



Capitol Hill Cluster School
Where Every Child Achieves
Peabody | Watkins | Stuart-Hobson | A DC Public School

LSAT Meeting Minutes
Watkins - Food Prints Room
March 12, 2018

Attendees: Ebon McPherson, Allyson Kitchel, Tom Guglielmo, Katherine Moxley, Lona Valmoro, Harolyn Brown, Ann Brogioli, Principal Bell, AP Croft, Nakisha Winston, and Principal Comeforo. Three parents were in attendance.

Stuart Hobson's Principal's Updates - Principal Comeforo

General updates

- Stable enrollment at 424 students (plus one discretionary transfer, minus one to neighborhood school)
- Students leave for space camp on Sunday, March 18th - 79 students attending; 13 on full scholarships.
- PARCC starts on April 10th and lasts for a total of 6 weeks.

Budget update

- Stuart-Hobson will have an additional English teacher, full time psychologist, part time custodian (split with Watkins), full funding of City Year, and an investment in technology.
- There were no personnel losses.
- Small cuts were made to the supplies budget, custodial overtime, and administrative premiums. Thanks to PTA fundraising, these funds were able to be allocated to other student needs.

Lottery seats & Family retention

- Lottery seats opening this spring include 5 slots in 6th grade, 3 slots in 7th grade, and 1 slot in 8th grade.

INSIGHT survey - Next steps

- Based on survey feedback, the focus area this Spring is the Evaluation and Observation/Feedback dimension. Teachers were invited to submit a self-coaching plan to request the specific coaching they wanted, i.e. time to observe other teachers, support on a particular technique, etc.
- The second round of teacher evaluations are due on Thursday, March 15th.

Outdoor time for students

- Stuart-Hobson has not had recess for at least 5 years due to logistical challenges. Principal Comeforo supports recess, has had it in his prior schools, and is talking to fellow middle school principals to figure out how they make it work well.

- Now that the budget is complete, we are considering different iterations of a master schedule at Stuart to see what could be possible in the coming school year.

Teacher rep/LSAT rep/community questions

- There was a discussion on the topic of DCPS policies around absences and their effect on grades at the middle school level
 - ✓ Students may receive a “Failure Due to Absence” (F/A): a grade received when there are more than 10 unexcused absences during one term.
 - ✓ If a student is absent more than 20% of the day, s/he is considered fully absent. (DCPS’s 80/20 Rule)
- There was a discussion around rescheduling Parent/Teacher Conferences
 - ✓ There is not yet word from DCPS about rescheduling.
 - ✓ Families are welcome to reach out to teachers at SH directly if needed.

Watkins & Peabody Principal’s Updates - Principal Bell

General updates

- Peabody’s enrollment is 224.
- Watkins’ enrollment is 428 (added three students, lost one student).
- Ms. Harrell has returned from maternity leave. Ms. Walters is out on maternity leave. Administrators continue searching for a temporarily assigned teacher while she is out.

Budget Update

- Budgets have been approved.
- Peabody will not have their own social worker next year due to the minimal need for the position. Any hours that students need met will be completed with help from Watkins’ staff.
- Both the Teacher Leader role (TLI) and the Urban Teacher resident have been approved at Peabody - one PK3 class will be supported by Urban Resident Teacher so the regular teacher will spend part time functioning as instructional coach. The paraprofessional will also remain in the room.
- Principal Bell petitioned for DCPS to add to the Watkins budget a reading specialist, and .5 Spanish position. As a result next year, there will be a full time librarian and a full time Spanish teacher.
- Watkins is also adding a half-time custodian (sharing with Stuart) and a half-time business manager.
- INSIGHT teacher survey - Next steps (agenda item overlooked - summary of plans for spring requested)

Lottery seats & Family retention

- The following lottery seats are opening in Peabody this spring: Pre-K3 – 58, Pre-K4 – 20, Kindergarten – 0
- At Watkins, there will be 24 lottery seats opening. Pending approval from Emerald Becker, DCPS Director of Student Enrollment Initiatives, Watkins is asking to spread out those numbers across three grades: 1st Grade – 10, 2nd Grade – 8, 3rd Grade -- 6

- The current retention rate between Peabody to Watkins (K to 1st Grade) is approximately 60%. When asked why, Principal Bell noted Watkins is larger campus with larger classes. She also attributed some loss to misperceptions about Watkins.
- The PTA has supported retention with happy hours and specific outreach to Peabody families for the last several years.
- LSAT requested that administration please increase outreach to Peabody families and suggested meet and greets with Assistant Principals. Family retention is important to community building.
- Technology Curriculum - in technology, kids work on PARCC prep, coding games, and Typing Agent. Principal Bell has not seen Prodigy being played. Teacher feedback on this time is that it is well-spent and is benefiting students.

Teacher rep/LSAT rep/community questions

- There was a discussion around the schedule for PARCC testing and Saturday Academy
 - ✓ PARCC testing begins on April 8th. Specific dates will be announced in grade level newsletters.
 - ✓ On average, 50 students are attending PARCC Academy at Watkins, according to AP Croft.
 - ✓ So far, two sessions were held - started later this year. Two remain. One was cancelled due to the marathon. The cancelled session will not be made up due to scheduling - it would take the session into the testing window.
 - ✓ PARCC Information Night is March 13th.
- There was a question raised around the schedule for the Equity Work Group and the Equity Reading Group
 - ✓ The Equity Reading Group will be meeting on March 21st. There will be no Achievement Gap meeting this month. Equity and Achievement Gap meetings are alternating months.
- Regarding parent-teacher conferences, schools continue to await word on how to proceed from DCPS.
 - ✓ Parents are encouraged to reach out to teachers directly if needed regarding their child's progress.
 - ✓ Monthly newsletters will go out from Specials Teachers moving forward.
- There was a discussion about school policies around providing candy as a form of reward and withholding recess as a form of punishment.
 - ✓ Ms. Bell noted there is not an official policy at Watkins regarding candy within the school. However, when the issue has arisen with specific parents and/or teachers, parents' preferences that kids not be given candy are honored.
 - ✓ Recess is not supposed to be taken away or shortened as a whole class punishment. Parents noted students have reported this happening on occasion - specific classes discussed. Principal Bell said she will follow up both with teachers and recess staff to stress this is against school policy and should not be done.

Summary of LSAT Chairs' Meeting with DCPS

- Allyson and Ebon gave a report regarding their meeting with DCPS staff, including Chancellor Alexander, Dr. Chapman, Deputy Chancellor Michael Gaal, and members of the DCPS budget team regarding our overall budget.
- Several factors impacted our budget's baseline over the last year. 1) We did not receive Stabilization Funds which we had received last year due to Elliot-Hine transition. 2) Federal funding for aftercare has been significantly decreased.
- Last year's substantial cut was the result of the "right-sizing" of Watkins over the last three years in preparation to transition into Elliot-Hine and then into the new building 2) We no longer receive Title I funding.
- Additional details were provided regarding how schools we perceive as similar to our student population may have other factors influencing their per pupil funding, such as special needs populations or a single building that houses grades PK - 5, etc.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.