



# Capitol Hill Cluster School

## *Where Every Child Achieves*

Peabody | Watkins | Stuart-Hobson | A DC Public School

### **LSAT Minutes - Northeast Library Decmeber 5, 2017**

**LSAT Attendees:** Ebon McPherson, Allyson Kitchel, Kip Plaisted, Tom Guglielmo, Nakisha Winston, Kathleen Turner, Samah Norquist, Katherine Moxley, Elizabeth ODonnell, Ann Brigioli, Lona Valmoro, Jeff Seltzer, Principal Bell, AP Jackson, AP Croft, Sherry Trafford and Principal Comeforo. (A number of teachers and parents also attended.)

#### **General Announcements**

- Enrollment projections for all schools expected next week by DCPS. Principals will have time to review them prior to their release to LSAT

#### **Stuart Hobson - Principal's Updates** (Provided by AP Turner)

##### General Updates

- The enrollment audit went well. Of all the records reviewed, only three records were flagged for review. They are in the process of resolving those issues now.
- Mr. Campbell is now the primary point of contact for all 7<sup>th</sup> grade math classes.
- Winter sports season is in full swing and going well.
- Encouraged families to attend the upcoming performances of Willy Wonka.

##### Comprehensive School Plan

- SH continues to focus on supporting struggling students. To do this, they use Response to Intervention (RTI) which is a way to identify and support students who need additional supports to be socially or academically successful.
- Additionally, Stuart Hobson will begin having Panther PARCC Prep which will be funded through use of the \$57,000 grant we received from DCPS for Excellence through Equity funds. Intended to help students prepare for the upcoming PARCC which happens in April, Panther PARCC Prep sessions will take place on Saturdays beginning in late January and continuing through early March, targeting approximately 150 students. Sessions are expected to run from 10AM-2PM and will include a social component in addition to the academic

supports.

- In response to the situation at Ballou, attendance at SH was briefly discussed.
- SH has a 95% “in seat” attendance rate and follows the DCPS protocol faithfully. For those students that do not stay in classrooms, counseling is offered.

## **Watkins & Peabody- Principal’s Updates**

### General Updates

- The enrollment audit at Peabody and Watkins went well. Only three records were flagged at Peabody. Principal Bell did not have the exact number of flagged records at Watkins available at the meeting. All flagged records at Peabody and Watkins have been remedied.
- Four teachers attended the NAEYC Conference in November to learn more about the latest research and best practices with other early childhood educators and leaders.
- Creative Curriculum training continues. Students may be introduced to new Creative Curriculum practices and activities in the upcoming months.
- Many families attended the Peabody Open House. Our next one will be in February.
- Question raised regarding no winter holiday celebration at Peabody. Principal Bell said the music teachers in consultation with parents decided to partner with SH for Willy Wonka in place of a Peabody-specific winter celebration. All students learned Willy Wonka songs in class. Peabody will do a school wide concert event in the spring.
- Watkins 5<sup>th</sup> graders went to SH for their first school visit to preview what they can expect if they attend SH next year. Kids loved it.
- The Principal Advisory Committee started in November.
- Watkins held a successful Honors Assembly and is working on Cornerstone Project showcases for each grade.
- Approximately 25-30 families attended the Watkins Open House in November.

### Comprehensive School Plan

- The focus area in November was “relationships”.
- The 8:00-8:40am time, Collaborative Morning Time (CMT) is used for various teacher meetings, trainings, and planning. This time is used, in part, to review Responsive

Classroom with teachers.

- Watkins is participating in the School Climate Initiative. Opportunities to engage with families include WATCH Dog Dads, increasing positive contact with families on an ongoing basis (including parent teacher conferences), Thanksgiving feasts (and similar events), and Cornerstone showcases.
- Teachers completed their Insight Surveys in November to review what is working well, overall leadership, learning environment, and family engagement and operations. This survey is anonymous and goes to Central Office and to Watkins leadership for review. The feedback is used by admin to continue building our school and teacher culture. Surveys are conducted each year in November and May.
- Question: Will the Bully Patrol come back this year?  
Principal Bell relayed that it might but groundwork needs to be done.
- Mather's parents and AP Jackson are working on setting up the STEM club and are currently seeking additional resources in the way of volunteers to help run and support the program.
- Question: Can we please ask that teachers send out Parent-Teacher Conference sign ups 2-3 weeks in advance? Principal Bell, AP Jackson and teachers present confirmed this is the current expectation.
- Question: Have we considered having a class about bodily changes students may be experiencing. Response: It is not something implemented by DCPS. However, it's not the first time it has been brought up and there is thought being given to these requests. The subject is covered in 6th grade.

#### Substitutes at Watkins

- Principal Bell reviewed the DCPS substitute process at length.
- We have about 15 subs in our usual rotation. When teachers know they will be out, they typically create a lesson plan that is suitable for a sub to execute. When a teacher is out unexpectedly, team teachers share lesson plans and support. Administrators frequently pop classes in to check on the substitutes. When we know a particular student is going to have a hard time adapting to the substitute, the student may have a "buddy teacher" for the day and spend the day with the team-teacher's class.
- Regular subs are invited to receive the same PD training teachers receive.
- If family members are interested and have a bachelor's degree, they can be certified and brought into the classrooms as hired substitutes. Principals have

discretion to opt to hire those individuals.

- If a substitute is not a great fit at Watkins or Peabody, they may be pulled in to discuss/clarify expectations and support is offered. In most cases, subs are able to receive feedback and use it to improve and align their practice with the Cluster way. For example, if subs have used inappropriate language, taken away recess, or given silent lunch, they may be called in to discuss what Responsive Classroom looks like and how we implement it. However, there have been cases where subs have not been invited back.
- Principal Bell also stressed that, when possible, teachers have conversations with students, reminding them to be on best behavior in their absence.
- Ms. Dickinson also noted that students do come to her when they have issues with subs or any staff and that she continues to encourage them to do so. Also expressed that it was disappointing to hear about students not having good experiences with subs - the admin team puts a lot of effort into supporting subs. The feedback from LSAT is appreciated.
- AP Croft, AP Jackson and Watkins aides do substitute in classrooms.
- Parents are strongly urged to call the Principal or APs if their student reports something that sounds “off.” If administrators don’t know about subs who aren’t a good fit they miss the teachable moment or miss the opportunity to be sure a sub isn’t invited back.
- LEAP is mandatory training (90 mins per week) for teachers. It is scheduled such that it either starts at 8 am (and so cuts into morning meeting and a short period of instruction) or during students specials session and then a short period of instruction. Most schools use a similar schedule where there is a small “loss” of instructional time - teachers are thoughtful about lessons to be executed during their absence.

### **Classroom Behavioral Support**

- There was a robust discussion about classroom behavioral support at Watkins and whether there are perceived problems or real problems in our classrooms.
- We do have students with challenges. We have a significant number of students with mental health and behavioral issues. Each of those students has an action plan tailored to specific needs, formed usually in consultation with those students’ parents. That a plan may be being “implemented” may not be apparent to someone unfamiliar with the plan, i.e. letting the child get off task for a while or letting the child do something that appears “bad” but might be the best that child can do in a hard moment.

- Concern was raised about kids being off task in class and teachers not being able to get administrative back-up to support a child who needed support - resulted in lost instruction. Teachers present voiced that they have never not been able to get an administrator in the room when needed. Still, admin acknowledged the concerns raised as not being acceptable and that there could be reevaluation of crisis response plans to make sure backup is always available.
- Administrators shared deep affection for the children who need support, sadness that at times classrooms have not received the support they needed, and willingness to: 1) re-evaluate where we could improve practices and 2) continue the conversation with the LSAT.
- Perspective offered that when students don't behave the way they should, it still creates an instructional opportunity - it shows students who are not misbehaving how to respond with compassion to people who are different and how to stay focused in a challenging moment, which are valuable life skills.

**Adjourn: 7:55**