

SHEPHERD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Minutes of Local School Advisory Team of FEBRUARY 8, 2011

Present: Marcie Bane (chair), Mark Pattison (secretary); teacher representatives Steven King and Mary Thomas, staff representative Robyn Brooks, community representative Don Squires, parent representatives David George and Jennifer Pauk; also, principal Jamie Miles.

Not present: teacher representatives Joele Michaud and LaShahn Booth, and parent representative Charisse Brossard.

Test Results: We need an “advanced” column, even if the number under “advanced” is 0. The principal said Discovery Education did the results, and that the figures distributed to the LSAT were pulled directly from the screen. “Test 2” was conducted just before winter break, and “Test 3” was conducted the second half of January. Students continue to struggle in “number sense” and “measurement.” Troubles also with multi-step problems, tracking zeroes, incomplete grasp of equation facts (such as multiplication). Simple computation errors and not reading problems all the way through may also be issues. Also the school is doing battle with life skills and laziness. Even so, Shepherd’s scores are superior to other elementary schools in its cluster. There is one more Discovery Test yet to take, and DC-BAS tests will be the first week of March. There are five additional standards to be added for grades 3-5 that they will be tested on, although some of those standards may not yet have been introduced in a classroom setting. Reaching and mat to be introduced first, with others introduced by 2013.

Minutes: The notes from the Jan. 4 conference call, which had been previously e-mailed, were reviewed. They will not be posted. The November minutes will be available for approval at the next LSAT meeting.

Computer Lab: Student excitement over the lab’s completion was reported. There should be enough computers in the lab for each student in a class to use. Physical improvements were made along with electrical improvements. The school is working on acquiring headphones and educational software. Students use the computers to publish, to make Power Point presentations, and to conduct Web quests. Laptops are available on a cart for checking out. The principal said she wants more access points for laptop use. We have cables, but that can get messy — but all of the laptops are usable.

TV-Turnoff: Students who are participating in TV-Turnoff will have their pictures on a bulletin board, along with what they say they do when they’re not watching TV.

International Baccalaureate: The principal has talked to the director to check on our application following November’s IB site visit.

Budget: Ms. Michaud and Ms. Thomas were given an overview of the budget, which almost certain to be cut from last year. The 13 percent cut estimate that came from D.C. Public Schools is a worst-case scenario. Budgets ordinarily would have been submitted by this time, but DCPS is working on finding more money to avert the worst-case scenario.

Based on the 2010-11 budget, a 13 percent cut would come to \$683,669.35.

Four spaces at Shepherd will be available through the lottery. The 2011-12 enrollment is predicted to come in at 358-361. Class sizes would be higher, but without additional positions.

Item #69, classroom supplies, could be set at \$8,000.

Item #93, computers, the goal is four in each room, although Shepherd can start with two. Cutting the current budget item in half will still allow the purchase of 12 computers.

Item #51, we're on the cut. We may need the position, we may not.

Item #105, IB coordinators, need not be a full-time job. Unlike what was said at a January DCPS budget advisory meeting, DCPS will fund only IB startup costs, which would not include Shepherd.

Item #68: We go past budget DCPS lacks in.

On item #113, professional development, also comes after school testing.

Custodial overtime: We may overshoot it (snowfalls), but DCPS kicks in somehow.

For 2011-12, there will be two kindergartens. There is a push to keep three classrooms for next year's third grade. Only if the numbers aren't justified for third grade will we go to a third kindergarten.

Even if Special Education coach goes, we'd have to take 13% off the reduced budget figure.

The average teacher salary, including benefits, is \$84,026. But DCPS does not give Shepherd, or any school, precise salary figures based on the level of experience of the current faculty, not to mention negotiated salary increases.

A split position of International Baccalaureate coordinators and instructional coach was not seen as doable. It's possible the IB position could be made half-time in a future year. The instructional coach position is cheaper than analogous positions elsewhere. It may be possible to cut the I job on paper. IB coordinators aren't easy to find; it's possible the position could be split with another school.

The custodians cannot be placed on a fixed split schedule. Mr. Kelly is the only one who can both open and close the building on the same day, and Mr. Friday can neither open nor close.

One instructional coach is a mandated position. For a school our size, having three custodial personnel is also mandatory.

A librarian need not be full time.

Instructional coaches support teachers, also manage DIBELS and other assessments.

All cuts result in others taking on added responsibilities other staff would rather not do.

The administrative assistant and the business manager positions are not on the table.

There are possible saving on a part-time bilingual teacher, but we have to keep the same budget figure until the numbers drop.

How tight would we pack the “specials” teachers’ schedules? The next draconian cuts would be in making art and music part tie. The French teacher is now teaching four days a week, 45 minutes per class. Language acquisition theory was discussed. Would fewer days but longer blocks of time increase comprehension? There are no language norm tests, but assessments are made – not a way to assess how intercurricular been in FLES system; it’s not designed to five students fluency.

It may be that, upon entering pre-K, one of the two languages would not be offered. That conversation needs to be had.

Once DCPS gives the budget numbers to each principal, those principals have two weeks to work with the numbers and return it to DCPS, saying how the money will be allocated.

Any employees cut from Shepherd could be snatched up by other DCPS facilities, although a job fair would probably be more effective.

The next worst case scenario would be making music, art and the librarian position part-time. But special teachers are needed at some level, and it’s what gives Shepherd its character.

The principal is required to submit a balanced budget. The LSAT is not required to advise the principal toward a balanced budget.

Shepherd is supposed to get a separate IB budget for supplies and training.

A full-time counselor is not required.

Concern was expressed on behalf of teachers regarding Shepherd’s ability to meet Adequate Yearly Progress as per the No Child Left Behind law.

The LSAT will continue the conversation via e-mail.

The next scheduled LSAT meeting will be TUESDAY, MARCH 8, at 3:45 p.m. in the school library.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Pattison, secretary
Shepherd Elementary LSAT