



# 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—DRAFT**

October 13, 2020, 4:00 pm via remote teleconference

School Leadership Present: Helena Payne Chauvenet, Taenaress Griffin

LSAT Members Present: VanNessa Duckett, Jean Kohanek, Ross Kyle, D’Ann Lettieri, Richard Parker, Abby Sparrow, Katie Spellacy, Angela Stover, Stefany Thangavelu

LSAT Members Absent: Henri Cooper, Elizabeth Nelson, Becca Sanghvi

Other Attendees: Johnnie Barton, Lora Nunn, Shanna Williams-Carr, Unknown Participant

1. **Previous Meeting Minutes.** Minutes of the September 8, 2020 meeting were unanimously approved by a voice vote.
2. **Community Comments.** None.
3. **LSAT Membership Updates, Teacher Chair Elections.** Teacher elections for LSAT membership were held in September; due to the election delay, Teacher Co-Chair elections could not proceed until now. Katie Spellacy volunteered to serve as Teacher Co-Chair, and was elected 7–1 via electronic ballot.
4. **Reopening School.** Principal Payne Chauvenet provided information on the DCPS plan for reopening schools for partial in-person learning next month. The DCPS Reopening Plan has promised one in-person classroom with a teacher, and up to two “CARES” classrooms for on-site distance learning with a vetted adult in each grade. She noted that there are many questions that she cannot yet answer due to a lack of information from DCPS and other sources. It was noted that schools received the reopening details at the same time as the general public.
  - Operational and logistical considerations. Principal Payne Chauvenet stated that she and other DCPS school principals are currently focusing on many various operational and logistical considerations related to reopening. These considerations include: the lottery for in-person classroom spots, including sibling preference; classroom and public space

set up to ensure health safety; and class schedules including projections of the numbers of students choosing the different options and attendant staffing needs. Currently, we do not currently have an exact number/type of classes per grade level.

- Teacher availability. The number of in-person classrooms available at schools will be based upon the availability of teaching staff. It was noted that the current DCPS reopening plan mandates that there will be one teacher per a grade for in-person instruction. If there is an insufficient number of “volunteers,” DCPS will compel one teacher per grade to teach in-person. It is not clear what happens if no teachers are available to return.

DCPS Human Resources is responsible for evaluating and determining teachers’ requests regarding eligibility for leave, distance learning, and in-classroom teaching. Teachers shared that it is their understanding that the timestamp of each teacher’s response to a DCPS staff survey is also a weighting factor.

LSAT members asked if there had been additional discussions with the Washington Teachers Union. It was noted that the WTU has a members’ meeting scheduled for 10/13 at 5 pm. Maury staff have met twice to discuss reopening in optional update and Q&A sessions; anecdotally, teachers report that many of their colleagues are not in favor of reopening for safety and other concerns.

- Reconfiguring classes. It was confirmed that with one teacher in an in-person classroom of up to 11 students, the other students in the grade would be divided among the remaining grade-level teachers. This will impact every student in terms of class size, placement, and teacher(s), regardless of whether they attend in-person or remain in distance learning.

An additional concern is that teachers in in-person classes will be required to teach all subjects. In Grades 3–5, where teaching is departmentalized by subject, all of the teachers in a grade will be required to teach subjects that they normally do not teach. This will require additional prep time, in addition to teaching more students at one time.

- Lottery process. Principal Payne Chauvenet indicated that DCPS will construct the list of names of students eligible to choose in-person classroom instruction, and that the school was only asked to identify siblings. The list is expected to follow the guidelines set forth in the DCPS reopening plan. It is anticipated that families will receive calls beginning next week, and that they will have several days to make a decision.

Members raised concerns about student privacy based on priority selection criteria (students with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, English language learners,

at risk) for in-person classrooms. Principal Payne Chauvenet indicated that there is no viable way for her to determine which students will be eligible for in-person classroom teaching and whether they or their parents will select that option if given the choice—if one family declines, it will be offered to the next student on the list per the lottery.

Class composition is also influenced by federal laws (like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). For example, the classroom could not be made entirely of students with disabilities as that would constitute a self-contained classroom, which would violate the requirement that students with disabilities be placed in the least restrictive environment.

Given the unknowns of student participation, it's difficult to determine additional staffing or other needs. Students in the in-person classrooms who require special education or related services may be provided both in-class and outside class support, again dependent on available staff. Students in other options will continue to receive services virtually.

The DCPS Reopening plan for calls for contacting families next week; Principal Payne-Chauvenet hopes to have staffing locked up by the end of this week so she can verify slots available. Teachers reported that they had been told by their union leadership that assignments would not be made until the end of the month, illustrating the confusion that exists for school staff.

- Building safety. Workers were in Maury today to ensure that the HVAC is upgraded as necessary, and to set up classrooms that were not already set up for safe learning. There will be an inspection and testing of the water system to ensure water safety. Classrooms are ready for social distance learning, and additional steps will focus on placing safe-distance markings in public spaces around the building, e.g., bathrooms. There is also sufficient storage space in the building to accommodate unused school furniture, like classroom tables and chairs.
- COVID-19 testing and quarantine procedures. If a student, teacher, or staff member who was in the school tests positive for COVID-19 or was exposed to someone who was positive or exposed to someone who was, Principal Payne Chauvenet indicated that the school system relies on the cohort model and contact tracing. The cohort (e.g., 11-student class) would be shut down and anyone with contact with that cohort's members would be expected to quarantine. If one cohort is shut down due to COVID-19 exposure, the whole school would potentially be able to continue to provide in-person classrooms.

Schools will also be testing each individual's temperatures every morning outside the building. Principal Payne Chauvenet also stated that the DC Department of Health provides schools with reports of identified/reported COVID-19 cases and possible

exposures. If any student becomes sick with suspected COVID-19 at school, they will wait with contracted medical staff in a converted, unused classroom space for maximum social distancing and to meet other guidelines (proximity to exit, bathroom, etc.) until the parent or guardian picks them up from the school.

- Alternate in-person classroom set-ups. Members asked whether it was possible to identify and pursue other options with respect to the 11-student in-person classes, for example, having mixed grades. Principal Payne Chauvenet indicated that the timing of the reopening process makes it impossible to pursue such ideas at this time.
- Pressure on school leadership. Several members observed that DCPS principals and administrators are under an enormous amount of pressure to comply with the DCPS reopening plan, while supporting distance learning. Members noted the controversy around the recent removal of the principal at School Without Walls.

**5. Motion to table remainder of agenda for next month.** Given that the remaining agenda items are not time-sensitive, Jean Kohanek moved that these items (Distance Learning Update, SEL Update, Comprehensive School Plan, Upcoming Events, and New Business) be tabled and moved for discussion at the November meeting. The motion was seconded by Stefany Thangvelu, and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:05 pm.

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The next LSAT meeting will be held Tuesday, November 10, 2020 at 4:00 pm via teleconference.