

Booker T. Washington Middle School 54

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New York, NY 10025
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SLT Minutes

December 11, 2020
7:20 AM

SLT Members

Core SLT Positions	Teacher Representatives	Parent Representatives
Elana Elster, Principal	Elizabeth McNulty (co-chair)*	Andy Weinstein
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: Gary Cohen/Marni Aarlev, Kyle Clayton, Anne McIntosh, Allison Gardy, Nildania Perez

Minutes

Agenda

- Approval of February Minutes - Approved
- Principal’s Update
 - The school building is feeling a little more back to normalcy in some ways.
 - Some kids we wanted to return 5 days per week did not take the offer, and we then went to our B list. These kids also needed the in-person.
 - 4 classroom management positions created, filled by paraprofessionals.
 - More teachers than expected are Zooming with kids that are remote. Going will although some technical issues.
 - 6th graders are in for an additional period which has been positive.
 - Students at home on days their teacher is in-person are experiencing too much down time. We’re looking into how to address that. If we were 100% remote the program would be

more complete. We're looking for ways to schedule additional material like enrichment, speakers... More and more requests coming in from kids who are 100% remote who are feeling more isolated and ready to come back in some way. It's complicated by schedules and space.

- School budget is strong. Some funds unspent due to unfilled position. DOE isn't allowing rollover of funds. So I've been trying to use the funds this year.
 - Waiting to hear on the Regents. Algebra and Earth Science seem like they will happen. State tests seem possible.
 - Parent Q: What might be most practical to change in student's schedules at this point? It seems scheduling got more difficult this time around for scheduling?
 - Principal (P): Parents have offered to present workshops to students. There are more opportunities for 3rd party presenters on remote days.
 - Do you anticipate any teachers changing their status between now and June?
 - P - I don't anticipate that, except for perhaps the school librarian, which would be great and would open up the library for children.
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- Current Schedule/School Year
 - Scheduling for the day students' teachers are at school, but they are at home
 - Requests from 100% remote students to return to blended learning
 - There was consolidation of in-person groups. This has resulted in lesser seats for remote students to return.
 - The superintendent can change kids' status between remote, in-person, hybrid.
 - P-question: What does everyone feel regarding kids/parents opting into hybrid--change of status?
 - Parent: Perhaps begin a waitlist for children who are interested in hybrid learning and run a lottery for seats in-person. (clarification: the lottery would be for kids in those classes and only families in that group would be in that lottery -- the teachers would not change, teachers would not find themselves teaching kids they didn't teach before)
 - Teacher - families are still traveling and asking for seats to be held. Families returning from vacations, domestic and abroad, etc.
 - DOE policy says kids who are remote cannot come into school for afterschool programs, they can participate remotely.
 - Parent: I think any kid who can get back into hybrid should be given the opportunity.
 - Teacher: What leeway do you have to change a student's status? Is there a policy?
 - Parent: How many seats are available?
 - Principal: I will have to look into the numbers. (in the 6th grade there are 20 total seats)
 - Teachers: It's important that parents and families understand what the lottery would be about if we did a lottery.
 - Parent: Maybe don't raise hopes, and say we are exploring opportunities to return for families who have opted for remote, and if you're interested let us know.
 - Principal: If I ask the superintendent for a remote student to go blended (because they need the in-person time) it will be approved.
 - Principal: Strategy could be to look at seats in grade meetings, and look at

filling seats in that context.

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- Length of class periods
 - Parent: I don't know how widespread this is, but my daughter claims she learns everything she is able to in the first 30 minutes. Is there some possibility of having a break within the 70 minutes? Claims that in the second half of the class she loses what is learned.
 - Teacher: I don't do one thing for the 70 minutes. And Dr. Elster has sent us material to show what works for middle school aged students. I break up the class time.
 - Parent: Student representation is needed on the SLT to make it clear. (It needs to be a student from the student council, which we don't have this school year.)
 - Parent: My child needs explicit permission to take those breaks. She would be mortified to be caught drinking, eating on camera.
 - Feedback regarding streaming in-class instruction to remote students.
 - Teacher 1: I flip the screen so the kids see one another.
 - Teacher 2: It was difficult at first and I was anxious. In the 4 sessions I've done it things have gotten better.
 - Teacher 1: It is important to know that teachers are using at least one of their own devices while in the classroom. I have used 3 devices to make the streaming from class work.
 - Homework issues: generally and for 8th graders during HS applications
 - Major assignments due just as high school applications are due.
 - Parent: Having multiple projects due at the same time has made for high anxiety. Are there opportunities for grade meetings across the teachers.
 - Teacher: Meetings are held, but given the timeline the weeks overlapped and it did cause trouble.
 - Parent: Can there be opportunities for 7th graders to work on a robust assignment that they can make it available for HS applications the following year?
 - Teacher: There are 2 assignments turned in thus far that would fit that criteria.
 - Early Academy
 - Parent: return of early academy? Kids are asking about it and want it back. Teachers have been communicating their own office hours. Some teachers are using the 70 minute period to reserve time, at the end for example, to provide office hours.
- State tests
 - Has there been discussion about how they might be administered? Would remote kids need to come in to the school to take it?
 - Dr. Elster: No information or discussion has taken place. We have ordered paper tests?
 - Rumor that all remote students wouldn't have to come in.
 - SHSAT: More kids may have taken the test because it happened at Booker T. More kids definitely took the test this year.
- Midweek Holidays:
 - The next one is Thursday, May 13. Do we want to move things around to allow for everyone to have equal days in school? For the first week in June there are 2 holidays, so it may not be possible to do anything for that one week. Since there are 2 Thursday holidays,

it may be possible to have one Thursday where that group would come in on that Friday (week of May 10).

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- Planning for 2021-22
 - Will hybrid schooling continue?
 - We don't know what the Covid situation will be like or if families are still uncomfortable with coming in person.
 - Principal: I hope hybrid is more centralized. I can't see doing a balancing act again next year. I haven't had much thought about next year at this moment bc right now the admissions situation is off of our plate at this time. When we have the kids in front of us things will change.
 - Parent: Superintendent is reviewing the rules. Demand to reevaluate the rules around shutting schools in cases of positive covid; we should be looking forward to September as we plan because it takes a long time to review rules. In another school, the SLT has put together a letter requesting that the rules be re-evaluated to ensure kids are in school.
 - Supporting teachers/students with big gaps from this year
 - Study skills are likely to be a big gap, in addition to content. Dr. Elster: To prepare for next year, perhaps bring kids in in June for our own tests to assess the gaps so we're better prepared to know the areas students need support with.
 - Teacher: Some kids now don't know how to get around the building, don't know the auditorium or the main office.
 - Parent: In terms of the use of the organizers. The 7th grade teachers may need to teach using organizers which they didn't have to do in the same way in the past.
 - Anticipated/potential budget needs requiring support from PTA
 - Principal: District wide there's a huge push to end screens and tracking of students. I feel obviously targeted in group conversations of principal meetings. Its going to take a lot to screen kids after next year. What will we do when we have kids who are not ready for the level of acceleration that is typical of BTW.
 - Q: Do we want to block out time for next meeting or have a special meeting re this issue.
 - Continued discussion regarding meeting student needs
- SLT Elections in June
 - For both parents and teachers; if you know people who you think would be good for the SLT, perhaps speak to them.
 - Parent: Think about ways to diversify the SLT parent group? We should think about new strategies for bringing in new voices. We will advertise up and down.
- Wellness Update
 - Wellness Day Tuesday, 3/16. Field day opportunities for the in-person day. 8th graders will have science based workshops that align with their classes. Natalie Silverstein will give a separate talk with students and parents.
 - Next meeting Friday, 3/19
- Equity Update
 - Next meeting Weds, 3/17
- New Business
 - Parent: Is there any information about the new chancellor?
 - Teacher: For next SLT meeting, I'd like to discuss how to continue having PT conferences online.

- Teacher: I wish the school bookings system had a button we could push that would send out a reminder to parents.
- Teacher: Online PT conferences had the upside of leading to meetings with parents I would never have seen.
- Dr. Elster: Maybe have one of the days live and one on Zoom.
- Parent: These online conferences were a convenience for us with 2 working parents.