

Booker T. Washington Middle School 54

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SLT Minutes

March 11, 2022

7:20 AM

SLT Members:

Core SLT Positions	Teacher Representatives	Parent Representatives
Elana Elster, Principal	Elizabeth McNulty (co-chair)	Andy Weinstein (co-chair)
Jose Beauvais, UFT rep	Erica Williams	Alexis Freeman
Lee Uehara, PTA Co-Pres	Kirby Mason	Erica Teasley Linnick
	Sara Lichtman	Karen Saltser
	Stefanie Cohen	Dimitra Koutsantoni
		Yael Swica
		Cat Travers**

*Late

**Absent

Observers: Marni Aarlev, Alison Gardy, Ann Kristin Lapidos

The meeting was held in person.

Minutes: Minutes from the February meeting were approved, and will be sent to the PTA Corresponding Secretary for posting.

Agenda:

Principal's Update

- Dr. Elster reported that COVID rates are very low. Only one teacher case. Gradually kids are beginning to take off their masks, though approximately 75% of kids are still

wearing them, likely due less to COVID concerns than a desire to hide or emotional reasons.

- Dr. Elster indicated that a return to having lunch in the cafeteria was under consideration, until DOE made clear that students would still be required to socially distance, which is not currently possible in the school's cafeteria. Having lunch outside is a big drain on staff, so the school would like to move back inside when possible.
- Middle School Admissions: The sibling priority policy for middle school has been extended beyond 6th grade siblings. This change benefits a number of MS54 families who have 5th graders applying and a 7th grader currently at the school.
- Personnel: Dr. Elster indicated she has been working on staffing replacements related to three upcoming parental leaves and searching for a new Mandarin teacher.
- Dr. Elster noted that, as it's the middle of the 3rd marking period, the school is working to follow up closely with students who aren't passing and are likely to need to attend summer school. The summer school program appears to be the same as last year.

Parent Teacher Conferences Recap

- The feedback regarding parent-teacher conferences from teachers is that there is a preference to continue Zoom conferences as it's easier to stay on schedule and parental participation is greater, particularly among parents of special education students and other parents who would not normally attend in person. A brief discussion ensued regarding convenience, the possibility of accommodating more meetings, and parents' interest in visiting the school and interacting in person with teachers, other parents' and their children's work.

Jupiter Grades

- Dr. Elster asked for additional feedback on family access to grades on JupiterEd. Discussion ensued regarding pros and cons of open and limited access. In particular, teachers observed that limited access has led students to speak to their teachers about missing assignments, fostering positive conversations. The consensus was that the system should be open from time to time. The administration will determine a schedule.

Feedback on the Separation of Humanities classes into English and Social Studies

- Teachers reported that teaching just one subject has allowed them to focus more on that subject, even if they personally may miss teaching the other subject. For

instance, in ELA, teachers have been able to focus more on reading, writing, and other skills, including analytical writing about literature (as opposed to history-focused writing assignments). Teachers indicated that students were also able to focus more on each subject and that their skills were improving more quickly as a result. That said, without the double period, it has taken teachers longer to get to know the students.

- The group discussed other pros and cons of no longer having a double period, but the consensus was that separating ELA from Social Studies has been a success.

Grouping Students Next Year

- A brief discussion occurred regarding whether and how the school planned to group students next year in 6th and 7th grade. The administration indicated that any such plans will be determined based on the students who are admitted and the information the school receives about them. Changes are made throughout the year based on evaluation of student performance, which may vary based on a variety of factors.

SHSAT Update and Discussion

- The group engaged in an extensive discussion regarding whether the school should provide additional support to students preparing for the SHSAT. The group reviewed past efforts to provide test prep at the school. Possible next steps included: identifying gaps, particularly in math, between the school's curriculum and the topics covered on the SHSAT and ways to address any such gaps; and ensuring that families receive timely information regarding the test, the need to prepare, and resources to do so.

There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned.