



# MAURY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LOCAL SCHOOL ADVISORY TEAM

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1250 Constitution Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002 • (202) 698-3838 • [mauryelementary.com/lsat](http://mauryelementary.com/lsat)

## Meeting Minutes

October 8, 2019, 7:30 am

School Leadership Present: Helena Payne Chauvenet, Taeneress Griffin

LSAT Members Present: Stefany Thangavelu, Becca Schendel Norris, Norah Rabiah, Katie Spellacy, Jean Kohanek, Elizabeth Nelson, D'Angela Williams, VanNessa Duckett, D'Ann Lettieri

LSAT Members Absent: Becca Sanghvi, Shannon von Felden

Other Attendees: Lora Nunn, David Pinchotti

1. **Membership updates.** No teacher nominee stepped forward. Per Washington Teacher Union guidelines the teacher vacancy will remain open and no additional action will be taken. If a teacher is nominated at a later date, it can be accepted at that time. The LSAT teacher co-chair position is also vacant.
2. **Community Comments.** No comments were shared.
3. **Letter to Chancellor re: policy of requiring fingerprinting, criminal background checks and negative tuberculosis (TB) tests for parent volunteers.** Discussion on the letter developed by the Maury LSAT (see final letter, attached). While safety is always a high priority, this extensive and costly process limits parent engagement, furthers inequity in our school, and reduces support for school overall. The process is a barrier and may prevent field trips that take advantage of the vast resources available in our city.

Per a conversation with a DCPS manager, there may be changes to the details of the policy (particularly regarding TB testing), but the overall security requirements are not likely to change. In comparison, Alexandria City Public Schools requires any visitor entering the school to provide ID and date of birth while the school conducts a

quick background search prior to the individual entering the building. Other schools in NOVA require volunteers to complete an online training module on safety.

Discussion continued on ways to mitigate the impact for parents. At Tyler Elementary, a parent who is a doctor set up a clinic to offer TB shots free of charge. Maury leadership will look for ways to support additional screening at reduced cost.

LSAT agreed to some minor edits to the letter, and voted unanimously in support of sending to Chancellor, Council, and DME. The letter will also be shared with other schools via Ward 6 Public Schools Parent Organization (W6PSPO) and the joint citywide LSAT committee as there may be interest in signing on to amplify message to DCPS. Jean is lead parent to follow up.

4. **New Building: Access, Security, Contractor Follow up.** Discussed concerns related to the Modernization punch list items that are still pending, and pushback from DGS regarding high priority issues for security and school safety. Punchlist items include flaking paint in old building, lack of interior shades for classrooms (both for privacy and safety for lockdowns), issues with exterior gates, and more. There is a running list of items and generally DGS has a one year window to complete.

MCN has rolled punch list completion over to subcontractor, NVB; though completion of a task can require coordinating multiple contractors. SIT was officially dissolved in May; Max Kieba still following for Maury, but there is turnover at DCPS as Nate Morris has moved on to another role. LSAT wants to be a support to school leadership and will work with Patrick to prioritize punch list items and advocate for school as necessary. D'Ann is lead parent to follow up.

5. **Overview of Schoolwide Goals** (see attached handout). Goals are focused overall on oral and written discourse. Strategies will be a focus of DCPS teacher professional development teams known as LEAP (LEarning together to Advance our Practice). These teams meet regularly to look at academic priorities, data, and content.
  - Writing in Math. Looking at different ways to focus on expressing different mathematical concepts in writing. Examples: redraw/write strategies for word problems.
  - Inquiry in ELA and Social Studies. Exploring the nationwide social studies C3 Framework to emphasize inquiry—pushing students to ask compelling questions to dive deeper into social studies, which then leads to writing/ELA. Different ELA curriculum, C3 framework adapted to Maury to prioritize inquiry.

- **Equity in Performance.** Looking at gaps, how close we are to closing. Connecting with families through conferences and APTT.

What are the challenges for Maury? Right now, elementary education has an emphasis on reading, writing, and math; DCPS is prioritizing access to all subject areas—including social studies and science. The resource missing is time. In addition, measuring progress can be challenging as some of these subjects don't align cleanly with DCPS testing structures. Engaging families is always critical; keeping morale high, especially as our school grows and pressures on teachers increase.

Discussion on including opportunities for access outside the school day: the new Geography Bee Club this year is an example for social studies; aftercare programming also has significant reach as more than 50% of the school uses aftercare at some point during the school year. Competitive afterschool activities spur relationships and learning; need to research citywide programs (ex. Geoplunge, theater, public speaking) that we may be able to tap into. Elizabeth will follow up with Ms. Conant on ways the community can support science; Becca will research on citywide programs.

6. **Updates from September Meeting.** Maury Community Book Club on the Five Stances will debut in November on the theme of Resilience; still finalizing date and best time of day (maybe before next PTA meeting). Targeted to parents, but will include recommended reading for parents, children of different ages, and non-book material (like a TED Talk) for those who don't have time for the book. It will be structured for families to continue the discussion back home with kids. Idea to have loaner copies of book for families to check out if they prefer not to buy. Stefany and Norah to follow-up with announcement and dates.
7. **Supporting Families of Students with Special Needs.** Item moved to next month.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:33 am. The next LSAT meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12 at 7:30 am.



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October 10, 2019

## VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dr. Lewis D. Ferebee, Chancellor  
District of Columbia Public Schools  
1200 First Street NE  
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chancellor Ferebee,

We are writing to request that DCPS reconsider the policy of requiring fingerprinting, criminal background checks, and negative tuberculosis (TB) tests from parents wishing to volunteer in their children's school.

The focus on children's safety is undeniably important; many of the measures DCPS uses to ensure that the employees and other adults in daily contact with children are safe are worthwhile and to be expected in a child-focused workplace. However, applying this same strict standard to parent volunteers is overly burdensome, counterproductive to creating an inclusive school culture, and disproportionately impacts low-income families and families where a parent or guardian may have concerns about an unrelated criminal record or their immigration status.

**TB testing is burdensome in both financial cost and time.** Skin tests for TB must be done in two parts, requiring a strict 48–72 hour interval between the initial test and the skin examination to determine accurate results (waiting longer renders the test invalid and requires a new test). Taking time away from work for two separate appointments creates a burden that many working parents cannot meet. In addition, the out-of-pocket cost of various TB tests can range from \$45–79, or even higher. Combining the cost of the test with a rigid test schedule creates an undue burden for families, particularly those with low incomes.

**Assessing the risk of spreading TB.** According to the Centers for Disease Control, surveillance from 2017 (the most recent year) shows that while TB cases in DC are higher

than the national average, they are still low overall: 5.2 cases per 100,000. Further, the CDC does not list schools as a place where TB testing would be an important precaution.

The test also generates false positives. Parents native to other countries where vaccinations commonly use live virus will always test positive, but do not have TB. For example, a parent in our school who is employed by a federal security agency and served in the US military is no longer eligible to go on even a half-day field trip, because the parent received a live vaccine as a child and therefore generates a false positive result. A chest x-ray would be necessary to prove that this parent does not have TB.

**Balancing safety with the full participation of families in the life of the school.**

Fingerprinting and criminal background checks for school staff and aftercare workers are appropriate, but applying these same requirements to parents comes at a high cost to the school and to families. Significant wait times at DCPS (1 hour +) were still being reported as recently as last week—a full six weeks into the school year. Many parents will not go through this time-consuming vetting process, either because they are unable to take the time required, or unwilling due to concerns over an unrelated criminal record or their immigration status. Either way, the result is fewer parents and guardians participating in their children’s lives at school. *Without an adequate number of approved volunteers, many field trips simply may not happen.*

**If we must do it, make it easier for parents and guardians:**

- Arrange for TB testing clinics at schools for free or at a discounted rate, at times that work with school and parent schedules.
- Remove the bottleneck of requiring that fingerprinting and criminal background checks must be performed by DCPS. There are many federally-recognized mobile services that can perform this service; arrange for sessions to be held at school at times that work with school and parent schedules.
- Be clear up front on how information from background checks will be evaluated, the basis for acceptance or denial, and any appeals process.
- Don’t require volunteers to submit fingerprints more than once; fingerprints are unique identifiers, and should not change from year to year.

**Consider adopting other policies to make schools safer.** Scouts BSA has adopted policies that combine common sense guidelines with an easy online training module that fosters greater awareness of abuse and overall safety. Rather than weeding people out through vetting, this approach actively educates all parents and guardians, and allows them to volunteer and participate in activities with kids in a safe, informed way that benefits the entire community.

School communities thrive when parents can be fully involved in their children's lives at school; we must reduce the barriers to participation for all families.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Maury Elementary School  
Local School Advisory Team

cc: Councilmember Charles Allen  
Councilmember David Grosso  
Deputy Mayor Paul Kihn



CSP Snap Shot: Academic Priorities SY20

School: Maury ES

| Academic Priority                 | High-leverage strategies  | Measures of Interim Progress   | Measures of EOY Success   | Instructional Leaders                              |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Writing in Math                   | <p>LEAP: Building upon work on student discourse to support students with explaining their thinking and expressing mathematical concepts in writing</p> <p>Data meetings (grade level, ALT)</p>   | <p>Student work analysis</p> <p>Writing tasks in math</p> <p>Observation</p>                             | <p>Increased PARCC %</p> <p>Average proficiency on classroom assessments</p>  | Assistant Principal, Math Intervention             |
| Inquiry in ELA and Social Studies | <p>LEAP: Utilizing the C3 framework to discuss inquiry in the humanities subjects (reading, writing and social studies; focus on questioning; connection to previous work on discourse (oral and written)</p> <p>Data meetings (grade level, ALT)</p> | <p>Observation</p> <p>Student talk analysis (written and oral discourse around compelling questions)</p> | <p>Increased PARCC %, ANET %</p> <p>Average proficiency on classroom assessments</p>  | Instructional Coach, Reading Specialist, Principal |
| Equity in Performance             | <p>Data analysis in subgroups</p> <p>APTT meetings for home-school connection</p>   | <p>iReady</p> <p>ANet</p> <p>DIBELS</p> <p>F&amp;P</p> <p>RI</p> <p>Affirm</p>                           | <p>Increased proficiency from BOY to EOY on all iReady, DIBELS, F&amp;P and RI</p> <p>Average proficiency on ANet and Affirm</p> <p>Increased PARCC %</p> | Principal, AP, Instructional Coach                 |