



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

LSAT Meeting Minutes
Watkins
May 7, 2018

Attendees: Ebon McPherson, Allyson Kitchel, Tom Guglielmo, Katherine Moxley, Lona Valmore, Jeff Seltzer, Ann Brogioli, Principal Bell, AP Croft, Nakisha Winston, AP Jackson, AP Angry, Liz O'Donnell, Principal Comeforo, Samah Norquist, and Dr. Angela Chapman. Approximately 12 parents were in attendance.

Stuart-Hobson - Principal's Updates

General updates

- Current enrollment is 425, an increase of 1 student.
- The position for 7th grade science teacher has now been filled by Ms. Cheryl Carter.
- Students are half way through PARCC testing with very strong attendance.
- Comprehensive School Plan & Climate Initiative Update - Social Emotional Learning

Learning

- Stuart-Hobson set the goal of increasing student satisfaction (students should love coming to school) and decreasing the number of suspension days per 100 students this school year.
- While the number of suspensions rose, the number of days for which students were absent due to suspension decreased. Principal Comeforo attributes this change in rate to students serving shorter term suspensions.
- School-specific strategies/action-steps include implementing strategies outlined within School Climate Initiative (SCI), practicing restorative justice to address student discipline, monthly pep assemblies, monthly town halls, and embracing the FISH Philosophy
 - a. SCI is being phased out District-wide for the upcoming school year. Principal Comeforo plans to continue with the work that was done during the SCI although they will no longer continue receiving monitoring from Central Office.
 - b. Instead of continuing SCI, next year, DCPS will shift to spend more time and energy training school-based staff on restorative justice practice, bullying prevention, and Chapter 25/discipline through the lens of social-emotional learning.
 - c. One challenge with implementing restorative justice this year has included lack of teacher training. While some staff received training, most staff have not, making it difficult to implement at the classroom

level which is integral to the success of restorative justice as a conflict-resolution tool.

- d. Fish Philosophy suggests when staff have strong comradery, positive attitudes, and joy in their workspace, they are better able to create that positive environment for students. A few examples of this include monthly staff yoga and bi-weekly staff circles.
 - Success for these areas will be measured by the suspension data (as compared to last year's), student satisfaction surveys (administered later in May), and feedback from monthly student focus-groups.

Retention and Enrollment Updates

- Stuart-Hobson is 62% enrolled across grade levels, which is 2nd in DCPS middle schools.
- Stuart-Hobson typically has a 90% retention rate.
- JO Wilson, Watkins and Ludlow-Taylor are the highest numbers of 6th graders at this point (all SH feeder schools)
- Additional strategies for reaching out to families include Principal Comeforo sending out robocalls to 5th grade families at all feeder schools.
- One-on-one phone calls from Principal Comeforo to families who remain unenrolled begin later in May.
- There was a discussion of whether the school has sufficient resources for training teachers in restorative techniques. Principal Comeforo will give this thought and consider asking PTA for additional funds. When asked, both principals agreed to the possibility of collaboration with Watkins and Stuart faculty as these trainings are typically geared toward Middle and High School staff but could be useful for Watkins staff as well.

Watkins & Peabody - Principal's Updates

Hiring for SY 18-19

- Watkins is currently hiring for a custodian, librarian, ELA teacher, and math teacher.
- Mr. Elmusa and Ms. Rountree are leaving Watkins to pursue new and wonderful opportunities outside of DCPS - we wish them very well. .
- Ms. Murdock is retiring at Peabody. Administration is working to hire an outstanding teacher at Peabody.
- In terms of hiring, Watkins is working with the personnel committee (comprised of teachers and staff) to look for the best fit for grade levels and students. Hiring is always fluid - as is true each spring, principals are in communications with all staff regarding their plans for next year.

Enrollment and Retention at Peabody & Watkins

- Peabody is currently 68% enrolled, Watkins is currently 51%
- Peabody's final goal is 223 students.
- Watkins' final goal is 424 students.
- The Watkins Enrollment Team met on April 26th to develop and implement the Enrollment Growth Plan. Mary Welcome who is an Analyst for Enrollment and

- Growth with DCPS also met with the Watkins Enrollment Team.
- Strategies emerging from the Watkins Enrollment Team include
 - Monday, May 7th – Meet and Greet for Kindergarten to 1st Grade (To strengthen the Kindergarten to 1st Grade route)
 - Monday, May 14th -- Teacher Swap Day at Watkins – students will meet teachers for the year ahead in a classroom setting.
 - Additional steps include teacher robo calls, enrollment Saturdays and classroom competitions.
 - A discussion of enrollment and retention issues followed, which included parents in attendance.
 - Attendees discussed that all of these plans are welcome but there was a wish that plans had come earlier in the year. Concern was expressed because May 1st is the DCPS deadline for enrolling at new schools, and families may have already decided to leave. Principal Bell reflected on the year long actions to support enrollment efforts (ie. Fall/Winter Open houses etc.) and took feedback from families on how to improve.
 - There are families leaving the Cluster for charter schools (Latin/Basis) and other Capitol Hill elementary schools and private schools.
 - Parents in attendance expressed disappointment that retention has not been a focus this year. Principal Bell communicated that retention is a focus provided enrollment data over the last 3 years to support the enrollment conversation.
 - Principal Bell said she values current families, wants families to stay, and invited specific feedback from those present for specific action items they would like to see/like to have seen.
 - Dr. Chapman spoke about the overall DCPS shift in enrollment and retention.
 - Schools and principals are now evaluated by enrollment benchmarks much earlier – May 1st and early June.
 - Schools have to reach 50% by May 1st or they will be penalized. Dr. Chapman stressed that enrollment is a yearlong plan and encouraged the LSAT to support the ongoing planning and implementation into next year.
 - We need to have a Cluster wide conversation about retention and re-enrollment between Peabody, Watkins and SH.
 - DCPS is doing an ongoing survey for each family who leaves each school and why.
 - Families who are changing schools can expect to be contacted by central office, or they can reach out to enrollment.growth@dc.gov

Update on Comprehensive School Plan – Relationships

- Review of Responsive Classroom – In April, asking if RC is helpful to our teachers. The team will continue to get feedback from teachers and students and develop a plan for support for SY18-19.
- School Climate Initiative – The main goal is to increase student satisfaction, working with the culture team and finding the gaps to address. The CSP was shared which indicates that we are on track for this CSP priority.

- Also, they would like to focus on strengthening the parent-teacher relationships by making positive contact with families more often.
- Create opportunities to foster relationships with students through school clubs and extracurricular activities.
- Monitor the implementation of the social-emotional curriculum.
- In March, Watkins administered an informational student satisfaction survey for 3rd-5th graders. The survey asked nine questions about day-to-day and overall issues at school. Principal Bell and Ms. Dickinson reviewed the questions and results which are outlined in the chart below. The results indicate that students are saying the we are making improvements as reflected in the data below.

Informal Survey Question	Total Positive % Spring 2016	Total Positive % Spring 2017	Total Positive % Informal 2018
I have at least one friend in my school	93%	90%	91%
I can be myself at my school	73%	72%	82%
I feel safe at my school	75%	72%	80%
Adults maintain control of my school	78%	73%	84%
At my school there are clear routines and procedures which students follow	70%	64%	78%
Adults and students speak with one another in a respectful way	63%	62%	71%
Students are recognized throughout the year for their achievements	93%	85%	85%
Teachers in my classroom know my family	90%	87%	83%
My school is clean and well maintained	50%	29%	62%

- There was a discussion about Panther Paws and Watkins behavioral incentives, specifically around teachers who focus their Panther Paws rewards on children who improve behavior and, as a result, do not reward children who are already well-behaved.
 - Principal Bell says Watkins is working to norm Panther Paws and PBIS incentives for students.
- Update from Ms. Brogioli -- Wendt Center said that they encouraged Watkins and SH to apply for programming together.
- There was a request to please close the playground during school hours.

- Administrators noted DPR requires one entrance be open for safety purposes. Staff does ask outside people to leave during school hours.
- There was a request that Watkins consider opening the gymnasium to students on the occasional Saturday, as was done this past Saturday.
- There was a discussion about Watkins losing its SPED Coordinator position and Peabody losing its Social Worker position.
 - Principal Bell was asked if plans exist to address the work that still needs to be done but will no longer be fulfilled by those positions. Principal Bell said those plans are still being finalized and will be addressed with LSAT in June.
- There was a discussion around athletics at Watkins.
 - There have been problems processing paperwork in a timely manner for the track, cross country, and basketball teams.
 - There is cumbersome paperwork required for general registration (prior to each event), safety and medical issues, and individual participant information (for after each event) that must be completed at the elementary level, making the job time-consuming and somewhat tedious - a heavy lift for our coaches. Principal Comeforo noted this work becomes an even heavier lift at the middle and high school levels.
 - A question was raised about whether parents are able to help with that paperwork. Parents who are willing and able to help in any way are encouraged to do so.
 - Principal Bell explained the ball was dropped between both the Athletic Director and the coach and noted there is no excuse.
 - Moving into next year, Principal Bell will define each person's role, responsibilities, and plans for accountability to ensure these types of mistakes no longer happen - resulting in incomplete seasons despite students' efforts throughout the season.

LSAT meeting adjourned at 8:07pm.