



Alice Deal Junior High School

P.T.A. Newsletter

January 2007

www.dealpta.org

Jennifer Gruber, Editor



Spotlight On: ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS LOGAN & DACOBA



What's a typical day like for Deal's top administrators? Assistant Principal Gwendolyn Logan says, "It's like dancing on the head of a pin." "Some days I don't even make it into my office," adds Assistant Principal Manuel Dacoba. "We don't have a set time for our lunch, even though we're both on cafeteria duty." If you want to know what's keeping Deal's APs busy, this article's for you.

The Deal administrative team that oversees academic and student life is led by Principal Kim with Assistant Principals Dacoba and Logan. "We're a team," stressed Mr. Dacoba of the three-some. They conference all the time, making building-wide decisions together. "We're the education leaders in the building; we support teachers in class management," stated Miss Logan. Both educators have many years of classroom experience, rising through the teaching ranks to qualify for their administrative positions.

Miss Logan hails from Houston, Texas and went to college in Austin. Her undergraduate major was chemistry with a minor in math. She moved to the East Coast to work as a chemist for Conoco in Baltimore before deciding to go into teaching. For some years she taught chemistry in Baltimore County schools. In 1988 she moved to DC and began teaching at Coolidge High School where she stayed for 12 years. During that time she received a MA in teaching from Towson State and advanced to become head of the Math, Science and Technology Academy. In 2000, certified as an Administrator, she began her tenure as one of Deal's assistant principals.

If you haven't already noticed the accent, Brooklyn, New York is where Mr. Dacoba was born and raised. He received both his Bachelor of Science and Masters in Education from City College of New York. A high school mentor opened his eyes to the power of teaching. Forced to take a technology course in high school, he "fell in love" with woodworking. His teacher recognized and nurtured his talent and, by senior year, Mr. Dacoba had become his assistant teacher. After college, for 10 years he taught in Westchester County and New York City both middle and high school courses including technical drawing, architecture, plastics technology, woodworking and home repair. In 1988 Deal's former principal Reginald Moss tapped Mr. Dacoba to start a computer lab with graphics and Computer Aided Design (CAD) capabilities, photography and a printing lab. (Ms. Logan noted that 1988 was the year they both entered the DCPS system.)

Small wonder Mr. Dacoba's administrative duties include oversight of all Deal's technological needs, from specifying (and pulling) CAT5 cables to purchasing school laptops. "It's a whole different game today with Smart Boards, laptops, thumbdrives...." He is the "go-to" person for all equipment and supplies, runs the homework hotline and more.

Ms. Logan oversees academic programs in Math, Science and Technology as well as all the testing in the school. In addition to the yearly "high stakes" test in the spring, this year the school incorporated a four-time-a-year test called DC-BAS the results of which teachers can access directly and help them target deficiencies in Math and English. For the past five years Ms. Logan has nurtured Deal's contacts with the American Association for the Advancement of Science; she speaks with pride of a relationship that led to the school adopting a high end Physical Science program called "Construct Ideas in Physical Science" or "CIPS".

What the biggest challenge ahead? Mr. Dacoba quickly replies, "Handling the modernization." He's been the lead administrator over the past few years in the development and design phases. They're getting ready for a culture shift as the school moves from a traditional junior high to a middle school. They started two years ago with professional development for teachers to learn strategies for middle school. *(Continued on next page)*

(Assistant Principal Feature Story continued)

Ms. Kim, Mr. Dacoba and Ms. Logan observe and evaluate teachers' performance in class. They are each responsible for about twenty teachers. Mr. Dacoba reflected, "The observation is required by DCPS but we use it more to assist teachers." First year teachers are observed several times a year. If they observe something that needs action, they'll meet with the teacher privately, give support and time to correct. Every year they compile the data and give teachers a final rating in June of each year.

Both vice principals serve on the LSRT and Mr. Dacoba serves on Deal's Student Support Team which is a front-line team that helps remediate children who need particularly closely coordinated support. Every day includes a lot of problem solving but they both agree that there are few new problems. They share disciplinary responsibilities, trying to lower the number of suspensions and seek alternative ways to deal with student behavior. Ms. Logan says, "When students act out it's an outward manifestation of inside issues. We try to help the whole problem; we do a lot of mediation. Sometimes it takes five minutes to get at the root of the problem, sometimes five hours." One of the most common are boy/girl issues. "Nine out of ten times one of them likes the other and doesn't know how to express it, so someone starts hitting," observes Ms. Logan. "We guide them to see that there's always a verbal solution." Mr. Dacoba adds, "We want everyone to come here feeling comfortable, safe and secure. It takes everyone in this building to make that happen; not just the three of us." Mr. Dacoba gives a lot of credit to Officers Archie and Davis who often "go above and beyond."

Each day, says Mr. Dacoba, "You turn right a student needs you; turn left a teacher needs you; go forward a parent needs you. That's what makes being an assistant principal so interesting!" They've agreed that one of the three administrators has to be in the building when it's open for any activity. It's not mandated but "that's the culture of Deal." Ms. Logan and Mr. Dacoba both arrive before 7:00 am and, if there's a basketball game that evening, they might not leave until 7:30 that night. The team approach is the key according to Mr. Dacoba who says of Ms. Logan: "She's my colleague and personal friend. I trust her and we need that trust for a good team." -- *Jennifer Gruber, Newsletter Editor*

Editor's Note: The administrative team also includes Special Education Coordinator Brooks; watch future newsletters for a feature on this department.

The next deadline for the Newsletter is:
Fri. Feb. 2nd with delivery to homes by Feb. 9th.
Please leave articles in the PTA Drawer in the Main Office or send them to Jennifer.gruber@starpower.net.



FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Happy New Year! Every New Year brings us hope and excitement. That, coupled with the days getting longer and the sun shining brighter, helps to lift the mood of the school.

For this month's column, I want to take the time to brag about our teachers. As many of you know, this is a dedicated and hardworking group of people. While the students were still on break enjoying the uncommonly warm weather, the teachers spent the time "sharpening their saws," as Stephen Covey would say.

Let me share four scenes with you –

- Visualize one group of teachers, sitting in the library with their laptops learning how to input student attendance into the student information system, STARS, under the guidance of Ms. Lindler, Ms. Abbas, Ms. Sellars, and Mr. Dacoba.

- Meanwhile, in a room above the library, another group of teachers, led by Ms. Logan, Ms. Lerum, and Ms. Brewer, cluster around tables, manipulating and analyzing the interim assessment data results. They are logged onto the internet with their laptops, discussing ways to refine their instruction based on the specific needs of students in their teams and classes. At the front of the room there is a Smartboard monitor that displays the data from an example classroom.

- Earlier, the entire faculty gathered in the cafeteria to brainstorm different ways to hook students' attention while introducing a lesson, to spot-check student comprehension during a lesson, and to close the lesson for the day. They work in teams while Ms. Mostoller and Ms. Veselick walk from group to group, offering tips and feedback.

- A few days ago, teachers gathered in the third-floor classroom of Mr. Mbayu, the chair of the Tech Team, to explore new uses of GradeQuick (<http://www.gradequick.com/>). Mr. Mbayu, joined by Ms. Abbas and Ms. Phillip, demonstrated alternative methods for keeping records that will help both students and parents track student progress.

As I reflect on these efforts, I realize that our teaching staff has made extraordinary strides in adopting new technologies and using technology to improve instruction. At the same time, our teachers are increasingly working in a collaborative style, reaching out beyond the walls of a single classroom to better understand their students and to share experience about what works and what doesn't. I see in our teachers a real spirit of innovation and enthusiasm, and that makes me very optimistic about what 2007 has in store for Deal and its students!

~~ *Melissa Kim*



FROM THE PTA CO-PRESIDENTS

Happy New Year! Just as the holiday frenzy fades you might feel that it is finally time to relax...but

no, a new frenzy has begun – the second half of the school year! This is a busy time for Deal students – Science Fair, National History Day competition, Spring Musical, the start of the spring sports season, applications due for admission for the Wilson HS Academies – DEADLINES! So much to keep track of – what’s a parent to do?

The PTA is here to help! We’ll continue to provide updated information about upcoming events on our website, www.dealpta.org. In addition, we have begun to send out the student weekly bulletin on the listserv. The bulletin is a full listing of meetings, events, academic and sports activities taking place in a given week. Every effort will be made to get that information to parents every Monday morning – so that you can more easily plan your week. The bulletin also provides you with great ‘conversation starters’ – for example, you’ll be able to ask your child about the assembly, the Geography Bee or the Ski Club meeting! If you haven’t yet signed up for the listserv – please do so now. Send an email to: DealPTA-subscribe@yahoo.com. It is very important that you send your subscribe email message from the email account you want registered.

Parents will have plenty of opportunities to contribute to Deal in the coming months – and we encourage you to do so. Volunteer to judge the Science Fair or National History Day competitions, sign up to help with the Phonathon or Auction, or make a contribution when you get the call from a fellow Deal parent. Please visit the school and take a look at the examples of student work lining our main hallways. The Deal community is a vibrant and exciting one – we invite you to be a part of it.

~ Alison Wylegala & Malin Kerwin

arwylegala@aol.com malin1@verizon.net



ELL STUDENTS STUDY THE CONSTITUTION

On Dec. 13th, thirty-six ELL students took the *We the People Constitution Trolley Tour* sponsored by a consortium of educators from the Capitol Historical Society, the White House Historical Association, the National Park Service, The Federal Courts, the National Archives, the Old Town Trolley and Children's Concierge. Students spent the day touring many famous landmarks in Washington, D.C: the Capitol, Lincoln Memorial, FDR Memorial, White House, Supreme Court, and National Archives. Although

all our students live in the city, most had never had an opportunity to visit these sites, let alone go around the city in a colorfully decorated red trolley. On the tour, each time students answered a question correctly, Cousin Sam and Driver Willie would ring the trolley car bell to congratulate them. In the halls of the Lincoln Memorial, Drilon Kojcini got a prize for reciting Abraham Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address. Outside, students took turns standing in the spot where Martin Luther King, Jr. made the "I Have a Dream" speech.

After students were treated to a hot lunch in the cafeteria of the Federal Court House, they went to the National Archives to view the most important documents in the history of the United States. Students found it incredible that they could still make out the signatures of the Founding Fathers in those hundreds-of-years old documents. Most importantly, students gained a true appreciation of the importance of the Constitution in the lives of *We the People*.

From Team United Nations

-- Mr. Mark Winn-Ritzenberg & Mrs. Jihong Wang



**Annual Phonathon is Coming –
Sun. Jan. 28th and Mon. Jan. 29th
Make a Date, Make a Pledge,
MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

The Annual Phonathon will be held **Sunday, January 28 from 4:00 to 6:00 pm** and **Monday, January 29 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm**. Along with the Auction, the Phonathon is the biggest fundraiser for Deal. You can help by making a date to volunteer on either day – bilingual volunteers especially needed – or certainly making a pledge when one of our parent volunteers calls your home. Either way, you’ll help us make a difference. Last year, the Phonathon raised about \$30,000 for the Deal PTA. The donations helped fund the 7th grade Hemlock Overlook “team building trip,” supplemental science books, new laptops for the teachers, student agenda books, peer mediation, the spring musical, parent education workshops . . . and much more!

Please consider helping us out in January by making phone calls to your fellow Deal parents. Volunteer just a couple of hours and help raise hundreds of dollars for Deal. It’s easy and fun – we provide the food, the phones and the teamwork. If you can’t volunteer, please be generous and make a pledge of support for the Deal PTA when you receive a call during the Phonathon. Your pledge is 100% tax deductible. To volunteer, contact the co-chairs, Amy Friend (244-9354; asfriend27@aol.com) or Cary Griffin (364-0856; griffin@griffinco.com)



**WANTED: Chaperones for
Valentine Day Dance**

Fri. Feb. 9th, 4:30 - 7:30

Contact katrinaburt@netzero.com.

SMARTBOARD ENHANCES CLASSES

“This is terrific; I have only seen these at big conferences. So you use this in your class to teach French. Your kids seem to just love it. I see why Deal is the best.”

-- A visiting Parent in Mr. Mbayu's French class

Deal Junior High school is one of the few schools in the nation using SMARTboard in class. When the Deal Administration decided to get us rear projection SMARTboard we envisioned it was a good idea and after using it for close to an advisory we can say with absolute certainty that it *is* an excellent idea. Combining the simplicity of a whiteboard with the power of a computer, the SMARTboard interactive whiteboard engages students and audiences. The touch-sensitive display connects to your computer and digital projector to show your computer image. You can then control computer applications directly from the display, write notes in digital ink and save your work to share.

Now the French class has not only become livelier but it is definitely more interactive. Every student yearns to go to the board now to write, explain or expound on a concept. We can save what they wrote and come back to it every time we deem necessary...we can even print the lesson of the day for those who were absent and those who need reinforcement.

I connected a DVD player to the SMARTboard and we can pause on an image, describe the image and then write over the image. Internet pages like Radio France International (www.rfi.fr) and other Francophone web sites have become just another tool we use in our classes. Translation exercises come to life when students can write over word documents or web pages. With handwriting recognition, I can easily transform my writings on the SMARTboard to word documents and email them to my parents and students.

Best of all I can retrieve any lesson saved on the hard drive as a file. This is a boon to instruction and I hope it can be made available to others. The importance of the integration of this technology into instruction cannot be overemphasized in this digital age.

-- Mr. Mbayu, French Teacher



STUDENT COUNCIL HELPS DEAL CELEBRATE VALENTINE'S DAY

The Student Council sponsors two special events to help the Deal family celebrate the annual day of friendship and love.

Fri., Feb. 9th : The Valentine Party from 4:30-7:30 p.m. in the boys' gym. Tickets will go on sale Thurs., Feb. 1st. The party includes a dance, refreshments, a special pageant with Valentine royalty, basketball, and movies. Parents are invited to help staff the coatroom and to chaperone events. *(continued on next column)*

Wed., Feb. 14th: Student Council Valentine delivery project. Student Council cupids will arrive early at school on the morning of the 14th to process and deliver special orders of carnations, lollipops, roses and teddy bears to friends and staff. Students must pre-order their Valentines during the lunch periods starting January 16th. Carnations and Lollipops: \$1.00 each. Roses and Teddy Bears: \$3.00 each



National History Day School Competition: March 5th -8th

“Triumph and Tragedy in History”

The Department of Social Studies will hold the annual school National History Day competition from March 5-8th. Parents who are interested in helping to register students or who have expertise in history and can help evaluate student projects are asked to contact Cynthia Mostoller at mostolmax1@aol.com.

The schedule is:

Mon., March 5th: *Registration in the Girls' Gym (all day during social studies classes)

Tues., March 6th: Judging (all day at school sites)

Wed., March 7th: Viewing of the Exhibits (for parents and students during social studies classes)

Thurs., March 8th: Take-down of projects (during social studies classes)

*Registration must be pre-approved by the students' social studies teachers. Students must be present to register on Mon., March 5th. No registration will take place after 3:00 p.m. March 5th.

Deal Media Center Receives Generous ANC Grant

In early December, Deal received a \$1,000 grant from ANC 3/4G to help with the rebuilding of the Deal Media Center collection. Thanks to the generosity of the ANC, Deal's Media Specialist, Ms. Sellars, is now able to add to the library's offerings. (Parents will recall that a pipe burst in the library last spring and caused extensive damage to Deal's book collection).

Most of the ANC funds will be used to support Deal's efforts to becoming an International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Foreign language books in French, Spanish and Chinese were ordered, as were works of literature (in English) written by foreign born authors. Audio books were purchased for use by both ESL students as well as students with alternative learning styles. In addition, Ms. Sellars hopes to provide the Deal library with complete sets of the extremely popular Harry Potter and Lemony Snicket series.

Thanks again to the ANC for making this grant possible. If you know of any other grant opportunities or would like to help with grant writing, please contact Leslie Cordes (leslie.cordes@verizon.net) or Tanya George (tanya.george@verizon.net).



DEAL AUCTION UPDATE

“Springtime in Paris”

We’ve already got some great items – dinner at La Fourchette, a weekend at the Sofitel hotel, a VIP Direct TV 12-month subscription. We’re aiming for a great event in April at Fannie Mae (likely April 21), and there’s a role for everyone at the school to help. Perhaps your favorite restaurant would be willing to donate a gift certificate? Or if you have ideas for donations, but don’t like to do the asking yourself, we’re not shy – just give us the contact information. We’re also planning a mass mailing, and could use some help stuffing envelopes. Visit www.dealpta.org for the donation form and solicitation letter. For more information, contact Linda Feldmann (FeldmannL@csp.com, 202-667-4465) or Malin Kerwin (malin1@verizon.net, 202-362-9055).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Thurs. Jan. 18 th	Math Night
Fri. Jan. 19 th	Last day of 2 nd advisory
Thurs. Jan. 25 th	Boys Basketball Home game 4:30
Fri. Jan. 26 th	Students dismissed @ 12:15pm
Thurs. Feb. 1 st	Boys Basketball Home Game 4:30
Mon. Feb. 5 th	Science Fair week begins
Thurs. Feb. 8 th	NAEP testing
Fri. Feb. 9 th	Valentine Day Party 4:30-7:30

DEAL GEOGRAPHY BEE RESULTS ARE IN!



Nathan Kohrman wins Alice Deal Geography Bee and moves one step closer to a \$25,000 College Scholarship. 8th grader Nate Kohrman won the school-level competition of the National Geographic Bee on Dec. 7th. The school-level Bee, at which students answered oral questions on geography, was the first round in the 19th annual National Geographic Bee.

The kick-off for this year’s Bee was the week of Nov. 13th, with thousands of schools around the U.S. and territories participating. The school winners, including Nate, will take a written test; up to 100 of the top scorers in each state will be eligible to compete in the state Bee on March 30th. The National Championship will be held in DC on May 22nd and 23rd. “Jeopardy” host Alex Trebek will moderate the national finals and it will air on television.

Anyone can brush up on geography with GeoBee Challenge, an online geography quiz at www.nationalgeographic.com/geobee, which poses five new questions a day from previous National Geographic Bees.

-- Sharon Purcell, Geography Bee Coordinator

NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET AT THE TOP OF THE LIST FOR THE LSRT

The LSRT is focussing its efforts to retain our robust educational programs, extracurricular offerings and sports during our two years as a 7th and 8th grade school. We have asked Dr. Janey and our Regional Assistant Superintendent, Pat Tucker, for meetings to discuss our specific needs and priorities. Both have responded positively and meetings are being set up now. In addition, Dr. Janey and his administration are looking at this situation on a system-wide level, because there are 7 junior highs whose rising 9th graders will be moving to high schools this fall, in the conversion to middle schools (not all are undergoing renovation at the same time). Two solutions are being considered: an increase in the Weighted Student Formula, and a special subsidy for junior high schools. Support for junior highs/middle schools is also coming from the Gates Foundation. Deal is well represented in the systemwide effort: LSRT member Margot Berkey sits on the Weighted Student Formula Committee and co-chairs the Middle Schools Committee, which includes Ms. Kim, Alison Wylegala, Jude Landis and Sarah Whitener.

The PTA and LSRT are planning to hold progress meetings for parents throughout this spring. Our first meeting is scheduled for the evening of Feb. 22nd.

-- Sarah Whitener, LSRT Chair

The following are abbreviated minutes from the Dec. 7th and Dec. 14th meetings. Full minutes, including those from the most recent Jan. 11th meeting, as well as the complete transcript of the email sent to Superintendent Janney, may be found on the Deal PTA website at: www.dealpta.org

MINUTES OF DEAL LSRT MEETING – Dec. 7th PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Recent Staffing Changes

Ms. Kim met with Assistant Superintendent Pat Tucker to discuss the recent reductions in staffing at Deal. Despite press reports (in the NW Current) to the contrary, Ms. Tucker said that there was no formal appeals process for local schools or LSRTs to appeal the recent staffing reductions that resulted from the system’s equalization process. She did say that the system has – for several years – provided supplemental funding for small schools, which may account for the perception that some schools were allowed to maintain staffing above that provided by the DCPS Weighted Student Formula.

Chinese Teacher

Ms. Kim sadly reported that she had been notified by the Chinese Embassy that the anticipated Chinese teacher (who was scheduled to begin teaching Chinese at both Deal and Wilson) will not be able to arrive in January because of visas issues. While we are now being told to expect the (Continued on next page)

(LSRT NEWS continued)

teacher's arrival in late March, Ms. Kim believes even this is uncertain. Luckily (unlike Wilson) Deal had not already changed student schedules to incorporate the new Chinese classes.

Armed Intruder Drill – Planning continues with DCPS and the Metro. Police Department over an Armed Intruder Drill at Deal, now likely to be in January. Discussions have been held with students, and will occur again. Parents will be notified with a letter home, a phone call home, and with a notice on the listserv. As a result of the Drill earlier this fall, and the involvement of the MPD, the administration has submitted to DCPS a detailed list of classrooms in need of functioning locks on their classroom doors.

PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR

Enrollment Update and Projections – Deal's current enrollment is 773. To date two additional students have returned to Deal from local charter schools. In planning for next year, the LSRT affirmed the administration's recommendation of a projected enrollment of 570. This is based on the current 7th grade enrollment of 270, both the addition of some new 8th graders as well as the loss of some current 7th graders. The administration is still completing its projection of what funding and staffing this level of enrollment would yield based on the DCPS weighted student formula. This is a complicated process, since it must include projections on numbers of ESL students, special education students and FARMs students (those eligible for the federal Free and Reduced Meals program). They expect to complete their projections before the end of the month. This will allow the administration and the LSRT to develop a concrete proposal to DCPS for what amount of additional staffing will be necessary to maintain the integrity of the Deal program during the two year facility modernization when the school will be 'down-sized' to just 7th and 8th grades.

The administration is renewing efforts to get families to complete applications for eligibility for the federal Free and Reduced Meals (FARMs) program. Another letter will be send home once more application forms arrive. Deal's eligibility for supplemental Title 1 funding depends on the number of FARMs eligible students. If we do not document a higher number of FARMs eligible students, Deal will lose \$160,000 in supplemental Title 1 funding.

Ms. Whitener distributed a list of the fall and upcoming outreach events scheduled at feeder schools. They include both informational meetings at feeder schools as well as "Buddy Days" at Deal.

Meetings with DCPS about Staffing for Next Year

Ms. Kim also has met with Nicole Conley-Abrams, Director for Resources, Allocations and Management, to discuss Deal's staffing needs for next year, the potential impacts of the loss of the 9th grade, and the need for special staffing so that Deal is "held harmless" during

the two year transition/modernization. The LSRT will be drafting a letter laying out the issues and a specific proposal for our needs for next year.

Ms. Kim also discussed next year's staffing with Deputy Superintendent Tucker at their meeting. Ms. Kim reports that Dr. Tucker understood the need to address these issues, and agreed to work with Deal to get answers as quickly as possible.

In addition to the 'small schools subsidies' discussed earlier, research by LSRT members clearly indicates that DCPS has provided supplemental staffing to "hold harmless" other schools: both for schools undergoing consolidation and schools in modernization.

Setting Priorities - The LSRT began a discussion of program priorities that will be critical to maintain during the two year modernization/transition. Some of the initial items identified included:

- Foreign language program - Deal's foreign language classes are over-enrolled, and additional sections were added this year to accommodate student interest. A vibrant foreign language program is essential to creating of an International Baccalaureate program.

- Mathematics – Deal receives a lot of positive feedback about the math skills of its graduates, and it is known for doing an especially good job in maintaining enthusiasm for math among our girls.

Interdisciplinary Teaming – The transition to teaming has led to a lot of collaborative instruction among teachers, and is felt to be an essential feature of our middle school program.

- Differentiation of Instruction – Deal's ability to provide a range of courses differentiated to meet student needs is also seen as a strength. Depending on individual student needs, Deal offers remediation, on level courses as well as intensive courses.

- Community Support – maintaining the breadth and integrity of our instructional program is critical to ensuring the continuing community support which has been so essential to Deal's success.

- Quality Staff – Deal has attracted a number of new teachers who not only make tremendous contributions to the program, but who represent the future of the school. As we manage our staffing over the next two years, we cannot risk losing our next generation of instructional leaders.

- Social Studies program – Deal's Social Studies department has a national reputation, epitomized by our tremendous record of success in National History Day. We have attracted attention (and staff) nationally as a result.

FEEDER SCHOOL PATTERN CHANGES

Ms. Berkey reported on the recent citywide meeting of Middle Grades and SHAPPE (the Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals and Educators). The focus of the discussion was on the first draft of the District's
(Continued on next page)

(*LSRT NEWS continued*) proposed new feeder patterns. The proposal has the potential for serious impacts on the Deal community. It was agreed at the meeting that the Board of Education would be asked to defer action on changes to feeder patterns and school boundaries. The draft proposes several changes relative to Deal. As proposed, West ES, Mann ES, Bancroft, and Oyster Elementary Schools would no longer feed into Deal (and Wilson). The re-alignment of these elementary schools away from Deal could have a detrimental impact on our enrollment; though we could continue to enroll students from these schools on an out-of-boundary basis.

If these issues are not resolved at the next SHAPPE meeting on the 19th, then rising 7th grade parents from West, Mann, Bancroft and Oyster should be encouraged to apply to Deal through the out-of-boundary process. We anticipate that Deal will have plenty of spaces for out-of-boundary students – but they will need to have completed the necessary paperwork in case the feeder school patterns are changed for next fall.

Wilson 9th Grade Transition Deal staff recently met with the department chairs at Wilson. They are continuing to work together to coordinate curriculum. Although there had been some uncertainty, at last week's Wilson Night at Deal, the Wilson staff announced that they would in fact be offering 9th Grade Intensive English next year. There was very good attendance at last week's Wilson Night at Deal. A number of Wilson students spoke, and several of the Academy Heads described their particular programs. Wilson is continuing to host a series of Open Houses, and rising 9th Grade families are encouraged to attend.

The LSRT set an additional meeting for Dec. 14th to continue the discussion of priorities during the coming two years.

MINUTES OF DEAL LSRT MEETING – Dec. 14th PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Ms. Kim announced that Sharon Purcell is the new faculty representative to the LSRT, filling Amy Helm's seat. Ms. Kim then reported that she has had another meeting with Assistant Superintendent Pat Tucker about Deal's enrollment and staffing for next year. She has requested a detailed letter from Ms. Kim outlining her perspective on Deal's program and staffing needs for the two years of modernization/MS transition. Ms. Tucker again made clear that DCPS recognizes the issues Deal is facing, that no decisions have been made, and that she welcomes input from Ms. Kim and the LSRT.

LSRT Advocacy On Staffing Needs

LSRT members reported on a series of formal and informal discussions which have occurred with Superintendent Janey, Victor Reinoso, and members of Adrian Fenty's transition team on the need for special staffing for Deal during the two year modernization/MS transition.

Citywide Middle Schools & SHAPPE Meetings

Ms. Berkey updated the LSRT on her ongoing involvement with the citywide meetings of Middle Schools and SHAPPE (the Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals and Educators). Ms. Berkey is optimistic that the proposed changes in feeder patterns and boundaries will be delayed.

She also pointed out that (if that occurs) there will be other junior high schools in the city that – like Deal – will be losing their 9th grades before they pick up their 6th grades. This should enhance our ability to ensure that the District is responsive to the needs of schools facing temporary downsizing due to the realignment into middle schools.

Ms. Berkey also reported that the Middle Schools/SHAPPE Committee has suggested to the Superintendent that DCPS approach the Gates Foundation for support for the transition to middle schools.

Key Themes

The LSRT discussed and agreed upon the following framework for our advocacy around Deal's staffing needs during the modernization/MS transition:

- Deal must maintain the breadth and depth of its instructional program: including our teaming model; our ability to offer remedial, on grade level, and intensive courses; and our increasingly popular foreign language program.
 - Deal must maintain its quality faculty: especially as we build and train the next generation of teachers who will carry Deal into the future.
 - Deal must continue its development into an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program
- Ms. Kim pointed out that two years ago only 30% of 7th graders were able to take a foreign language. This year, 90% of the 7th grade has been able to enroll in a foreign language. This speaks to the popularity, and the importance, of Deal's foreign language program.

-- Tom Israel

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL HOLIDAY TREE SALE

Thanks to all who participated in this year's Holiday Tree and Greenery sale. We netted more than \$5,000 on this fundraiser, \$1,000 above our budget target! Special thanks to Hamlet Bent, Chipp Jones, and Bud Lomax, for seeing to ordering our stock of trees, wreaths, etc., and putting in multiple double shifts during the sale itself. Marty Kastanaki contributed a new, large sign that drivers along Nebraska Ave couldn't miss, and which we can use to draw more customers for years to come. Alison Wylegala saw to it that word got out on multiple local listservs. Alumnus parent and sale founder Bob Wollam generously allowed

(Continued on next page)



(Holiday Tree Sale continued)

us to borrow his fire pit, awning, and the all-important chainsaw. Finally, Felicia Gregory, Gero Carletto, Terry Lynch, and others, stepped up on short notice to do extra sales shifts, when staffing came up short. And, of course, as always, thanks to Ms. Kim, Mr. Dacoba, and the custodial staff at Deal, who accommodated us at every turn.

-- Joe Scholten



Spanish and French Students Benefit from New Technology

Imagine your child sitting in a classroom full of boisterous students. Each student is reciting tongue twisters, answering questions aloud, or perhaps is quietly listening to a recorded exercise and writing down the answers in a notebook. A few children have finished the assigned practice and are enjoying the last few minutes of class listening to some culturally appropriate teacher selected music. These children have their eyes closed and are gently swaying to the music unaware that anyone else is around them.

In the midst of all this activity and buzz, your child is getting one-on-one attention from her teacher. Your child is one hundred percent focused on mastering a new concept or perhaps she is repeating after the teacher and improving her accent, learning in a low-stress atmosphere. She can make mistakes and get feedback without any snickering from classmates around the room. She can ask questions that she might normally feel intimidated to ask in front of others. And your child has the full attention and expertise of her teacher to insure successful acquisition of a new language.

How is this possible? This learning experience is made possible by the newly acquired Mobile Language Lab at Deal JHS. This extraordinary lab has broadened the horizons of both students and teachers at Deal. Physically, it is a cart that can be transported from one room to another, but in reality it is a tool that transforms the learning experience and allows students to "travel" through foreign countries and experience culture through native voices and experiences.

The Mobile Language Lab is an expensive piece of equipment that consists of a main unit that can play a CD and a cassette tape simultaneously. The lab has thirty student head sets with microphones and these are distributed to students at their desks. They control the volume of their own equipment and can change the channel, depending on whether they need to hear the listening activity or want to listen to teacher selected music on another channel. While students are working independently, the teacher can always choose to override all activity and make an announcement to all students through the teacher microphone. The teacher can then select one student and talk only to that student. This is

how the teach can give on-to-one feedback and support individual students.

The World Language teachers are very pleased to have access to this technology. Since there are five teachers in the department, we each use the lab one day per week in our classrooms. I find that the lab works great on test days. My tests consist of four sections: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. I have students use the head sets from the first two parts of the test. They complete the listening exercise and then choose to either change the channel to listen to Spanish music or take off the head set while working on the reading and writing portions of the test. During this time, I select students and have them complete the speaking portion of the text by communicating with me through the lab. This gives them privacy and lowers the stress level during testing. I actually believe the Mobile Language Lab makes the testing experiences "fun." Just ask any French or Spanish student or teacher at Deal to learn more about the lab. The World Language Department is excited to get more labs for student use in the future. The possibilities of learning are endless!

-- Ms. Kelley, Spanish Teacher

JUNE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!

8th and 9th Grade parents – Mark your calendars now for these milestone dates!

Wed., May 30th 9th Grade Dance

Wed., June 6th 9th Grade Promotion

Fri., June 8th 8th Grade Dance

Tues., June 12th 8th Grade Promotion

Thurs., June 14th Last day of All Classes

Magazine Drive Still in Full Force – Support This Terrific Deal Fundraiser



Your holiday shopping may be over, but birthdays and anniversaries still come and go...have you considered giving your friends and loved ones a magazine subscription? The Magazine Drive allows you to do this easily and economically. All magazine sales are done exclusively on-line, so you can order new magazines and/or renew current subscriptions at your convenience. There is a wide selection of magazines available, and the prices are competitive. The best news...Deal receives 40% of the sale proceeds with each purchase you make.

To order a magazine, simply visit www.QSP.com and click on the yellow "SHOP NOW" link. You will see an orange box for school/organization # -- please enter 425007047 in that box to designate Deal (you can always click on the school/organization finder link on that page and locate Deal's number that way).

-- Lilly Abbey -- kostyack@msn.com or 966-6437
Deal Magazine Sale Chair

