

**Booker T. Washington Middle School 54**

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New York, NY 10025  
Phone: 212.678.2861

**SLT Minutes**

November 13, 2020  
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*	Rachel Weisz*	Alexis Freeman
Laura Adams, PTA Co-Pres	Kirby Mason (co-secretary)	Brad Roberts
Peter Armstrong, DC37 rep	Erica Williams	Hudson Roditi (co-secretary)
	Sara Lichtman	Karen Saltser
		George Schneiderman*
		Jacqueline Shannon

\*Late

\*\*Absent

**Observers:** ez, Ann Kristen, Sandra, Anne McIntosh, Lawrence Lee, Gary Cohen, Alison Gardy (Wellness), Marni Aarlev

**Minutes**

October minutes were approved and will be sent to the PTA Corresponding Secretary for posting.

**Agenda**

- **Approval of October Minutes**
- **Principal’s Update**
  - 26 students opted into blended learning.
    - Parents have emailed saying they wanted to leave the door open for coming back, students may stay remote due to COVID numbers
  - Emails from Chancellor’s Office about going 100% remote
    - Nothing official yet
    - Make sure schedules are ready so there is a seamless transition

- Remote schedule is ready to go (created over summer with this possibility in mind)
  - Marisol Rosario's final day of teaching
    - Current science teachers will cover Rosario's schedule until an appropriate full time replacement is found
  - Report card will be available next week. Families access through schools account.
  - Q: Will you [Dr. Elster] have discretion to move kids from remote to blended?
    - No, the principal has the ability to approve not assign students. The city reviews the case.
  - Some students are in unstable housing situations and their work environment is difficult. Looking for different ways to accommodate those kids in-house.
    - Bring certain students into the building for learning.
  - Is there discussion about addressing parts of city (like UWS) in a differentiated way because positivity rate is much lower there?
  - Q: Shutdown preparing through January?
    - Speculation: Thanksgiving - New Years will be heightened spread during this time.
  - Feedback from parents is kids are really enjoying in person time, in response to planning for Mrs. Rosario's retirement.
- **Review and Confirm of CEP goals for the 2020-21 school year**
  - Special Needs students: All will meet the 80% average goal.
    - No penalty for keeping the goal high.
  - iPortal where CEP doc lives and goals are edited.
- **Grading Policy**
  - 1st Marking Period: Numeric grades. Students will receive 65 and upwards.
    - No failing grades citywide.
  - Parents can switch numbers to Pass/Fail at the end of the year.
    - Parents can "cherry pick" grades for P/F.
  - NX grade = work is incomplete. Consequence of another marking period NX is unclear.
    - How do we incorporate NX in a marking period into an average grade?
    - "Kids must be given the opportunity to continue their learning" - City guideline
    - What is the difference between NX and incomplete? "Incomplete" is more compassionate way for city to say the work is below expectation.
    - Are there added supports for students who receive NX in a period?
      - There are supports, but issue is getting supports to be used by students who are impacted.
      - A plan to pull students from Humanities Seminar to provide added support
    - Is there guidance for teachers on "holistic grading?"
      - We don't want students to receive the wrong message when kids who are capable are doing less than they are able.
    - There are some problems teachers and students are facing when students are doing other activities during instruction, sometimes in a coordinated way, like gaming together.
    - Differences between students' elementary school experiences are apparent in 6th grade as students struggle with technology and time management.

- Communicating due dates: discussion of how consistency with use of due dates in Google Classrooms is impacting students. Some students are struggling with having most classes report due dates in GC and perhaps a single class that doesn't use the feature.
- Regarding distractions during Zoom, video games are being played, and there is addiction. And it contributes disproportionately to screen fatigue. It's a hard thing to break. Having breaks so there aren't long periods of zoom is helpful.
- Kids need reminders from all those around them to be engaged in class when they're in class.
- **Making up for Midweek Holidays**
  - There are 4 mid-week holidays during the rest of the school year.
  - There has been 1 Monday holiday that used a Friday as a make-up.
  - MLK will be switched with the Friday.
  - Eid is on Thursday in May.
  - Pros and cons of making up in-person day on Fridays: loss of core academic instruction time but addition of in-person time.
  - We can revisit this topic in March.
- **Update re: HS/MS Admissions**
  - MS54 Open house dates pushed back to December.
    - Asking that people register on the MS54 website.
    - Info-blasts will be sent out.
  - Elementary schools have not sent out information re: middle school admissions.
  - What will happen with screening?
    - Awaiting more guidance from the city.
    - Hoping specialized HS tests happen first to figure out how screening will be performed.
    - May need a special SLT meeting to plan for screening at MS54.
    - Questioning how we will administer a test with academic honesty in a remote scenario.
      - Idea: A zoom link with time slots and students must stay on zoom to take the exam with teacher monitors administering the exam.
- **Contingency Planning for 100% Remote**
  - Started making sure all kids are secure with devices
    - Still have MS54 devices available for kids who need internet access.
    - Kids will have more instruction in core subjects when we do 100% remote
      - Early Academy periods built into the week
      - Music and art for 6th graders.
    - Full cohort will meet together.
    - Schedule is a completely new schedule which will be emailed out and reviewed with kids during a homeroom period.
- **Planning for Social-Emotional Programming/Wellness Update**
  - To be worked on with the wellness committee
  - At last meeting, we had four students in Mrs. Goldfarb's community service. Goal to make wellness a more seamless part of the MS54 experience. Goal is not rapid results but to learn from longer-term community organizing outcomes and connect that with wellness. Emphasis on process as MS54 expands community service.
  - What types of programming events/experiences are being considered?

- Next Wellness mtg: Friday, November 30 at 7:00am.
- **Equity Update**
  - No meeting since last SLT mtg.
- **New Business**
  - Can parents be contacted if there are concerns about distractions during Zoom sessions, so they aren't learning about it for the first time when report cards are received?
  - Kids freezing in classrooms on in-person days. Any remedies?
    - Custodians will measure CO2 in classrooms to figure out how little a window can be open to have appropriate baseline air.
  - Are there air purifiers in classrooms?
    - Not currently. DOE will provide them once custodial staff has reported air quality numbers at no cost.
    - Classroom doors are open during class.
  - Next meeting in December.