

Minutes of Shepherd Elementary LSAT Meeting March 7, 2011

Present:

Principal Miles; M. Bane, parent, chair; J. Michaud, teacher, bldg. rep; M. Thomas, teacher; R. Brooks, admin. asst.; D. Squires, comm. Rep; J. Pauk, parent; C. Brossard, parent; L. Booth, teacher; S. Pruitt, parent

DCPS Scorecard

Ms. Miles shared a pilot prototype of a Scorecard brochure prepared by DCPS with information about individual schools to be provided to prospective parents to help evaluate schools for their children. The Scorecard we reviewed contained information about Shepherd in three categories: Academic Enrichment, Wellness and Fitness, and Arts and Culture, and included selected student test statistics, survey results reflecting attitudes of students, parents and staff, and facilities information. Ms. Miles solicited feedback from the LSAT to relay to DCPS.

Among the comments on the Scorecard:

If the data is to be updated only every 2 years, it seems too infrequent to be useful.

The physical quality of the Scorecard (glossy paper, full color) seemed like it probably cost more to produce than it was worth, especially given that much, if not all, of the same information is already on-line.

The term "computer lab" (among the facilities listed) is a somewhat antiquated term, given how computers are used and dispersed throughout Shepherd and other schools.

Median test scores, without further breakdown, don't say much about actual student achievement and can be very misleading.

Facilities category lists music, art rooms but don't say anything about whether the school has teachers to teach these subjects.

Is the IB program properly described as academic enrichment?

Student progress section (as apart from test scores) is misleading and confusing.

Why are they doing this?

Budget/Enrollment

Based upon enrollment numbers and the existing waiting list, it looks like enrollment will stay about the same as this year and Shepherd will have 3 classes in each of 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades with 2 classes in each of Pre-K, K and 4th and 5th grades.

The budget came out the previous weekend and was not as bad as it could have been. The target teacher to student ratio will be 1-20 for PK, K, 1st and 2nd grades and 1-25 for 3rd, 4th and 5th grades.

Principal Miles will check on one ambiguity in the budget, which could affect the number of teachers Shepherd is allotted for next year. If the ambiguity is resolved not in Shepherd's favor, the LSAT will meet by phone on 3/17 at 8:30pm to discuss how to deal with the resulting staffing issues.

Aftercare

Ms. Miles brought up the need for a committee to address aftercare for next year.

Maintenance

Shepherd will be bringing on an additional person for the maintenance staff next year.

Bathroom Abuse

There is a problem with students abusing the bathrooms, including urinating on the radiators, throwing wet paper towels, and other forms of disgusting behavior.

Certain parents are in denial that their children could be doing this. Several ideas were discussed on how to deal with the problem. It was noted that children caught vandalizing the bathroom cannot be made to help clean them up as it may be viewed as corporal punishment. It was suggested that students develop more of a relationship with the maintenance staff and be familiar with specifically what they do to clean the bathrooms with the thought that they may be less likely to abuse an area that they associate with an actual person, instead of thinking of the bathroom as a place unconnected with anyone at the school.

Bullying - Socialization

It was noted that children need time and opportunities to socialize with each other and talk about everything that they read and experience. They really do not get that opportunity during the school day. It was suggested that perhaps parents could sponsor book clubs, where children could all read the same book in advance and get together for an hour at someone's house (with a parent coordinator) to talk about it – and to socialize and talk about other things on their minds.

Partnership with Drew Elementary School

Ms. Miles mentioned that as part of the Family Action (Achievement?) Network, Shepherd would be partnering with Drew Elementary School in Ward 7 for joint projects/activities to be determined.

Respectfully submitted –
Don Squires