

01 November 2005

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

The Minority Achievement Committee held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday October 18, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held in the Principal's conference room. Our turnout was lower than usual, due primarily to multiple events occurring at the school that evening, including Freshman Parent Night.

The meeting was opened with introducing the committee to our newest members. It was nice to have several new faculty members join our committee and this further demonstrates the commitment of the school to form a partnership between parents and school faculty to address closing the achievement gap.

The [College Partnership Program](#) (CPP) held its first meeting during the month of October. Dawn Dickerson and Dawna Royster are the CPP coordinators. I asked if there were information posted on the school's web site regarding CPP. It is not certain that this information is available. I took an action to see if I can find information on the County's web site on CPP and if successful, provide a link to our web site so that parents can obtain more information on the program. It was also recommended that information on CPP be included in our next newsletter.

The second issue of the MAC newsletter was released on Thursday, October 20th and mailed to parents. The latest issue was also posted on the MAC web site. Please visit the web site to review the latest up to date happenings of the committee.

Karla Butler provided an update on the Nawledge 101 Club. The club held its initial meeting and the club will meet every Monday in Trailer #3. Pending the success of the club, the dates may be extended to Monday and Thursdays. More tutors are needed for the club and Karla will look into obtaining more students.

Carol Jasper provided an update on the BITS program. The program had 31 students and 32 tutors at its first session. The majority of tutors are students. Attendance is expected to grow. The program was promoted to all of the feeder schools to Westfield and this year the program is open to all students from these feeder schools from the start as opposed to waiting until January 2006. For more information on BITS and/or to register your child as a participant, or to sign up as a volunteer tutor, please visit the MAC link on the PTSA web site.

Dr. Lavinia Dickerson would like to visit Westfield and speak to the school on issues related to Minority Achievement. For those of you who may not know Dr. Dickerson, she visited Westfield about four years ago when our committee requested

conducting a student survey to assess the level of student comfort at Westfield and also to obtain an initial assessment of how students perceived the learning environment at the school. Dr. Dickerson opposed the survey and thus the survey was cancelled after spending a great deal of time developing the survey and coordinating conducting the survey with the school. The committee agreed that it would be of value to have Dr. Dickerson come in to speak to the school so that we all can ascertain where her current stand is on minority achievement.

The handbook for closing the achievement gap is ready for distribution. The handbook was developed by Christina Schmitt and Karla Butler with some inputs from myself. The handbook is a valuable resource that every minority parent and teacher should have and use. The handbook will be mailed to all African American and Hispanic parents, and also will be distributed to all Westfield faculty and administrators.

There was a lengthy discussion on college admissions process and how the committee can assist parents who have seniors that are entering this process. It was decided that an article will be included in the next newsletter to address this topic. It was also decided that the committee host a workshop, working in partnership with the career center to provide information to parents and students.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to finalizing the agenda for the Fall Parent Coffee. It was hoped that the Latino Dance Club and the STEP team could perform as a means of increasing the number of parents in attendance. However, this was not possible. The parent coffee will be used to highlight the accomplishments of the school in terms of reducing the achievement gap for school year 2004-2005 and introducing the school handbook that was developed by Christina Schmitt. We will have our usual brief presentations by the academic departments, BITS, the career center, and summer institute. I have asked the principals of Rachel Carson and Stone Middle school to come and share a few words on how their schools are addressing the achievement gap. The coffee will close with information sharing on the Nawledge 101 club, the MAC newsletter and the MAC web site.

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 forth coming through keep-in-touch. I will also place an announcement on the MAC webpage.

The next committee monthly meeting will be held on Tuesday November 15, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. We will review the Fall Parent 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.