

Ron Brown College Preparatory High School (RBHS) Community Cabinet Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 16, 2016
DCPS Central Office (1200 First Street, NE)
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Meeting Objectives

Meeting participants will:

- Meet newly hired staff who will be a part of the RBHS staff.
- Hear updates on the school's enrollment, facilities, and hiring plans.
- Provide feedback on how the school can address transportation concerns for families, including Safetrack and general safe passage.

Meeting Attendees:

- *EMHS Community Cabinet Members:* Lois Berlin, Brandon Daniels, Chantal Fuller, Antawan Holmes, Bridgette Hudson, Maurice Kie, Erwin Kwawu, Robert Pierre, Monica Roaché, Mark Samburg, Jessica Scheer, Kathy Silva, David Smith, Michael Taylor, Eric Vinson, Keith White, Tinley Wickersham, Julian Wright
- *Not in Attendance:* Dion Davis, Sirraya Gant, Donny Gonzalez, Eboni-Rose Thompson, Larry Womack, Han-na'h Wright
- *Office of Family and Public Engagement:* Josephine Bias Robinson, Shanita Burney, Sarah Parker, Sharona Robinson, Allison D'Aurora
- *Office of Chief Operating Officer:* Anjali Kulkarni, Teresa Biagioni
- *Office of the General Counsel:* Omar Mahmud, Steven Rubenstein

Notes:

Topic	Comments
Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The name of the school has officially been changed to Ron Brown College Preparatory High School (RBHS) and will no longer be referred to as Empowering Males High School.• Principal Williams introduced 12 newly hired staff members to the Cabinet, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Dr. Roosevelt Cohen, Social Worker○ Leslie Edwards, Assistant Principal○ Shaka Greene, Math Teacher○ Tonya Hawkins, Registrar○ Alfred Jackson, Manager of Strategy and Logistics○ Celestine Jackson, Assistant of Strategy and Logistics○ Arman Lakes, School Counselor○ Ken Nero, Media Specialist

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Patricia Odom, Intervention Coach ○ Shatane Porter, School Counselor ○ Darrin “Guy” Richardson, Custodial Foreman ○ Errin Smith, Special Education Teacher • School staff asked the Cabinet what their goals are for the school. The Cabinet reported they would like to see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The school retain its teacher workforce so there is consistency in the students’ experience. ○ The school earn and maintain a strong reputation, so students are prepared to work hard when they apply to attend the school. ○ Students who are enthusiastic about their education. • The Cabinet asked the staff what kind of support they will need to be successful. Their responses included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Incentives for both attendance and some academic programs ○ Exposure to new environments, especially to college ○ Access to summer internships, experts in various careers, and other similar opportunities for students ○ Support getting new families enrolled in the school ○ Building a community presence in the building so students know their whole community is supporting them
Update and Discussion on ACLU Publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) recently released a report that questions the legality of DCPS’ Empowering Males of Color (EMOC) initiative, including RBHS. • DCPS is continuing its work on EMOC and is committed to supporting RBHS. • DCPS anticipates that a lawsuit may be forthcoming and does not plan on making many public comments about the report. • Cabinet members were invited to ask questions, which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Question: How should Cabinet members respond to questions they receive about this report? Response: Cabinet members can defer any questions about this report to DCPS and should not speak on behalf of the Cabinet or DCPS. ○ Question: Have any female students tried to enroll in RBHS? Response: The school has been promoted as a school for male students, but females have not been precluded from applying. ○ Question: Has DCPS considered an all girls school? ○ Response: DCPS continues to explore all options to

	<p>improve academic achievement for all students, including its girls.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Question: Does DCPS know if other public school districts have had to defend single-gender education initiatives? ○ Response: A complaint was filed against the New York City Department of Education in August 2015 that charged the department with violating Title IX by operating the Young Women’s Leadership School (YWLS), a single-gender public school for girls in Harlem. The Office of Civil Rights for the U.S. Department of Education issued a decision letter that determined even though there were differences between YWLS and schools offered by the school district to boys, the differences were not significant enough to support a finding that the school district was discriminating against male students.
Principal Update	<p><i>Enrollment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is exactly 50% enrolled with 75 students. RBHS is the second highest enrolled high school in DCPS. • The new staff will help with outreach to continue to recruit students, including attending parent-teacher conferences at select middle schools on May 23 to share information with eighth grade parents. Staff will also be visiting schools with a high number of matched students, participate in door-to-door canvassing, and phone bank to matched families. <p><i>Logo and Mascot</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Monarchs was selected as the school’s mascot after voting that took place throughout April. • Principal Williams is refining the logo design with a graphic design firm. Having a final logo will help the school with branding. <p><i>Hiring Update</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Williams continues to fill a few open positions. The goal is to be completely staffed by the end of May. • The Academic Planning Committee continues to be a huge support in participating in interviews and mock lessons. • A couple of the staff members will attend a conference hosted by the Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color. It will be a good opportunity for the staff to network with other professionals in this field and learn best practices. <p><i>Summer Transition Program</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Williams is finalizing plans for the summer transition

	<p>program. The first week will take place at Sandy Spring Friends School in Maryland. Students will also participate in ropes course activities at an adventure park next to the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of the program is for the students to break down walls and build trust with staff, fellow students, and themselves. • There will be three day camp sessions, and the last session will be spent overnight at the school. • The second week of the program will be at RBHS where students will complete beginning of the year assessments. Staff will use this data to inform their pre-service week and ensure they are prepared for the students and their needs.
Facilities Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first floor demolition has been completed, electrical and plumbing is installed, and the crew is ready to put in the walls. This is the floor where students will be in August, so it has been the team's priority to complete this floor. • Demolition has begun on the second floor, and asbestos abatement is in progress on the third floor. Once the abatement is complete, demolition will begin on the third floor as well. • The crew is also working on the connector in the middle of the building. The back staircase has been separated and will be removed. The brick will eventually be removed as well and replaced with glass. • The Department of General Services (DGS) approached the Deanwood Citizens Association (DCA) and ANC 7C about getting an after-hours permits, so the crew could complete the building before the start of school. DCA required that the DGS hire Ward 7 residents to work on this project. About one-third of the employees are Ward 7 residents. When there are no more Ward 7 candidates, DGS is prioritizing hiring other DC residents. The ANC 7C did not support the permit because it allowed for Sunday working hours. DGS was still able to acquire a permit from the DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), but this has caused some tension in the community. DCPS and DGS have communicated that work on Sundays will not start until June and will refrain from completing loud work so as to not disrupt religious gatherings. There is an agreement that the crew will only do loud work during the week from 7 a.m. – 8 p.m. even though the permit allows them to work from 5 a.m. – 10 p.m. • DGS has also had to ask the community for a letter of support to get an exemption from the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) to have a smaller number of parking spaces than required for the building capacity. The ANC has asked for more information from the Department of Transportation to better understand the city's long-term parking plan for this

	<p>neighborhood. They're concerned that a small parking lot will impact the street parking situation for nearby residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet members emphasized that many teachers will drive to work because they have a lot of materials to transport every day. The school should prioritize making enough parking available to staff and consider consulting with Stuart-Hobson Middle School, which made some creative decisions with limited parking availability.
Safe Passage and School Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the concerns prospective families voice when considering enrolling in RBHS is safe passage between the school and home. • Additionally, WMATA is planning on shutting down from the first two weeks of school while they complete service on the tracks, which will impact students' transportation. • Principal Williams asked the Cabinet to provide their thoughts about how the school can ease these worries for parents. Their feedback included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consult with other high schools that have high out-of-boundary populations to learn how their students get to their school safely. ○ Explain to parents that students will be leaving together and the school's dismissal time is later than those of nearby schools. ○ Partner with WMATA to provide charter buses for students. ○ Consider engaging Ward 7 Councilmember Yvette Alexander to help with lobbying WMATA to reschedule the closure time. ○ Provide charter buses the first two weeks of school while the WMATA is not operating. ○ Create a carpooling system for parents who live near each other, and give incentives to parents who are carpool drivers. ○ Conduct a transportation needs study of enrolled families to better understand what kind of support the school can give the students. ○ Consider partnering with the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) to walk students to and from the metro. ○ Help Deanwood in messaging a positive story about the neighborhood. The recent violence is overshadowing all of the good work the community is doing, and they need help communicating this to district residents.

Closing and Next Steps

- The next meeting is on June 20. The tentative location is the Mt. Pleasant Library, but the Office of Family and Public Engagement staff will confirm the location with the Cabinet prior to the meeting.

NOTE: Meeting location was updated from Mt. Pleasant Library to Dorothy Height Library from 6:30pm – 8:30pm.