

CSC Minutes

January 23 and 26, 2015

Present: Stephanie Nusbaumer, parent representative and co-chairperson; Catherine Forington and Angela Dire, faculty representatives; Jeff Aitken, community representative, Marisa Hudson-Arney, parent representative, Karin Johnson, principal; Corina Hall, DPS financial partner for Polaris.

Kat Zimmerman, former Polaris teacher and Math Olympiad instructor (January 23).

Leta Kalfas, parent representative and co-chairperson (January 26).

Angie Brown, member School Leadership Team (January 26).

Budget. Ms. Johnson and Ms. Hall presented the projected 2015-16 school budget to the committee. Under current projections, Polaris is about \$60,000 short of what it will cost to maintain current staffing levels and resources. The primary reason for the shortfall, they said, is a change in district policy: DPS used to pay benefits for Polaris's 11 paraprofessionals from a central budget. Now, the district is shifting those costs to the school.

The committee discussed ways to address the shortfall, including:

- Employing fewer paraprofessionals. This may be possible to do through attrition, without letting any staff. Some of the paraprofessionals currently employed by Polaris are planning to retire next year, and others may leave to take full-time teaching positions. This would result in a minimum of \$17,000 in savings or more.
- Trimming \$5,000 the budget for materials such as copies and laminate.
- Cutting out \$10,000 budgeted for professional development for faculty. In the past, Polaris has brought in consultants to advise the faculty on subjects such as the Math and Focus curriculum and reading instruction. This type of professional development could be

shifted to “Teacher Leaders,” who receive stipends from the district for assuming such responsibilities.

- Asking the PTO for a one-time \$20,000 increase to help cover the shortfall. This year, the PTO spent roughly \$100,000 to hire paraprofessional help in classrooms. The CSC agreed to ask the PTO to increase this amount to \$120,000 for the 2015-16 school year.
- Cutting back on non-salary expenses in this year’s budget and carrying over that money to next year’s budget.

Math Specialist. Ms. Zimmerman presented the committee with a proposal to hire a math specialist for 10 hours a week. The specialist could assist classroom teachers in differentiating instruction for students and also provide struggling students with extra help. Currently, Ms. Zimmerman helps run the Math Olympiad, an enrichment program for students. She said there has been great interest in the program, and that interest has exceeded available spots. Committee members expressed interest in the proposal but said it might be difficult to fund in light of the budget shortfall.