



Capitol Hill Cluster School

Where Every Child Achieves

Peabody | Watkins | Stuart-Hobson | A DC Public School

January 6, 2022
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Welcome & Introductions Ramona Burton (Watkins parent rep, co-chair), Henri Rowe (Watkins teacher co-chair), Shannon Russell (Peabody parent rep), Annie Slattery (Peabody teacher rep), MScott Berkowitz (Peabody/Watkins Principal), Kathy Zeisel (Watkins parent rep), Bethany Rosera (Stuart-Hobson teacher rep, Union rep), Sarah Cissna (Peabody parent rep), Peter Honarvar (City Year, LSAT Community member), Laythe Elmusa (Watkins teacher, Union rep), Eric Fraser (Stuart-Hobson principal), Gerty Johnson (Stuart-Hobson parent rep), Sarah Friedman (Peabody teacher rep), Kerslyn Featherstone (Stuart-Hobson parent rep), Denise Forte (Stuart-Hobson parent rep), Nancy Abou-Samra (Stuart-Hobson teacher rep), DAmbr Taylor (Stuart-Hobson teacher rep), Mark Boisvert (Watkins Assistant Principal), La-Tarsha James (Peabody Assistant Principal)

LSAT Open Business

- Covid Testing Requirements/Quarantine Protocols/Contact Tracing Concerns

Watkins

Principal Berkowitz sent a summary school-wide email to families reporting on the first day of 2022. There was some discussion about students who were on quarantine during the holiday break that are still testing positive, and how to allow students back to school. About 66% of students were present at Watkins, with most families submitted test results through the portal ahead of school drop-off. There are various, including unknown reasons for why students weren't present, Principal Berkowitz encouraged students to return to school if testing negative or report as a positive case or quarantining so that students can be accounted for.

Peabody

Parents expressed concerns about timing and uncertainty of when the one closed classroom will open.

Stuart-Hobson

About 85% of families reported student test results in the portal, with a handful of students needed to test in the morning. About 60% of students were present in school. Some school staff were not present for multiple reasons (close contact, sick, etc.). Staff at school were tasked with handling classrooms. Several classrooms were in the auditorium due to lack of teacher coverage and so that multiple classes could be adequately spaced. Also, two long-term vacancies add to lack of teacher coverage. There was general discussion on testing protocols (test to return and test to stay). Question on parents who are available to volunteer during the day—suggestion was for parents to be licensed as substitute teacher by DCPS, as well as a DCPS volunteer.

- **Overview of new DCPS Budget Model**

Bijan Verlin (DCPS Family and Community Engagement Specialist, Clusters 4 and 7) provided a presentation on the new DCPS budget process and protocol.

Questions were raised on how the new budget will deal with staff cost of living increases; in the past, school budgets have shifted costs to schools (ex: having to increase security guards). There was discussion on whether schools will have to support the cost of COVID coordinators, how schools are funded for librarians (since DC passed a law that all schools will have a librarian); and how schools will fund special teachers. Bijan will follow-up on these questions. There was a discussion on students with one or more risk factors based on Fair Funding Act—homeless; in foster care; eligible for food stamps; one year older, or more, than expected age for enrolled grade level. Bijan.verlin@k12.dc.gov if you have any follow up question re: budget

The following Budget resource/information links were provided in the chat by Bijan:
Comprehensive Staffing Model (old budget model) <https://dcpsbudget.com/budget-model/comprehensive-staffing-model-overview/>
Budget Model Engagement Summary - https://dcpsbudget.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Exploring-a-New-Budget-Model-Town-Hall_8.12.21.pdf
New Budget Model Presentations - <https://dcpsbudget.com/budget-process-timeline/budget-stakeholder-input/>

- **Upcoming budget planning** (what to expect for new members; what should change; determine priorities for investment that would support the CSP strategies)

Stuart-Hobson

Principal Fraser detailed how Stuart-Hobson is using the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds (aka federal covid stimulus dollars) has been used for summer and afterschool acceleration academy (small group tutoring); custodial, office, and educational supplies; software licenses (Liveschool and Reading Plus); tutors with After-School All Stars (but having trouble filling tutor positions); and overtime for teachers and custodians.

Some of the priorities have been troublesome to achieve (ex: instructional coaches can't meeting with ANET in order to train teachers because instructional coaches have been in the classroom for teacher coverage).

Watkins

Principal Berkowitz explained how Watkins/Peabody is using ESSER funds; similar to S-H, some of the programs haven't been realized due to ongoing COVID challenges.

There was discussion on what happens to the stimulus fund if not spent, the assumption was that the money will be lost unless it's reprogrammed.

There was discussion on what LSAT can think about for priorities in advance of budget season. Principal Fraser suggested a separate LSAT team meeting (per school) before budget season to go over basics of required positions and then talk about budget options before the DCPS budget is provided and the time crunch starts.

- **MTSS Protocols** (what screening tools are used to identify intervention needs and/or referral for possible special education services; Update on writing interventions)

Watkins/Peabody

DCPS has established screening tools (iReady assessment, Reading Inventory, Dibels, etc.) for identifying intervention needs and instructional planning (Tier 1 and 2, not able to do Tier 3 intervention). There was a piloted approach that started in December for evaluating the needs for certain students and developing a strategy for student success by the student's teachers, special education, instructional coaches, other staff; however, this piloted approach was thwarted by covid.

There was discussion related to students who may have needs for writing intervention, by implementing reading intervention during WIN time may not be necessarily needed or supported by the screening tools data. So how do teachers assess for writing intervention needs and look for progress throughout the year; perhaps the Panorama survey data would be helpful for parents.

LSAT Standing Topics

- **CSP Update** (progress made to date; reflections on what may have hindered or enabled growth in focus areas): no discussion at meeting, will likely discuss during budget meetings.

- Staffing Updates/Needs

Peabody

There is a full-time substitute for the one staff vacancy (maternity leave) in December.

Watkins

Third grade teacher will be on maternity leave very soon, will need full-time teacher for rest of year. Watkins has several candidates. One more Watkins teacher may be going on maternity leave this year as well.

DCPS promised a covid coordinator (contact tracing, etc.) and permanent sub for each school but this has not been realized.

Stuart-Hobson

There are three long-term vacancies: one person being interviewed; admin is hoping to fill one position (that was never programmed into school schedule) in early March; one long-term leave will be through end of school year. There are two other short-term vacancies that will be long-term. There is also an aide vacancy, there is a partner candidate who might fill this vacancy.

Question on ongoing staff shortages and considering virtual school as option; and challenges with pivoting to virtual school considering so many factors (seven-period class schedule, childcare needs for families, parent expectations, etc.). Principal Fraser welcomed any feedback.

There was a question on teacher burnout for remainder of year: spread the word to families to take a moment to send a teacher a note of thanks and appreciation.

Question on how to setup thresholds for when/why to pivot to virtual learning. Parents and community can support each other and there is some movement in DC Council on establishing consistency and transparency on how/when/why schools would pivot to virtual learning.

- School Culture
 - Behavior Management/Positive Interventions/Bullying/Discipline Data
Watkins/Stuart-Hobson

No new school suspensions since last meeting. Reiterated Panorama data discussed last LSAT meeting for both schools to show data on school culture.

Watkins

There was a discussion on the significant incident during one of the 3rd grade library classes. Currently librarian absence is being treated as a typical absence of other teachers; there will be temporary teachers. Other teachers and social workers will work with any students who need help to process the library incident.

There was a question for students who have library for WIN time and how to manage WIN time with so many fluctuations in teacher absences.

General Campus Updates

- Peabody
- Watkins: Martin Luther King, Jr. speech will be postponed for 5th grade due to COVID-19 case surges.
- Stuart-Hobson: the next open house (Jan 20) will likely be virtual instead of in-person as planned. December virtual open-house was recorded and is on Stuart-Hobson website, with a request to include open house link on Watkins newsletter. Request for LSAT members to receive Stuart-Hobson weekly newsletters. Ms. Abou-Samra is making sure that annual spelling bee will happen! DCIAA announced that winter sports will be spectator-free competitions.

Public Comment - None

Next meeting: February 1