bill is being considered. I would like to frame my argument principally within the context of school capacity issues.

My name is Mark Pattison. I have lived in the District of Columbia since 1989. My wife and I have a daughter in fourth grade attending Shepherd Elementary School in Ward 4, which is our neighborhood school. I am a past president and recording secretary of the Shepherd Elementary PTA, current secretary of Shepherd's Local School Advisory Team, and the chair of Shepherd's School Improvement Team, as the school is slated to receive \$5.295 million in renovations over the summer.

My first public school experience was at Edwin Denby High in Detroit at the crest of the postwar baby boom. I graduated from Denby in 1974. The school was bursting at the seams with more than 3,000 students. Denby had four feeder schools. Three were "junior high" schools for grades 7-9, and one was a "grade" school educating students K-8. This meant that, with the exception of a relatively puny freshman class, those 3,000-plus students were in grades 10-12. My own graduating class had 704 students -- and another 125 had graduated in the winter because they had earned enough credits by then to graduate. I didn't know from crowding then; it was the accepted order of things. Denby was also a "magnet" school for the performing arts in a bid to attract more African-American students to an overwhelmingly white student body. I consider my three years at Denby to be a signature moment in my life, showing me the power and promise of public education. (Just so you know, Denby was home in 2011-12 to 1,300 students.)

At Shepherd, there were parents and administrators who predate our time there who saw the potential in the International Baccalaureate curriculum and in offering both French and Spanish as dual-language options. It was precisely this kind of thinking that has earned Shepherd its reputation as a high-achieving public school, with the best test scores of any predominantly African-American elementary school in the District. We are fortunate that staff and parent leadership that came before us helped make our neighborhood school what it is today. And, by the way, Shepherd is operating at capacity, if not over. For instance, what used to be a "PTA room" is now a "PTA closet."

(see PATTISON, p. 11)

**PATTISON** from p. 10 \_\_\_\_\_

It doesn't take a genius to conclude that something has to be done to alleviate overcrowding at DCPS' most popular schools. But a boundary redrawing commission, even if it follows U.S. Department of Justice guidelines, treats only one symptom of the problem and doesn't get to the core truths of the matter.

One core truth: Parents are skeptical at best, and loathe at worst, to send their children to underperforming schools; that's why they're so far below capacity and at risk of being closed. The other core truth: D.C. Public Schools has not invested in creating new schools where the student population has grown. Where else would a large swath of Washington students living west of Rock Creek Park go to high school if not to Wilson? What would the eminent-domain costs be of adding new schools?

It's taken a serious lack of planning for us to get to this point. With former DCPS buildings being turned into charter schools left, right and center, it's no surprise attendance patterns have gotten out of whack. It also takes out of circulation buildings and properties that could have been used to build new schools not carrying the baggage of the past.

Paul Middle School had been the feeder school for Shepherd students until it converted into a charter school in 2000. Since DCPS couldn't very well force parents to send their elementary-graduate children to a charter school to continue their education, Deal Middle School was settled on as the best option. Now, every time I drive to work past the construction site of the incoming Wal-Mart on Georgia Avenue, just one block from Paul, I shake my head in disbelief, wondering whether anybody in DCPS or District government -- anybody at all -- had anticipated the need for new school construction in addition to mothballing other buildings.

Since you can't build a school like magic, what happens in the meantime? Take the case of my daughter's school, Shepherd Elementary. There are three "education campuses" relatively close to Shepherd Elementary housing pre-K through eighth grade: Takoma, Whittier and Truesdell. All are now under capacity, but would be over capacity if three grades' worth of Shepherd students were assigned to any of them. And none has the International Baccalaureate curriculum, which we believe to be one of Shepherd's main drawing cards. And, according to the IFF study

commissioned by the city, Shepherd is the only Ward 4 school east of Rock Creek Park ranked Tier 1. That is a stunning and sobering assessment.

Is it true that Deal already has more students than it was expected to accept? Yes. But the old Rose School could be renovated to accept students from Deal's feeder elementary schools. Until then, "education cottages" -- trailers -- could be employed until that building is ready. In my capacity as chair of the School Improvement Team at Shepherd, I never for a moment considered that we should ask for more money to add even more classroom space to our filled-to-the-gills building with no parking lot to accommodate a middle school as well. But if that's what it takes to preserve the educational gains Shepherd students achieve, then I'm prepared to rip up nearly a year's worth of work and tell DCPS and the project manager to start building some second-story and third-story classrooms, not to mention excavating the basement, to hold all the students -- and hold on to those gains.

The crux of the matter is this: Deal has a successful educational program. Parents from all of the elementary schools that feed into Deal understand that. None of them want to be turned away; none of them want to be a victim of Deal's success. If a school is successful, why reduce the number of students who go there? If you have tendinitis, you don't cure it by cutting off the offending limb.

I was quoted in the Nov. 26 issue of the Washington Post as saying, "I think people would rather send their children to an overcrowded school that's successful rather than go to a school with a lot of elbow room but without high achievement." The reporter who interviewed me asked me a question Council Chair Mendelson asked a Shepherd parent: What would it take for you to send your child to Coolidge High School? Coolidge is closer than Wilson. But at Coolidge, about a third of the students are proficient in reading and math. The school is also at just 44 percent of capacity. My answer is simple: If Coolidge can double its proficiency levels, it will also double the size of its student body. My daughter's in fourth grade. That gives Coolidge five years of DC-CAS testing to bring up its scores before she starts high school.

The upshot: Don't make DCPS' problem the parents' problem -- or their children's. Thank you.

(see TESTIMONY, p. 12)

**TESTIMONY** from p. 11 \_\_\_\_\_

By **TOBY SUSSE**

My name is Toby Susse. I live in Michigan Park in Ward 5. My husband owns a business near Eastern Market in Ward 6. Our son, Daniel, is an African-American boy currently in second grade at Shepherd Elementary School in Ward 4.

Daniel has been going to Shepherd since he was in kindergarten. We chose Shepherd for its academic strengths, its International Baccalaureate program, its offering of languages, music and arts, its strong parental involvement, and its diverse community. In addition, we chose Shepherd because it is a school that feeds into Deal and Wilson.

**Any boundary changes and/or proposed legislation should reaffirm the successful feeder policy so that out-of-boundary students automatically have the option to continue with their classmates to the same destination school.**

This policy promotes stability and continuity. With his placement at Shepherd and future placements at Deal and Wilson, I have confidence that my son will get a good-quality K-12 public education. As a consequence, my family is more likely to stay as District residents and we are more likely to invest and be involved in Shepherd and DCPS activities.

Those of us who are out-of-boundary families choose to do so with additional costs and burdens. We get up earlier to get our children to school. We spend more in money and time on transportation. We face more challenges in coordinating drop-off and pick-up schedules. We do all of this to make sure our children get the best possible education available to them – and such parental investment should be recognized and rewarded.

Without the policy, when Daniel reaches fifth grade, in-boundary classmates would know where they were going in sixth grade. Daniel and out-of-boundary classmates would either be going to their neighborhood school for sixth grade – in Daniel's case, this would be the same K-8 school we chose not to send him to before – or they would need to go back into the lottery and hope for good luck. **It would be a system of the haves and have-nots in the same classroom, defined simply by a student's home address.** Friends would be separated, parents who have been collaborating for up to seven years would be dispersed, and fifth-grade teachers would have less purpose to coordinate with

their sixth-grade counterparts, since only a portion of their students would continue to the same destination school.

Without the policy, long-term planning for families becomes more challenging. The prospect and uncertainty of having to enter three lotteries (one for elementary school, one for middle school, and one for high school) would be unacceptable to many parents, especially until there are more high-quality options for sixth grade and beyond. They would then either have to find a K-12 charter school or leave the District for a better chance for a strong K-12 education. Schools like Shepherd would face a mass exodus of out-of-boundary families.

Those that did choose to stay at Shepherd would have less incentive to invest, in both time and money, as they would no longer have a long-term commitment to the school and school system – **or rather, the school system would no longer offer the same long-term commitment to them.**

In short, DCPS should keep its promise to out-of-boundary parents and any legislation should reaffirm the current feeder policy.

**BEHAVIORS** from p. 9 \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 2:** If behaviors persist, the classroom teacher or special area teacher should call the parent to advise them that the teacher will meet with the student for the purpose of goal setting.

One of the following staff members may be a resource for this process: Principal, Counselor, IB Coordinator, SPED Coordinator, Social Worker, Counselor or Instructional Coach. The teacher may contact the personnel directly or by completing a Student in Need of Assistance form (C) and placing it in the appropriate mailbox. The teacher should phone parent(s) to inform them of the goal(s) sheet and include them in the goal setting process. An e-mail or note may be sent only if unable to reach parents by phone. After two weeks, parent(s) should be contacted regarding the student's response to the goals set. Each parent contact should be documented on the phone log (D).

**Step 3:** If Level 1 behaviors have not improved after 4 weeks and/or 5 Staff-Handled Problem Behavior Forms have been completed within a 4 week time-frame, an Office Referral should be made. At the time of the referral all Staff Handled Problem Forms (A) and the Office Referral Form (E), should be submitted.

(see DISCIPLINE p. 13)

## DISCIPLINE from p. 12\_\_\_\_\_

### Level 1- In School Administrator Administered Disciplinary Actions:

After school detention, loss of privileges (i.e. field trip, participation in classroom party or special treat), exclusion from extracurricular activities, written reflection, conflict resolution, loss of recess, mediation, or similar actions that do not result in student's loss of academic instructional time.

### Level 2 Behaviors Include:

- ⇒ Abusive language (threat of physical harm, offensive racial/sexual comments)\*
- ⇒ Fighting (defined as actions that require a visit to the nurse due to injury)
- ⇒ Forgery, theft\*
- ⇒ Property damage\*
- ⇒ Skipping class\*
- ⇒ Vandalism (irreversible destruction of school property)
- ⇒ Violation of district technology guidelines\*

Level 2 behaviors should be referred to the office at the teacher's discretion\*. The teacher will complete an Office Referral Form (E) to be sent to the office. Students able to stay in the classroom may be put in isolated instruction. **The appropriate personnel will call for the student when instruction is least interrupted and an administrator is available.** Students in a fight may be sent to the office immediately with a Discipline Referral. If there is a fight, call the office and the school security guard will come and escort the students to the office. If the security guard is not available, the students may be escorted by another adult or sent to the office with a classmate who was not involved in the altercation. Students involved in the altercation should not be sent together. The school administrator will make contact with the parent. After meeting with the student, an administrator will give a copy of the Discipline Referral form to the student for parent signature. Student should return the signed copy to the office.

### Level 2 - In/Out of School Administrator Administered Disciplinary Actions:

In-school suspension/out-of-school suspension up to five days for first offense; up to 10 days for the second offense, up to 90 days for third offense and beyond.

### Level 3 behaviors include:

- ⇒ Arson

- ⇒ Bomb threat, false alarm
- ⇒ Use, possession of alcohol
- ⇒ Use, possession of prescription or non-prescription drugs
- ⇒ Use, possession of tobacco
- ⇒ Use, possession of weapons

Level 3 behaviors should be referred to the office immediately. Teacher will complete a Shepherd Elementary Office Discipline Referral form to accompany the student. Consequences for students who engage in level 3 behaviors will include removal from the classroom and possibly the school for a period of time. An administrator will notify parents.

### Level 3 - In/Out of School Administrator Administered Disciplinary Actions:

Out-of-school suspension at the discretion of the school administrator

## **International Day: Winter Holiday Celebrations**

Please mark these important dates on your calendars. In addition, please support all resource and classroom teachers in any way you can to make these events successful.

International Day will be divided into two parts:

### PART 1- Annual Holiday Concert

On Wednesday, Dec. 5, our annual holiday concert will take place. This concert will feature songs in English, Spanish, French and Hebrew, and will represent peace themes appropriate to the season. The holiday concert will also include violins and recorders, accompanied by D.C.'s own rapper and beatboxer, Christylez Bacon.

### PART 2- International Day

International day will take place on Thursday, Dec. 20. It will begin in the auditorium where a small set of international dances, arranged by Mr. Giles and Ms. Conte, will occur. Throughout the day, classes will participate in educational and interactive holiday displays from around the world.

Please contact your child's teacher for more details.

--Shepherd's School Culture and Climate Committee



**MILES** from p. 1\_\_\_\_\_

What did you find in the text that caused you to modify your predictions?

**Read more on Family Education:**

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/skill-builder/reading/48610.html#ixzz2DH3qOnPi>

**Morning Arrival**

Parents: Please be reminded that any student arriving after 9 a.m. must be escorted into the building and signed in. STUDENTS MAY NOT ENTER THE BUILDING ALONE!

**Math**

Gone are the days when are students are administered assessments that require them to complete pages and pages of computation problems. Instead, students are asked to apply their understanding of what they may know and solve word problems. Students must read and comprehend, apply what they know and have the endurance to struggle and grapple with problems and not give up. Students need to understand that in some cases they will not get the answer immediately and they should not make impulsive decisions when selecting an answer. We are working hard as a school to approach instruction differently so that our students are prepared to do what is required of them; however, we cannot do the work alone. How can you help?

- ▶ Allow your students to wrestle with solving problems presented to them.
- ▶ Coach your student, guide them and support them but refrain from doing the work and giving your student the answers. It is not always about the right answer, it is about the process.
- ▶ Encourage your student to show their work and explain their thinking.
- ▶ Practice number recognition, addition, subtraction, multiplication and/or division daily. Though students are not often presented with "straight" computation problems, they are still required to do these tasks and often students' errors are computation errors.

**Traffic Safety**

Please proceed cautiously through our school zone.  
Please refrain from talking on the cell phone so that you may remain fully alert.  
Please look for students and parents crossing in the

crosswalk.

Please do not zoom around parked or stopped cars. Plan carefully and arrive early so that you can avoid rushing and forgetting traffic safety rules and procedures.

**Dismissal Reminders**

Please attempt to schedule all appointments after school or on days when school is not in session. However, in the event that your student needs to be released early, please adhere to the following.

- ▶ Please send a note to your child's teacher.
- ▶ Arrive early to allow time for your student to pack their belongings and transition to the main office.
- ▶ Please do not call the office requesting that you child be called to the main office; students will be called when you arrive.
- ▶ Please arrive before 3 p.m. to pick up your student.
- ▶ Students will not be dismissed from the main office between 3 and 3:30 p.m. If you arrive during these times, you will find your student in one of the following locations: aftercare – cafeteria, carpool- library, everyone else – gymnasium.
- ▶ Students remaining at 3:30 p.m. are transitioned to the main hallway.

Thank you for all you do to support our school. We appreciate you!

Warmest regards,

*Jamie B. Miles*

Principal

***Shepherd Elementary School***

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