

## **SHEPHERD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

### **Minutes of Local School Advisory Team meeting of JULY 24, 2012**

**Present:** Nancy Ulba, Tia Holt (teacher representatives), Robyn Brooks (staff representative), Jamie Miles (principal), Sherilyn Pruitt, Mark Pattison (parent representatives).

**June minutes:** Minutes were approved.

**Safety Patrol:** Ms. Holt to work on that.

**Elections:** Ms. Ulba nominated Mark Pattison as chair. Mark deferred, and suggested Sherilyn Pruitt. Sherilyn accepted. Mark Pattison was then nominated as secretary, and he accepted that.

**Community reps:** There was discussion about community reps for both the teachers and the parents. No solid leads had emerged from parent-led efforts to select a community rep, and teachers had not started their efforts. It was determined that if no community reps are found, the LSAT will proceed with its business without any.

**Meeting schedule:** Mrs. Miles asked to wait until July 30 before establishing a slate of meetings. It seems July 30 is the date DCPS meeting schedules will be overlaid onto the school system's calendar.

**Priorities:** The LSAT decided to continue with three priority programs: Academic Enrichment; Culture and Climate; and Community Engagement.

**Safety:** Ms. Holt said Shepherd had identified students who would be candidates for a safety patrol. A letter would be sent to them. There would be 12 students, although not all would be doing patrol duties at the same time. There would be training on August 30 at a time to be determined. Parents would also be sought to help out on a Patrol Committee. This would be a year-long commitment. Parents, for instance, could monitor the morning patrols. Ms. Holt would like donations for activities throughout the year and an end-of-the year event.

**Recruitment and Retention:** An online survey tool was developed following the June LSAT meeting. Although it has not been activated, Mrs. Miles said there seemed to be very little fall-away over the summer. A plurality of families not returning to Shepherd are doing so because they are moving out of the District. A few are doing home schooling, one (and possibly a second) is choosing a private school, and one a charter school.... Enrollment pre-registration rate has hit 85percent -- best-ever results for the school. Even so, some did not submit proof of residency. An effort will be made to get families to firm up their registration records. If another 20 students get properly registered, Shepherd will automatically get another classroom teacher; currently, we are allotted 17 teachers, although two are reserved for language -- and we have enough second graders already registered to merit a third classroom. Our projected enrollment is 333 students, but we may need to have 363 in hand before getting a new teacher, and it is better to get a teacher while there is more time left in summer vacation. ... As for new students, there are six brand-new in-boundary kindergarten students; a new in-boundary family with three

children from pre-K to second grade; new families on Floral and Fern streets; and a family whose children had been in a French international school in another state.

**Community Engagement:** The LSAT will use the September Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4A meeting to recruit attendees for specific volunteer tasks at Shepherd; Mrs. Miles will develop a list of tasks for attendee-volunteers to help the school. Mark will monitor for the upcoming PSA (Patrol Service Area) 4A meeting to recruit helpers for the safety patrol and safety issues.

**First Day of School:** The 7:45 a.m. start time for the pep rally is correct. It was thought to get parents and students in early with more time to (re-)familiarize themselves with the surroundings and for school staff and the PTA to address issues like fees, the 180 Fund, volunteer assignments and the like. The pre-K group will not be there, though, so it is important for school and PTA representatives to be on hand for the Teddy Bears Picnic Saturday, Aug. 18, 11:30-1 p.m. for new students from pre-K through first grade so that new parents can get schooled in the Shepherd Way. Ms. Ulba, Ms. Holt and Mark to check their schedules to see if they can participate.

**Back to School Night:** The 6 p.m. start time here is also correct; it has proven impossible to end things at 8 p.m. with a 6:30 p.m. start time. Representatives from the Shepherd Park Public Library and the Tifereth Israel tutoring program have already asked to be part of the activities.

**Hiring:** A new English Language Learning teacher, Elyssa Rosch, has been hired. The school's Hispanic outreach has been deficient. But Ms. Rosch is fluent in both written and verbal Spanish and may be able to offer help in translating and interpreting. (No such deficiencies have been identified among the school's Ethiopian population.) A Spanish teacher has been chosen but has to go through DCPS' hiring process.

**Activity Nights:** Mrs. Miles would like to get back to monthly (if possible) enrichment nights such as Math night and Reading Night. She has also secured a partnership with Wolf Trap for PK-5 activities.

**Pre-K:** The question was raised as to whether any D.C. public school starts at kindergarten. Mrs. Miles could think of none. The question was then raised as to why DCPS does not make pre-K mandatory. This would settle some of the enrollment churn and keep families together rather than subjecting all families, in-boundary and not, to a lottery.

**School size:** Shepherd is at capacity, and has been for some years now. Upcoming renovations will help ease the space crunch. As it is, Mrs. Miles could think of only three schools that are smaller in size than Shepherd. Many schools in D.C. operate under capacity and operate not only PK-4, but also PK-3 and even PK-2 programs.

**Grants:** Shepherd is not a Title I school and as such is ineligible for many grants available for public schools. A source list is needed for which Title II schools like Shepherd are eligible for grants.

**Long view of Shepherd:** Mrs. Miles said we have to look at how we see ourselves as a school. International Baccalaureate is a great thing, but DCPS doesn't support it in quite the same way it said it would when Shepherd first sought IB certification. Further, language teachers are counted as classroom teachers and there is a perennial fight to keep them yet get the necessary number of classroom teachers. Budget cuts the last two years have exacted their toll; it would be nice to still have a librarian, but the money just isn't there for it. If schools are expected to cut further I 2013-14, the non-instructional personnel will have to go first but it gets exceedingly harder to cut. The point was brought up that if different Friends of the Library groups in the city could get the ear of Councilmember Jack Evans to introduce a bill adding \$10 million to the D.C. Public Library budget, then perhaps of "League of LSATs" could provide enough pressure to have the council improve budgeting for DCPS.

**Partnerships:** With the departure of Mr. King, the Science Fair will continue as will Shepherd's partnership with NOAA. Ms. Ulba will run the Science Fair. Other partnerships will include Architects in the Classroom, the National Building Museum, Class Acts, Young Playwrights Theater (for poetry and drama) and Arts for All. Mrs. Miles would like to continue the Kennedy Center partnership as well. It may be possible for lawyers or a law firm willing to tutor.

**Next meeting:** The next meeting has been tentatively set for Tuesday, Sept. 11, at 4 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark Pattison, secretary  
Shepherd Elementary School LSAT