

John Eaton Elementary School
Washington, DC

Local School Restructuring Team

March 11, 2008
4:00 - 6:00 p.m
Eaton Library

Present: David Shapinsky, Carolyn Barnhart, Susan Eastman, Noah Steinberg, Kelley Ellsworth, Laura Broach, Trish Berman, Jacqueline Gartrell, Lucy Mallan. Diane Magruder, Margot Berkey

Good News and Community Concerns

- Ramsey Tomasi-Carr (5th grade-Bergfalk) will be representing John Eaton in the city-wide spelling bee on March 18th at NBC-4 studios.
- Footloose Dance was a big hit - lots of fun for everyone! Special thanks to Stuart Weiser and Sari Henry for organizing and running it.
- The Book Fair at Politics and Prose was very successful. The traditional Story Time on Saturday morning and the new "Open Mic" on Sunday afternoon were quite popular and many parents and students participated. Special thanks to organizers Stefanie Berger, Sheri Carline, and Karin Leuthy!
- Open House today brought in some new faces to tour the school.
- Mrs. Gartrell is putting together a partnership with George Washington University's education school to place interns in our classrooms. See more info below.
- Announcement: Michelle Rhee and leaders from DC Voice will be featured speakers at Thursday's meeting of the Cleveland Park Citizens Association. Eaton parents and faculty are encouraged to attend and ask good questions.

Principal Selection Process

We have all positions filled for the principal panel:

LSRT rep: David Shapinsky

HSA rep: Mark Boss

WTU rep: Noah Steinberg

Support Staff: Maria Barreto

Faculty Reps: Mrs. Barnhart, Ms. Rice, Ms. Baker

Parent Reps: Sherry Wood, Marianne Eby, Stefanie Berger

Community Reps: Margot Berkey, Lucy Mallan

Parent Alternate: Michelle Koerner

Faculty Alternate: Susan Eastman

- Kelley has contacted Michelle Rhee and John Davis twice. First, Michelle Rhee replied that the matter was in John Davis's hands, but there has been no response from him yet.
- **Action Item:** We will try calling him. [Noah called while we were meeting.]

Principal's Report

- We're waiting for a call from downtown about our budget. We're curious to see if the current administration will stick with the weighted student formula or if there will be a new and better way to distribute funds to schools.

Partnership with GWU

- Mrs. Gartrell is putting together a partnership with GWU Graduate School of Education.
- The plan is for GWU graduate student teachers to complete their year-long internship in specific classrooms at Eaton beginning next year.
- It is possible that these teachers could take the place of the HSA's funded co-teachers.

Enrollment News (from Trish):

- There seems to be very little movement of students out of the school this year. Very few students have asked for transcripts to be sent out to private schools. (We haven't heard yet about anybody going to Hardy or to Washington Latin, but those dates are a bit later than for private schools.) Mrs. Barnhart adds that this is the first year that she hasn't had a parent asking for a teacher recommendation, which means that none of her students seem to be considering private school.
- We need to find out how many students are planning to return next year. Right after Spring Break, we will send out mandatory forms for parents to complete. We sent a message to the neighborhood listserv for in-boundary families to pre-register for kindergarten for next year. We should have solid numbers in April.
- Total 2008-09 pre-k students right now is 32. This includes pre-enrolled in-boundary, siblings, etc. There are many students on the waiting lists for both pre-k and kindergarten.

Planning for transition of Eaton after 6th grade leaves (Team: Margot Berkey, Ms. Barnhardt, Laura Broach)

- The graduating class of 2009 is our last year of sixth-graders, so we're planning to add a pre-k class next year (08-09) to begin to prepare for the loss of approximately 50 kids the following year (no sixth in 09-10). Over a period of years, the LSRT envisions Eaton having 3 classes in each grade pre-k to 5th (roughly 60 students per grade) for a projected maximum enrollment of 420. This would require 21 acceptable classroom spaces throughout the building. In grades 1-5, two of these would serve 22-23 students, and the third would serve 14 or 15. The DCPS Master Facilities Plan contains two different statements of "program capacity" for Eaton: 459 on the demographics report for Eaton, and 418 on the "Planning Zone Cluster G Summary of Enrollment" page. In either case, Eaton would be at full capacity (therefore full funding capacity) if we are able to make efficient use of the building.

- The LSRT took a “field trip” walking around school to look at classrooms and available space. Eaton has lots of square footage, but much of it is carved up into small classrooms and offices which are a bit challenging to use effectively.

We noticed:

- The basic design of the school includes a few large classrooms with smaller classrooms in between. It seems that these smaller classrooms couldn't hold more than 14 or 15 kids (they are currently used for 5th grade, ELL, Reading/Chinese, Special Ed. Art, etc.).
- There are lots of small offices and mini-classrooms scattered throughout the school. (currently used for music room, science storage, faculty room, Special Ed and ELL classrooms, offices, etc.).
- JEAP uses one full-size classroom and one mini-classroom that don't serve students during the school day. Some other schools have after-care programs that share space within the school and do not have dedicated classrooms. It was noted that JEAP is a true asset for Eaton parents and that caution would need to be taken in regard to any changes to the program. There was a desire to strengthen the relationship between JEAP and Eaton in terms of academic support, student behavior, and behavior management so that there is “an Eaton way” that is seamless between before-care, the school day, and after-care.
- Our PE program uses a full-size classroom and storage room. Perhaps the PE program could be conducted differently and the PE classes could be taught outside and/or in the multi-purpose room. In this case, Ms. Magruder would need office space and lots of convenient storage space. It was noted that the PE program would face some real challenges if it operated out of the MP room because of lunch service and the ongoing need of classroom teachers to use the MP room for programmatic activities of all kinds. Furthermore, the PE room serves all 413 Eaton students as compared to ESL or Special Education whose classrooms are also active all day but serve fewer than 80(?) students each. The LSRT needs to exercise caution in disrupting the PE program for all students. It was noted that this option might only be undertaken as a temporary measure, if at all.

We discussed at length many more options for adding an additional classroom for next year. Here are some of the more feasible options.

Options that would not require construction:

1. Adding a full-size pre-k (20?) and use the PE room.
2. Adding a small pre-k (15) and use an existing small room such as the Reading Resource room or ELL room.

Options considered that would require construction:

1. Enlarge existing faculty room and include HSA space by removing the wall. This would add an adequate classroom space with its own bathroom to the same cluster areas as our other pre-k classes.

2. Combine first-grade classroom (currently Maxwell) with adjacent Reading Room to make two evenly-divided rooms by removing the temporary wall and relocating one classroom door.
3. Combine Ms. Baker's room and Mrs. Plumb's room by removing one wall.

Action Item: Prepare presentation at our next meeting of a roadmap for the next several years about class distributions and sizes and space. (Margot will design a template that we can use to explore proposals.)

Marketing the Eaton model (Team: Trish Berman, Claudia Withers, David Shapinsky, Ms. Freda): not discussed, so, once again, put off till next time.

respectfully submitted on 3/13/08,
Laura Broach
co-chair