

19 September 2005

Memorandum To: WHS-PTSA Minority Achievement Committee  
CC: Mike Campbell, Dana Cimino  
From: Mark Richardson, Minority Achievement Committee Chair  
Subject: Summary of September Monthly Committee Meeting

The Minority Achievement Committee held its first regular monthly meeting of the 2005-2006 school year on Tuesday September 14, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held in the Library. I am very pleased to announce that we had a terrific turnout with approximately twenty people in attendance, including new parents to Westfield, administrators and faculty members. We also had in attendance two representatives from the Chantilly Pyramid Minority Student Achievement Committee (CPMSAC), namely, Mrs. Ella Thomas and Mrs. Shirley Nelson. Mrs. Thomas is the CPMSAC parent representative at Rocky Run Middle School, and she was on hand to learn more of what the MAC does at Westfield. Mrs. Nelson is the co-founder of CPMSAC and attends our meetings as well as other related meetings across the County as time permits. We thank both Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Nelson for their presence.

The meeting was opened with introducing the committee to our new members and stating the committee's goals and objectives. Principal Campbell followed with a short discussion on the school's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report for this past school year. Westfield High School met its AYP for the school year 2004-2005 and showed progress in closing the achievement gap in math and reading. For those unaware of the AYP report, this report uses SOL test scores in math and reading to determine the level of compliance with regard to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The math SOL test scores for African American and Hispanic students were significantly higher this past year while the reading SOL test scores rose slightly for African American students and declined slightly for Hispanic students. Overall, the school is making strides in closing the achievement gap and remains committed to the goal of eliminating the achievement gap at Westfield High School.

Assistant Principal Ms. Karla Butler and faculty member Ms. Christina Schmitt presented a synopsis of the Westfield plan for closing the achievement gap. The school has developed a document that outlines the major factors contributing to the minority achievement gap and provides proposed solutions to faculty and administrators as well as parents to address these factors. The plan is now complete and will be distributed to all parents of minority students and each member of the school faculty. The development of this school plan is the result of continued dialogue and interaction between the school administration and this committee. It is a major step in the right direction toward addressing the minority achievement gap at Westfield.

Principal Campbell also discussed the school's relationship with its feeder middle and elementary schools. He and I noted our meeting with Rachel Carson Middle School's Principal Mr. August Frattali and how Rachel Carson has nearly eliminated the

achievement gap (for school year 2003-2004). Carson has instituted several programs to identify students entering their school with borderline reading comprehension and math skills. These students are provided additional assistance in math and reading and closely monitored throughout the school year for progress, thereby allowing for quick remediation if necessary. It was requested that Westfield contact Principal Frattali to obtain more information pertaining to the specific programs implemented at Carson and follow up to obtain AYP numbers for this past year. This information is to be shared with other Westfield feeder schools.

Touching bases will occur again this year on Veterans Day. Parents will have the opportunity to meet with their child's teachers to discuss current status, concerns, etc. I encourage all parents to take advantage of this opportunity. More information will be forthcoming through keep-in-touch. I will also place an announcement on the MAC webpage.

Speaking of the webpage, The MAC will have a link on the WHS PTSA home page that directs interested persons to our webpage. The MAC webpage will include committee related information including meeting dates, minutes from previous meetings, copies of the MAC newsletter, and other important minority achievement information. We need a volunteer to work with the PTSA webmaster to provide updates to the webpage. If you are interested, please contact me.

Our next MAC newsletter release is scheduled for the middle of October. We are currently seeking news articles for the next release. The following has been identified as inputs for the next newsletter release.

- 1) Article from Committee President – Mark Richardson
- 2) Article from Principal on AYP – Mike Campbell
- 3) Article on School Plan – Karla Butler/Christina Schmitt
- 4) Article on “Knowledge 101” Club – Karla Butler/Natan McKenzie
- 5) Announcement of Fall Parent Coffee – Mark Richardson/Celeste Peterson
- 6) Article from Student – Sue Bradshaw (working with student)/Erin Peterson?
- 7) Article announcing Touching Bases – Principal Campbell
- 8) Others as provided/suggested

If your name is listed above, you are asked to please submit your article to Celeste Peterson, the newsletter editor. **The deadline for article inputs is September 30.** Mrs. Peterson's email address is [Celeste-Peterson@Raython.com](mailto:Celeste-Peterson@Raython.com). Article topics for future MAC newsletter releases are always welcomed. Please submit your suggestions to either Celeste Peterson or myself.

Mrs. Shirley Nelson announced that the Fairfax County Parent Advocacy Handbook for 2005 is available to parents. Please go to the CPMSAC website at [www.CPMSAC.org](http://www.CPMSAC.org) for more details on how to obtain a copy. A link to the CPMSAC website will be included on the MAC webpage.

Carol Jasper presented an update on the BITS program. There will be more dates this school year for the BITS program. Karla Butler stated that student volunteer tutors from the National Honor Society will be asked to commit to a minimum of four sessions in order to receive their community service hours. This requirement is being imposed so that the students will have the opportunity to establish a relationship with the tutors, and it has been shown that these one-on-one relationships tend to lead to improved performance of the students. To learn more about the BITS program, please visit the Westfield website and click on the link to BITS. The BITS coordinator is Ms. Carol Jasper. Ms. Jasper can be reached at [CVJ78@aol.com](mailto:CVJ78@aol.com).

The MAC will host two parent coffees this school year. The Fall Coffee will be held on Tuesday October 25, 2005. The Spring Coffee will be held on Wednesday March 15, 2006. The agenda for the Fall Coffee is in the planning stage and will most likely include more detailed information on the items published in the October MAC Newsletter. If you have agenda items you would like to see included for either the Fall or Spring Coffee, please forward them on to me.

The next committee monthly meeting will be held on Tuesday October 18, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. We will finalize the agenda for the Fall Coffee at this meeting so please plan to attend. Your ideas, suggestions, inputs and support are valued and needed. Thanks to all for your continued hard work and diligence.

**IF YOU ARE NOT A CURRENT MEMBER OF THE PTSA, I STRONGLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO BECOME ONE! ALL MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE SHOULD BE A MEMBER OF THE PTSA.**