

Booker T. Washington Middle School 54
 103 West 107th Street
 New York, NY 10025
 Phone: 212.678.2861

SLT Minutes

December 13, 2019
 7:20 AM

SLT Members

Core SLT Positions	Teacher Representatives	Parent Representatives
Elana Elster, Principal	**Randee Johnson	Stefanie Goldblatt
Jose Beauvais, UFT rep	Elizabeth McNulty (co-chairperson)	Andy Weinstein (co-chairperson)
Laura Adams, PTA Co-Pres	Sara Lichtman	Brad Roberts
Peter Armstrong, DC37 rep	Richard Cappadona	Jeanne Goffi-Fynn
	Rachel Weisz (co-secretary)	Jacqueline Shannon
		Laura Adams (co-secretary)
		Hudson Roditi
		George Schneiderman

*Absent

**Late

Observers: Chris Giordano, Jerome Kramer

Calendar of Dates

- January 10, 2020
- February 14, 2020
- March 20, 2020
- April 3, 2020
- May 8, 2020
- June 12, 2020

Minutes

November 8, 2019 SLT Minutes were approved. The SLT Secretaries will send the final version to Joanne Giordano to be posted.

Agenda Discussions

- CEP Update
 - CEP was submitted and approved
- School Budget
 - There is an effort to align CEP goals with budget
 - Because the vast majority of the budget is personnel, most of the allocation is for that
 - Reading teacher added into budget as well as per session positions that provide targeted support
 - Discussion around what amount of budget is flexible
 - Mr. Beauvais to circulate UFT document that explains budget parameters
- Regents Exams
 - At least two other middle schools offer the US History Regents exam in G8 (CSS & WESS)
 - MS54 does not, primarily because it limits our flexibility in Humanities (concern of teaching to the test)
 - Further discussion touched on the benefits/downsides of offering an additional regents test: stress management vs. the opportunity to take additional history/humanities courses in high school
 - Discussion around MS 54 no longer offering a language placement test for HS; it was stopped b/c most high schools offer their own placement tests, and it's time consuming
 - The only HS that doesn't seem to offer a placement test is LaGuardia, so this year we'll likely offer it in Spanish and French on a limited basis
 - For science, we are one of two schools that still offer regents in Earth Science instead of Living Environments b/c middle school is the only opportunity to take Earth Science
- Wellness Update
 - Wellness Committee meeting with teacher notes copied below
 - Discussion about Jupiter communication and email v. text
 - School Messenger system for robocalls is the only way parents can be notified if their child doesn't show up at school one day
 - No alternative system because it's the only one connected to ATS
 - Decision made to renew for purpose of attendance notification
 - Wellness Day: March 13, 2020
- New Business
 - Admissions - received long list of kids who ranked BTW on their middle school application, test in January
 - New wait list system will not affect how MS54 makes offers, but it will reduce the number of empty seats
 - Attrition is partly attributed to lack of D3 high school options
 - Chris shared Letter on State vs. Mayoral Control of DOE sharing how the Mayor, Chancellor and DOE have been unresponsive to the needs of our school & district, and asking for the state to remain involved in NYC education
 - It will be presented at the hearing on Mayoral control on Monday
 - Update on CEC3 stance on G&T, accelerated learning, etc
 - Equity & Excellence team - 3.5 hour meeting last night about screened v. unscreened schools
 - CB7 has a youth, education and library team that is looking into this

- After School
 - Yearbook, Newspaper are fee-based programs. Should they be free?
 - Consult with PTA on alternative funding source

Coffee Rotation

- January 10, 2020: Andy Weinstein
- February 14, 2020: Jeanne Goffi Fynn
- March 20, 2020: Jacqueline Shannon
- April 3, 2020: Hudson Roditi
- May 8, 2020: no volunteer yet
- June 12, 2020: no volunteer yet

Teacher Wellness Lunch took place on Fri. Nov. 22nd during all three lunch periods. Highlights of discussion with Teachers and Staff including suggestions.

Topics

- 1) **Cell phones**
 - a) Positive feedback on the collection of cell phones at the school
 - b) The learning environment has improved
- 2) **Vaping**
 - a) Students at the school are vaping and they don't realize the dangers
 - b) **Suggestion** that all students would benefit from a school-wide presentation on vaping
- 3) **Social-emotional support**
 - a) Students struggle with their interpersonal relationships
 - b) **Suggestions for providing support**
 - i) Informal lunch groups with the Parent Coordinator, Teachers and/or counselors
 - ii) Advisory - pair students with teacher advisors who follow them for all three years of middle school - meet weekly
 - iii) Teach conflict resolution skills
- 4) **Grades**
 - a) Students/parents are too focused on grades
 - b) Grades are a source of mental health issues
 - c) **Suggestions for changing the grade emphasis culture**
 - i) **Decouple learning from grades**
 - (1) Focus on what it means to be a student - try more holistic grading focused on growth, effort, resilience, skills, and habits
 - (2) Grade some assignments without numbers - use check, check minus, and check plus
 - (3) Do not use grades on the first marking period report card - instead, use E (excellent), S (satisfactory) and N (non-satisfactory) or just P (pass) and F (fail)

- d) Grade inflation problem
 - i) 7th-grade teachers are particularly prone to grade inflation due to the importance of 7th-grade report cards for high school applications
 - ii) 8th-grade teachers are preparing students for high school and grades need to honestly reflect student work - this can be surprising to students and parents who are accustomed to grade inflation
- e) **Recognition of achievement**
 - i) **Suggestion** to stop posting honor roll and high honor roll names on walls at school
 - ii) Awards assemblies at end of the year - are they necessary? Is there a way to make them more balanced?
 - iii) Can there be more recognition of non-grade focused achievement (i.e., growth, effort, resilience, kindness, citizenship etc.)
- f) **Report cards**
 - i) Current distribution is not healthy
 - ii) **Suggestion** to seal report cards and request that parents are the ones to break the seal
- 5) **Hallway monitoring**
 - a) Student conflicts often occur in hallways in corners of the building
 - b) 6th graders transitioning to middle school could use supervision to establish a respectful hallway culture
 - i) **Suggestions for improving hallway culture**
 - (1) Add staff to 3rd and 2nd floors in the morning and between periods to monitor hallways particularly in the corners of the building
- 6) **Wellness curriculum**
 - a) Positive feedback on the health/tech class for 6th graders
 - i) The 4 teachers of 6th-grade health/tech seem to be working together and addressing important wellness topics of transitioning to middle school, peer pressure, bullying
 - b) 7th-grade health class is a natural place for the continuation of wellness topics
 - c) **SWC monthly wellness topics**
 - i) **Suggestion** that the administration needs to tell staff/teachers if they are expected to present a wellness topic in homeroom/class
- 7) **Struggling students**
 - a) Designated parent-teacher conferences in May is late for struggling students
 - b) **Suggestion** that 1 hour of a teacher's Parent-Teacher conferences in Nov. is reserved for "invitation only students"
 - c) **Suggestion** that the best way to reach parents may be via text message (more universal communication channel)
- 8) **Food waste**
 - a) **Suggestion** that perhaps there would be student interest in a "wellness club" to look into food waste and other wellness initiatives
- 9) **Teacher and Paraprofessionals relationship**
 - a) There are complaints between teacher and paraprofessionals
 - b) **Suggestion** to clarify expectations and responsibilities and facilitate dialogue between the two