

SHEPHERD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Minutes from Local School Advisory Team meeting of SEPTEMBER 11, 2014

Present: Keith White (parent representative), chair; parent representatives: Aeva Doomes (briefly), James Elliott, Eve Lotter; teacher representatives: Beverly Johnson, Gail Liggins, Nicole Pethtel; staff representative: Robyn Brooks; Washington Teachers Union representative: Tia Holt; community representative: Carl Bergman; supplemental members: Mark Pattison, Kesha Pendergrast; plus Jamie Miles, principal, and Zara Barry-Young, Mary Jane Patterson fellow.

Not present: Robin George, teacher representative; David Trimble, PTA president.

Minutes: Minutes of the July 31 meeting were approved.

LSAT Responsibilities: Pattison and Pendergrast to stay another year on the LSAT as per the LSAT guidelines issued by D.C. Public Schools.

LSAT Committees: Shepherd has experienced success in recent years by having no committees on its LSAT, opting instead for the Follow-Up/Follow-Through (FUFT) process in which a person who accepts responsibility for carrying out a task can report on it at the next LSAT meeting or via the LSAT listserv. Shepherd's experience was that committees often fell by the wayside and lacked accountability.

LSAT Officers: Keith White, who had been serving as interim chair, said his job responsibilities may change during the school year, which would prevent him from carrying out his

planned Odyssey of the Mind contest. However, this should not deter him from serving as LSAT chair, nor from helping in the Igniting Creative Energy initiative. White was confirmed as LSAT chair. ... Mark Pattison demurred continued service as secretary. James Elliott agreed to take on the role, with tutorials as needed from Mark. Elliott was confirmed as LSAT secretary.

Test Results: Shepherd's EOY (End Of Year) test scores shows that 73 percent were proficient in reading – slightly down from the year before – and 76 percent were proficient in math. In the Text Reading Comprehension tests, Shepherd's score hovers between 89.4 and 89.5 percent; a 90 percent score would have prompted Jamie Miles being turned into a “Principal Sundae.” Shepherd's special education population continued to struggle. About 11 students currently in fifth grade were not reading at grade level. About 10 percent of current third graders had challenges as well. Third graders are taking a pilot test for the tech piece first. ... Shepherd is continuing to prepare for the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) test. PARCC will give more nonfiction and complex texts in its assessments. ... There is also a learning curve on training students for taking tests online. ... Shepherd's goals remain 90 percent proficiency on TRC reading tests, and to get all students reading at grade level or above. ... All Shepherd students can read; there are no issues keeping them from reading. The issue is comprehension. ... A new systemic math assessment is coming, and a new testing regimen will replace DICBELS.

International Baccalaureate: IB pushes comprehension and gives a needed stress to nonfiction. Kids see real-life

application to math and reading. Upper grades don't always mesh as well as in lower grades. The inquiry part of IB is good -- asking questions -- but it's not always in synch with what D.C. Public Schools wants. ... Data support that IB increases test scores. If you put all the elements together, the results should be pleasing. IB equips children with skills; if they have these skills, they'll do well no matter where they are. ,, Pressures still impinge upon the IB framework that's been installed. Shepherd is up for an IB review in the spring, which includes a self-study. ... The parental piece of IB used to include boot camps at Shepherd. Ms. Hart is working on workshops/boot camps. ... Community engagement, long an LSAT priority, is another important piece of the IB experience.

Demographics: Shepherd is currently at 330 students. Last year, 90 of 317 students (28.4 percent) lived in the attendance area; this year's in-boundary numbers could be 5 percentage points more due to the new pre-K/3 class and the third kindergarten class.

Hiring: All new staff hires for 2014-15 had been made by June.

Review of LSAT Priorities: Traffic safety is an issue to be addressed. It has joined Parental Engagement, Academic Enrichment Through Activities, and Community Engagement as the four key priorities of the 2014-15 LSAT. Culture and Climate, which had been an LSAT priority last year, has elements in each of the four priorities. The LSAT and the school are tasked with finding ways for parents to reinforce lessons, and keeping parent and community engagement together. Keith White noted that last year, a lot went on at Shepherd. "It was advertised. But it was like spaghetti" – a

comment LSAT members saw as apt.

Academic Enrichment: TV-Video Game Turnoff, Mad Science, Math Counts all fit in this priority. TVTO did not generate the numbers in 2013-14 as it had in previous years. It had been a PTA activity, which transferred to the LSAT. The LSAT can continue sponsorship, but with PTA buy-in, plus a definitive drop-off spot for membership forms – the PTA mailbox (still not up yet), the students’ teachers, Ms. Brooks, but one place. Mark Pattison will get in touch with PTA president David Trimble on this issue, and develop a standard operating procedure. ... Clubs will start in October. Teachers have responsibility for clubs, so club types cannot be mandated. Math Counts is a competition and there is no guarantee it will be at Shepherd. But GeoPlunge, the Spelling Bee and the Science Fair are expected to continue. ... Curriculum Night has already been scheduled. ... It may be helpful to use the PTA and Shepherd Park listservs to recruit for Odyssey of the Mind and Igniting Creative Energy. ... Last year’s International Day had very poor parent participation. It may be helpful to ask parents of particular ethnic backgrounds to help the teachers with this. Nicole Pethtel and Beverly Johnson to take the lead in identifying parents. ... The Spanish teacher has done some translations to keep Spanish-speaking families in the loop with school events.

Traffic Safety: Walk to School Day is set for Oct. 8. A school safety Committee has been formed. Walking to school also plays in to wellness and fitness. One idea is a “Pace Car” program in which parents pledge to drive safely by schools, following Shepherd’s pickup and dropoff policies. There will be prizes for those classrooms that have the largest number (percentage) of parents signing this pledge. Magnetized

bumper stickers will also aid in the effort. ... Based on a series of spring meetings, a plan was developed by Jennifer Hefferan of the D.C. Dept. of Transportation for Shepherd. This plan still needs reviews, particularly with arrival and dismissal. Traffic is better in the mornings with the new 14th Street entrance. Afternoons are still problematic, especially with double-parking by parents. Teachers are winding up instruction earlier to make sure students are ready for carpool at dismissal.

Wal-Mart: Keith White has been serving on a panel advising Wal-Mart on items it should stock in its forthcoming Fort Totten Square location, and asked a Wal-Mart executive about grants being made available to Shepherd. Grants of up to \$2,500 can be obtained, he said, by going directly to the store; grants for larger amounts require a bit more effort. Carl Bergman to work with Keith on this effort.

December Service Project: The Shepherd Park Citizens Association would like to conduct some kind of service project on Thursday, Dec. 11, and wants to invite the school to participate in the effort. The nature of the project, three months away, is still undefined. Jamie Miles and Shepherd staff may have ideas as to community needs and how to engage students. Carl Bergman said he would meet with a group called Children's Homeless Playtime on project specifics. This would tie in with both the LSAT goal of community engagement and an IB goal of service-based learning/

Candidates' Forum: The Shepherd Park Citizens Association also plans to host a forum for candidates for attorney general and the at-large seat on the D.C. Council Wednesday, Oct. 22 at Congregation Tifereth Israel and is seeking co-sponsors. If child care could be arranged, the PTA would be an ideal co-

sponsor. But if PTA leadership felt it could not do so, the LSAT could also be a natural choice.

Other Business: Harold Confer, the husband for former Shepherd business manager June Confer, died September 8.

Next Meeting: The date is tentatively set for WEDNESDAY, OCT. 8, 4 p.m., at the school.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Pattison
LSAT ex-secretary