

**MINORITY STUDENT ACHIVEMENT COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 20, 2007
MEETING MINUTES**

The minority achievement committee held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday November 20, 2007 in the Library. Mr. Mark Richardson chaired the meeting. The following members were present:

Richardson, Mark, (Parent/Committee Chair)
McLendon, Deidre (Parent)
Peterson, Celeste (Parent/Newsletter editor)
Jones, Gloria (Grandparent)
Wilke, Maren (Teacher)
Muller, Ginny (Teacher)
Lauer, Mary (Teacher)
Reed, Malikah (Parent)
Hagedorn, Jan (Teacher)
Hobbs, Sheila (Parent)
Bernstein, Bill (BITS Tutor)
Tortorella, Nancy (BITS Co-Chair)
Jasper, Carol (BITS Co-Chair)
Tim Thomas (Principal)
Dargan, Valerie (Parent)

The minutes are lengthy as there were a number of agenda items covered. The following covered agenda items are summarized below.

1. Introductions and Welcome:

Mr. Richardson welcomed everyone and expressed his thanks for coming out during a short holiday week. Turnout for this meeting was excellent with both parent and faculty well represented.

2. Student Representatives on MAC:

Marnie Dawson is heading up an effort to recruit students to become active members of the committee. She is seeking volunteers across ethnic groups and the committee encourages students to participate and share their ideas with committee members on how the committee can accomplish its goals for this year.

3. Hispanic Parent Outreach

In keeping with one of our goals for this year, Principal Thomas, Hilda Ventura, the Hispanic parent liaison at Westfield and Monica Sanza will meet to discuss concepts for increasing Hispanic parental involvement. I recommend that we also include a student in that meeting. Principal Thomas along with Ms. Ventura is seeking to host a Hispanic Parent meeting that will be conducted entirely in Spanish. Members of the Outreach

Subcommittee are asked to support this planning meeting if possible. Current subcommittee members include:

Susan Pike (Susan.Pike@fcps.edu)
Evelyn Spain (Evelynss@yahoo.com)
Monica Sanza (ROMAS154@aol.com)
Marnie Dawson (marnie.dawson@fcps.edu)
Roger Taylor (taylorrm@cox.net)

If you would like to participate on this subcommittee, please contact Hilda Ventura (Hilda.Ventura@fcps.edu) or Principal Thomas (Tim.Thomas@fcps.edu).

4. **Bulldog Buddies**

Ginny Muller and Harry Van Trees initiated a new student led mentoring program at Westfield called Bulldog Buddies. The mentoring program is initially using seniors to mentor new freshman students at Westfield. There are currently 75 student mentors signed up to participate in the program and these students represent a diverse culture. The goal is to eventually have an upper class student mentor for every new freshman at Westfield. There is more information posted on the Westfield High School web site and a link to this information will be posted on the MAC web site. Ginny Muller will serve as the mentoring subcommittee chair for the MAC. We started that subcommittee last year and I would like that subcommittee to work along side Ms. Muller and Mr. Van Trees to grow the Bulldog Buddies program. The current mentoring subcommittee members are:

Celeste Peterson (Celeste_r_Peterson@raytheon.com)
Jennifer Campbell (JCampbellPTA@aol.com)
Sheila Hobbs (Sheila.Hobbs@us.army.mil)
Kim Greer (Kim.Greer@fcps.edu)

If you are interested in participating on this subcommittee, please contact Ginny Muller.

5. **MAC Newsletter**

The next issue will be distributed at the December Holiday Celebration (more to come on this later). This issue will include articles on Bulldog Buddies (Ginny Muller), BITS (Carol Jasper/Nancy Tortorella, Hispanic Outreach (Hilda Ventura/Tim Thomas), Demographic trends at Westfield (Tim Thomas), African American Girls Club (Pat Williams/Kim Greer), Erin Peterson Golf Tournament (Celeste Peterson), Chairman's Corner (Mark Richardson), pictures from Fall parent coffee (**Who has the pictures?**) and PTSA article (Jennifer Campbell). We are also seeking student articles. The deadline for submitting articles is **Friday December 7, 2007**. Please send your articles to Celeste Peterson, our newsletter editor at (Celeste_r_Peterson@raytheon.com and CPeter40@aol.com). Please send to both email addresses to ensure that Celeste receives your inputs. Also, please copy me so that I know that your article has been submitted.

Final camera ready copy of the newsletter will be completed no later than 14 December 2007 and copies completed by 17 December 2007. We will distribute copies at the December Holiday Celebration and also mail copies home to parents as inserts in the Watchdog newspaper. In addition, a copy of the newsletter will be posted on our web site.

6. Grade Data Analysis

Mark Richardson received the grade and SOL summary data for the past year from Nina Lord. Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Bernstein and I will meet to discuss ways to analyze this new data and compile updated trend data for presentation at the December Holiday Celebration. A more comprehensive presentation will be developed and presented to the school faculty and parents. We will use the grade and SOL data as metrics to determine where the gaps in academic achievement persist and also to identify those areas where the gap has closed. Concepts applied in areas where the gap has closed will be shared with faculty of subject areas where the gap has increased or remains persistent as a means of closing the achievement gap in those areas.

7. Demographic Changes at Westfield

Westfield continues to become more culturally diverse. The school's ethnic population has grown from 73 countries of birth and 39 languages spoken in 2004 to over 80 countries of birth and 50 languages spoken in 2007. Mark Richardson asked if the school's faculty has diversified in terms of culture to meet the changing demographics at Westfield. Mr. Thomas replied that the diversity of the faculty has improved over the years, but that it has not kept up with the changing student demographics. He stressed the difficulty in identifying qualified candidates across ethnic cultures primarily due to the cost of living in Western Fairfax County and the highly competitive environment across the County, when qualified candidates are identified. He did state that the faculty at Westfield continuously undergoes cultural diversity and sensitivity training and that has worked well in keeping up with the changing demographics at the school.

8. BITS Update

Carol Jasper and Nancy Tortorella provided a summary of BITS. They noted that there is a significant increase in the number of elementary level students participating in BITS this year. This increase has led to a higher demand for elementary student level tutors. The number of minority student participants has also increased this year. One of the committee's goals for this year is to have increased minority student (and parent) participation in BITS. There number of high school and parent tutors has fallen this year and there is a need for more tutors. A Keep-In-Touch announcement will be used to solicit more student and parent tutors. I strongly encourage members of the committee to volunteer to become a BITS tutor. The work is rewarding and your participation is surely needed.

9. Step Team Performance

There will be a Step performance at Westfield on December 7. Westfield's step team will participate in the performance. The cost is \$6.00 and all are asked to come out and

support this event. The Westfield Step Team has not performed in over a year and now is back up and running thanks to new faculty coordinators.

10. December Holiday Celebration:

The annual Holiday Celebration will be held on Tuesday December 18, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Cafeteria. We will celebrate the Holiday season by sharing foods from around the world. **It is a pot luck format so please plan to cook up some of your favorite food and come out and share it with others.** The Step Team will and International Club will provide entertainment Please stay tuned for more information in the near future. The draft agenda is as follows:

FOOD, FOOD and MORE FOOD!!!!!!!

- A) Welcome and Introductions
- B) International Club Performance
- C) BITS (Call for more tutors)

FOOD, FOOD and MORE FOOD!!!!!!!

- D) Westfield Changing Demographics
- E) Bulldog Buddies
- F) Step Team Performance

FOOD, FOOD and MORE FOOD!!!!!!!

- G) Overview of Grade Data
- H) Erin Peterson Golf Tournament
- I) Open Discussion

FOOD, FOOD and MORE FOOD!!!!!!!

We need volunteers to assist in setup and cleanup after the event. We will once again use the automated telephone calling system to announce the parent coffee. I am asking that calls be made at two weeks in advance using the automated calling system and followed by another call one week prior to the date of the event. I will ask Vanessa Craig to make up a flyer (using the above draft agenda) and make the flyers available for distribution at the school and also for posting on the web site and hallways. Volunteers are needed to make follow up calls to parents the weekend prior to the coffee. I have a list of calling volunteers from the fall parent coffee. If you have a list of names but are unable to make calls this time around, please send Mark Richardson an email so that I can find an alternate volunteer to make calls. In keeping with our goal for this year, we really want to reach out to our Hispanic/Latino parents to get them to the event. Tim Thomas will arrange to get the translation machine and we also would like to have several parents and or faculty on hand to assist in translations for our non-English speaking parents. **Carol Jasper is asked to bring the raffle tickets.**