



MAURY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LOCAL SCHOOL ADVISORY TEAM

1250 Constitution Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002 • (202) 698-3838 • mauryelementary.com/lSAT

Meeting Minutes

June 8, 2021, 4:00 pm via teleconference

School Leadership Present: Helena Payne Chauvenet, Taeneress Griffin

LSAT Members Present: Jean Kohanek, Ross Kyle, D'Ann Lettieri, Elizabeth Nelson, Richard Parker, Becca Sanghvi, Katie Spellacy, Angela Stover

LSAT Members Absent: Henri Cooper, Stefany Thangavelu, Abby Sparrow

Other Attendees: George Blackmon, VanNessa Duckett, Lora Nunn, Alison Schwartz, Max Thornburg, Kenyon Weaver, Shanna Williams-Carr, Tess Winters.

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm.

- 1. Minutes from Previous Meeting.** Minutes of the May 11, 2021, meeting were unanimously approved by roll-call vote.
- 2. Community Comments.** None.
- 3. LSAT Election Results & 2021–22 schedule.** Several new LSAT members for SY2021–22 were present for the meeting. The LSAT wishes outgoing members the best, especially Mrs. Cooper who is retiring. The first meeting of the SY2021–22 LSAT will be held on September 14, 2021, at 4:00 pm via videoconference. Subsequent meeting dates will be released after the initial meeting.
- 4. Parking, Playground Construction Updates.** Eight spots in our parking lot are being eliminated to incorporate space into the updated playground. Additional spaces on 12th Place are now available to Maury staff using a ParkMobile app and decal, but staff have found it challenging to find spaces, and often have to circle many, many times to find available parking. Original estimates of street parking availability may no longer be valid given the number of people now working at home. WTU Representative Becca Sanghvi pointed out that the promised street parking/zoning at

the time the SIT concluded was not fulfilled, and this is a further reduction. Principal Payne-Chauvenet was glad for the feedback on the new ParkMobile system, and understands that this is an issue of importance for staff. The school will continue to utilize the visitors parking passes donated by neighborhood families, but engagement with DDOT will continue until this issue is resolved. One takeaway from Maury's construction experience is the SIT does need to continue to exist post-construction.

Regarding the playground fence (see attached letter), DGS has repaired the gate door, but it does not lock at the top or bottom. Parts have been ordered, but we do not yet know when they will return to complete the job. Principal PC has been in contact with DCPS Chief Operating Officer Patrick Davis about this and a few other building issues. The highest priority at DGS right now is making HVAC upgrade and repairs at schools, but Maury staff will continue to follow up regarding gate.

5. Enrollment and Budget Updates. 400+ families are enrolled so far for SY2021–22; we are within range to meet our projection as enrollment will continue throughout the summer. As for budget updates, the fourth Grade 3 teacher and summer school will be covered using one-time federal recovery funds; any remaining funds will go into supplies and admin premium. Unfortunately, the school did not receive the front office clerk position as requested in the budget. The urban teacher position for next year will now likely be situated with Grade 5. The building capacity is 539; our student projection for next year is 509.

6. Comprehensive School Plan for SY2021–22. Academic goals are reading and math growth based on year-end testing, which is still underway. Preliminarily, we are seeing strong iReady numbers in Grades 3–4. For reading, K–2 DIBELS assessments are ongoing, as are 3–5 reading assessments. Early learner reading will be a priority for next year, given that the virtual environment made teaching reading and reinforcing good reading skills difficult.

On the culture and vision side, our school will be larger, we will be back to in-person learning, therefore, the environment will feel different for staff and students. Coming together as a community on our key, core values will be a priority. Educator wellness will also be a priority. Healing and moving forward in a healthy way is important after this past year. Attendance is an indicator of health; this year was an anomaly, but our daily attendance remained high in the virtual and in-person environments, and parents remained engaged through parent-teacher conferences and APTTs.

7. Family Engagement. Much like educator wellness and student health, family engagement is important. How to bring families back into the school physically is not yet determined. Next year, mask wearing will continue until further notice. But, much is up in the air regarding recess, morning entrance and afternoon dismissal, after school meetings, on-site parent meetings, etc. More information will be available this summer

to families as we begin to re-engage as a community in-person for full-time education. As for new students to Maury, there was an effort last year to reach out to new families and connect them to the school, but it was difficult in a virtual environment. Efforts to welcome families new to Maury for the next school year as well as engage with those who are disconnected due to the last year are being thought through by staff and parents. It was suggested that room parents could reach out to existing classes to seek volunteer “mentor” families, who could be matched up with a new family if desired. The PTA Exec Committee will discuss.

8. New Business. There was no new business.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:15 pm.

The next LSAT meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 14, at 4:00 pm via teleconference.



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May 18, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Patrick Davis, Chief Operating Officer
District of Columbia Public Schools
1200 First Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

Kevin A. Anderson, Director
District of Columbia Department of General Services
2000 14th Street NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Mr. Davis and Mr. Anderson,

The Maury Local School Advisory Team (LSAT) was recently made aware that the Board of Zoning Adjustment granted a special exception to reduce the number of on-site parking spaces to allow for a previously-planned playground expansion at Maury. This was brought to the attention of school leadership by the ANC6A Chair rather than through DCPS channels.

We are excited about the planned playground changes, and can report that school leadership has now been looped in with points of contact at DCPS and DGS regarding the project. However, we currently have an urgent safety issue regarding the gates around the playground that has not been addressed, despite multiple attempts to elevate the matter.

Thus, we are writing today with two requests: 1) to address urgent gate/fence repairs for Maury as soon as possible; and 2) to consider keeping school SIT Teams intact through the first year of a new building.

Fence repairs. One of the two large gate doors on 13th Street NE broke about a month ago and has been removed, thus creating a wide gap in the fence perimeter around the playground. In the several weeks since DGS staff assessed that a part was needed for repair, the other gate door is falling off and has had to be tied together. In addition, the gate on the 12th Street NE side does not latch. This is an urgent safety issue that has not been addressed, despite repeated attempts by school leadership to elevate these requests. Maury

has welcomed back nearly 300 students for Term 4, and has made wide use of our outdoor spaces for typical uses like recess and PE, but also for a socially distanced lunch space and outdoor learning. The dangers to students and staff without a secure gate is clear and we would appreciate your most urgent assistance in resolving this issue.

Modernizations need SIT Teams through the first year (and beyond). The initial confusion with communication about the details of the playground changes, as well as difficulty addressing an urgent safety need, brought to mind past LSAT discussions on systemic issues during the renovation process. These discussions were set aside with the pandemic and subsequent building closure, but we feel they are timely to share now.

The multi-million dollar renovation of a school is no small task, and ongoing issues are to be expected as new systems are tested, new spaces are used, and the final building punchlist is completed. Unfortunately, SITs seem to focus only on planning and active construction, and are dissolved once a project is at or near completion. Keeping a SIT active for the initial school year of a new building (or beyond as appropriate) would maintain project continuity for the school, allow for more efficient oversight over warranty issues and contractor work, and provide direct accountability for the operation and maintenance of this significant capital investment.

Maintaining continuity. Though the new Maury building opened in August 2019, the last SIT meeting was held in May 2019, and our project coordinator for the planning/building phase was reassigned. At Maury, our experience has shown that without the institutional knowledge and memory of the SIT members and active planning/building phase project coordinator, there was difficulty in addressing issues directly related to the renovation.

More efficient oversight. While nominally the school still had a project coordinator at DGS, as well as a master contractor on site coordinating all of the subcontractors for a time, Maury staff still spent countless hours following up on warranty issues and punchlist items. Even after punchlist items were converted mid-year into DGS work orders, already stretched Maury staff continued to have to spend significant time on these items, because orders were often closed without resolution and had to be re-entered.

Because the SIT brings together all the relevant players related to the project, we believe that had the Maury SIT been active, any issues with warranty or punchlist items could have been monitored and handled faster and more successfully by the DCPS/DGS project coordinator, who is already familiar with the project and better equipped to handle warranty issues and subcontractor performance. In addition, SIT meetings would be conducted on site, where issues can be seen and understood immediately. This would significantly lessen the burden on school staff, who are managing building issues—at a much greater volume than normal—in addition to their regular duties.

Direct accountability. Without an active SIT, the Maury LSAT became the forum for renovation-related concerns, but with no clear line of communication or accountability back to DCPS/DGS. Though our monthly meetings were an opportunity to discuss

community concerns or ongoing issues with the renovation, there was little the LSAT could do as a body to pursue or support resolution.

For example, months and months went by without a simple fix for a downspout that was a few inches short and thus eroding the cement foundation beneath it. Though the leaking downspout was reported to the school by parents and community members on an almost daily basis, maintenance staff could not fix it without fear of violating the building warranty. It took nearly six months of follow-up by Maury staff to get it resolved. While that effort was not a good investment of time or money, it had the potential for terrific waste had the foundation been eroded and the interior of the building flooded.

We know the complexities of a project don't disappear when the building opens; an issue like the downspout (or the fence) could have been easily and quickly resolved had the SIT still been active. Regular SIT meetings—whether on a monthly, quarterly, or even ad hoc basis—would provide accountability to the community that issues are being addressed and assurance to DCPS and the city that a significant capital investment is being well maintained.

The Maury community is proud and thankful for our beautiful new building and playground, and excited for the other neighborhood schools across the city that are undergoing renovation. We hope that our experience highlights the need for ongoing communication, oversight, and accountability for the first year of a new building, and the way the SIT could be used to achieve that.

Regarding the fence, Principal Payne Chauvenet can be reached at (202) 698-3838 or helena.chauvenet@k12.dc.gov.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Maury Elementary School
Local School Advisory Team

cc: Chairman Phil Mendelson
Councilmember Charles Allen
Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.
ANC6A Chair Amber Gove