

SHEPHERD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Minutes of School Advisory Board meeting of AUGUST 31, 2010

Present: Marcie Bane, parent representative; Robyn Brooks, staff representative; Charisse Brossard, parent representative; Marcus Hall, parent representative; Steven King, teacher representative; Joele Michaud, teacher representative; Mark Pattison, PTA president; Jennifer Pauk, parent representative; Don Squires, community representative (parents). Also present: Jamie Miles, principal.

Excused: Lashahn Booth, teacher representative; Mary Thomas, teacher representative.

No community representative from the teachers had yet been selected.

The "Autonomous Status School Review" document was distributed.

SAB calendar: According to yet-unfinalized guidelines, six SAB meetings are required. All meetings will be held Tuesdays at 3:45 p.m. and last 90 minutes, with the possibility of an end-of-June meeting for current and incoming SAB members to meet. Meeting dates are October 12, November 9, January 11, February 8, March 8, May 10 and June 7. All meetings will be public unless specified. Nonmembers who attend are observers with no voice and vote. An additional SAB meeting could come in January with the budget.

SAB officers: Mark Pattison was chosen by acclamation as secretary, and Marcie Bane was chosen by acclamation as SAB chair.

Comprehensive School Plan: Jamie Miles said work needs to be done on the plan and teachers need to be included. Its constitutive elements include teaching and learning, job-embedded professional development, leadership, a safe and effective learning environment, an engaged family and community, special education, and resources.

Under "teaching and learning," much work needs to be done by the school advisory board. The principal highlighted certain results of testing of Shepherd students to illustrate this.

In the DC-CAS, 76 percent of students were proficient in math in 2009, but 63 percent in 2010. In reading, 78 percent were proficient in 2009, but 63 percent in 2010. In math proficiency, 62 percent of boys were proficient (16 percent advanced plus 46 percent proficient), and 59 percent of girls proficient (16 percent advanced plus 43 percent proficient). In reading proficiency, 55 percent of boys were proficient (4 percent advanced plus 51 percent proficient) and 68 percent of girls were proficient (12 percent advanced and 56 percent proficient).

In DIBELS testing, two kindergartners indicated a need for "intensive" help at the beginning of the year, and just one at the end of the year, while 10 needed "strategic" help (not as much as intensive) at the beginning of the year, and six at the end of the year. In first grade, one needed intensive help at the beginning of the year, and six at the end of the year; four needed strategic help at the beginning of the year, and eight at the end of the year. In second grade, six needed intensive help at the beginning of the year, and three at the end of the year; six needed strategic help at the beginning of the year, and three at the end of the year. (DIBELS tests different things over the course of the year and assumes some advancement.)

The TRC testing for reading comprehension proficiency indicated that 7 percent were far below standard, 10 percent below standard and 43 percent proficient at the beginning of the year. At the end of the year, 21 percent were considered far below, 13 percent below, and 16 percent proficient.

Math proficiency in third grade was 50 percent (19 percent advanced plus 31 percent proficient), 68 percent in fourth grade (12 percent advanced plus 56 percent proficient) and 66 percent in fifth grade (21 percent advanced plus 45 percent proficient).

Attendance at Shepherd in 2009-10 was at 99 percent.

Wide-ranging discussion followed on the interpretation and importance of the numbers and how they can be addressed.

There seemed to be no consistent pattern to explain the 2010 numbers vs. the 2009 numbers. While some students receiving special education help can be identified, it does not solely account for the changes. It was theorized that some students are not learning to read until third or even fifth grade, but holding back students a grade is a cumbersome process that virtually requires the parents' approval before it happens. There has been no such problem in parents choosing to have their children repeat pre-K. DCPS addressed the issue in part by moving back the deadline for birthdays from Dec. 30 to Sept. 30.

The testing also indicates that boys are falling behind girls. Parents may not be aware that their sons are not proficient, coupled with concern that boys' interest in reading wanes.

Ideas included but were not limited to:

- The PTA including a line item of \$1,800 for Discovery Communications testing.
- A reordering of our book/library stock, since most of the school's literature is fiction -- but most of what is tested on comes from nonfiction.
- Greater parent awareness of such approaches as reading with/to their children; making time for their children following school pickup beyond dinner and bedtime.
- A school-wide reading program.
- A concerted push to check out library texts.
- Educating parents on principles of a supportive home environment for education and holding them accountable. The school extends to the home – set the tone. A more positive reinforcement may be called for.
- A contract to be signed by parents outlining the school's expectations of them.
- Establishing book clubs (or "novel groups"); this need not be a teacher responsibility, but something that could be undertaken by the PTA's Academic Affairs Committee.

- Training, and post-training resources, for teachers.
- A “buddy program” linking, say, first- and fourth-graders to help the younger students with homework, reading, and general togetherness. Teaching helps students learn.
- Shutting out such distractions as TV, video games, iPods and cell phones.
- Outreach by the PTA and the SAB to families of students not currently in aftercare due to financial and transportation concerns. There are currently 150 students in aftercare in a student population of 353. Students in aftercare can have a “Power Hour” of tutoring or instruction with a teacher, or with an aide who is degreed. The one-hour maximum for “Power Hour” is a DCPS policy. Is it the students in aftercare who need support, and if so, what kind of support?
- A monthly International Baccalaureate-related project for parents to work on together with their children.

Jamie Miles will draft a plan and circulate it via e-mail with the SAB with root cause analysis and overall goals. Other informational points that may factor into the plan:

- 9/11 has made it more difficult to volunteer in the school, what with fingerprinting and TB test requirements. D.C. Public Schools’ off-site fingerprinting machine broke down, and B&W Stat Lab is too overworked to do a clinic at the school for parents interested in volunteer – and has wait times of up to an hour for a TB test with eager parents hoping to get cleared. Two CVS drugstores on Wisconsin Avenue offer testing, with a \$5 coupon on its Web site. Volunteering protocols are a DCPS policy ignored by many schools, but not at Shepherd.
- There are 12 sets of books, each geared to a specific topic, at the school.
- Students who are at an advanced level will get 30-minute interventions to support extra enrichment, just as a struggling student would. Parents need to be fully partnered in this.
- Summer school seemed to help students. The Saturday Academy of winter-spring 2009 drew the students for whom it could help most, and it also helped. There were 210 students in the Saturday program at its peak. Doing Saturday Academy again would cost about \$14,000. There may be some money for that tucked away in the school budget. The PTA may have to help pay for security and snacks. There is no money for Saturday language studies.
- Now, every Shepherd student has had language from the start of their enrollment here. The question is how second-language instruction has affected achievement levels.
- There is great consistency in the school’s phonics program. The fifth grade phonics intervention program is “Wilson Read.” The lessons are 10 minutes long.
- Finding ways to support our teachers.

- Finding ways to increase parental engagement, since parental engagement costs nothing. Coupled with this is a need to change the mindset of the students.

At the end of the discussion, the theme for 2010-11 was selected of Parent Involvement in Academics. One aim is to have something in place for parents by Back to School Night Sept. 15.

Two committees were formed. One is a Parental Involvement Committee consisting of Charisse Brossard, Jennifer Pauk, Don Squires and Marcie Bane. The other is an Academic Enrichment Committee consisting of Mark Pattison, Mary Thomas, Marcus Hall and Joele Michaud.

Charisse Brossard volunteered to serve on a Budget Committee that will be constituted on an ad hoc basis.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting will take place TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, at 3:45 p.m. in the school library.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Pattison, secretary
Shepherd Elementary SAB