



MAURY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LOCAL SCHOOL ADVISORY TEAM

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

Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2021, 4:00 pm via remote teleconference

School Leadership Present: Helena Payne Chauvenet, Andrew Lardell

LSAT Members Present: Ross Kyle, D'Ann Lettieri, Richard Parker, Alison Schwartz, Kenyon Weaver, VanNessa Duckett, Katie Jondal, Becca Sanghvi, Shanna Williams-Carr, Tess Winters

LSAT Members Absent: Angela Stover

- 1. Previous Meeting Minutes.** Minutes of the June 8, 2021, meeting were unanimously approved by a roll call vote. The motion to adopt was put forward by Richard Parker and seconded by Ross Kyle.
- 2. Community Comments.** None.
- 3. Membership Updates, Election of Officers & Community Member Appointment.** All members of the new LSAT were introduced by name, and the officer positions of parent co-chair, teacher co-chair, and secretary, as well as the appointment of the community member were discussed. In the past, Maury LSAT has had parent/teacher co-chairs, though there can be just a single chair, and a rotating secretary position among the parent members, as opposed to one individual with that set of responsibilities. Elizabeth Nelson ("Aunt Lizzie") has been our community member for many years, and she expressed interest in continuing in that role. No other community members were nominated. Later on, the electronic ballots confirmed D'Ann Lettieri as chair (there will be no teacher co-chair this year), the secretary position as rotating among the parent members, and Elizabeth Nelson as the community member.
- 4. Future Meeting Schedule.** It was agreed meetings will continue to be held on the second Tuesday of the month at 4pm via Teams - except for Spring break week. The schedule

will be posted on the LSAT portion of the school website as well as on the official school calendar. Additional meetings may be scheduled during budget season.

5. Whole School Update. (explanatory slide presentation attached)

- a. *Enrollment and Staffing Updates.* Currently 516 students are enrolled in Maury (with a few more expected). There are 26 homerooms, nine new teachers, two new paras, 62 DCPS and PTA staff, and eight contractors. Two teacher positions are pending: Spanish teacher and Librarian. At this point, Maury is fully staffed. There are 2 new educational aides. Contractors are security, cafeteria staff, and health screeners.
- b. *Social Emotional Learning/Academic/Equity Update.* Maury's school year priorities continue with a focus on three pillars: Social-Emotional Learning, Equity, and Academics.
 - Social Emotional Learning (SEL) priorities include building relationships, creating a positive school culture, and teaching SEL strategies. Goals: 90% family engagement in home visits, parent-teacher conferences and APTT meetings, and 90% school attendance.
 - Equity priorities are working to close performance gaps and engage families historically less engaged. Goals: increase achievement for Black students, students with IEPs, and K-2 literacy. This work is ongoing and follows up on past equity work done by Penn State University doctoral candidate Keiana Mayfield, who is also working with a parent-led equity working group at the school.
 - Academic priorities include high quality instruction, multi-tiered interventions to align with district-wide goals, and personalized/targeted approaches for individual students. This is layered on top of current work Maury educators are pursuing. Goals: increase reading and math performance, introduce additional layers of intervention for certain students including intervention blocks, enrichment throughout the week, and targeted tutoring programs to address students with intensive needs (this will be done by teachers being paid through additional funding).
- c. *Comprehensive School Plan.* Maury's plan focuses on improving academics, fostering a culture of achievement, increasing engagement, and continuing a shared leadership approach.

6. Reopening school.

- a. *COVID Protocols and Maintenance Concerns.* Masking and social distancing where possible are still being utilized. HVAC issues in certain spaces on the 3rd floor remain a top priority for school leadership. Several work orders have been issued for our school regarding the HVAC issue, and school leadership has been told the issue should be resolved in the next two weeks. Air filtration intended for larger areas with 15 people or more continues to be utilized as well as opening windows where possible. The multipurpose/gym area has two large air filtration systems, and when possible the accordion door is open to let fresh air circulate throughout the building. Enhanced cleaning is ongoing. Student immunization requirements will begin being enforced this month, with children not in compliance receiving letters after the 20-day mark. Implementation of the DCPS adult vaccination policy is starting in a few days, but is managed at the central office level. Individual schools do not have information on which adults within their schools are vaccinated. Testing and compliance is managed by DCPS central office. The Ask, Ask, Look daily tracker is the before school screening protocol. Asymptomatic and symptomatic testing is ongoing, yet as of September 14, there were zero confirmed cases of COVID at the school. School leadership suggests that the community follow all recommended guidelines around travel.

Additional discussion:

- Many vaccinated teachers have expressed a desire to be tested weekly, but testing is only available through DCPS for unvaccinated staff. It was suggested that parents advocate for a change to this policy by contacting DC Council Members and the Mayor's office.
- Children who are tested randomly at school will get a note in their backpacks with directions on how to log into a portal to check results. It was noted this portal was not available the first week of school.
- A very small number of Maury students have opted out of asymptomatic testing.
- Once the weather turns colder, it is still expected many teachers will opt to leave their windows open (and children will need to dress accordingly).
- With regards to smaller rooms, particularly offices and intervention spaces, there is not a plan to outfit those rooms with additional air filtration. The air filters provided are meant for large rooms with more than 15 people.

- 7. Maury's DCPS CAT team liaison.** The DCPS Communications and Engagement Office's [Community Action Team](#) (CAT) is composed of four individuals who serve communities based on DCPS clusters. Maury's cluster representative is Joel Damian Popkin. Damian's job is to be a liaison between DCPS and individual schools. He interfaces with PTAs and LSATs, but he is available to all individuals who have questions or concerns about schools and DCPS. He can be contacted at joel.popkin@k12.dc.gov

- 8. Playground and Parking Update.** The playground expansion project was supposed to be completed by the start of the school year. The revised completion date was 9/30/21, but it is likely to take longer. There have been quite a few issues with contactors having improper parts when they arrive, and equipment delays have delayed the entire project. Once the playground is complete, there will be additional space options for outside lunch and learning. Furniture has been ordered for this new area. The playground project is either being run by MCN or DGS - it is unclear who is in charge. This has not been a very partnered process, and communication is not good. It was noted that playground contractors do not have access to the inside of the building. It was also noted that the current guardrails on the new bridge are rather low, but a playground inspection will have to occur before this area is reopened, and that issue should be resolved.

The playground expansion cut into teacher parking, and Maury has also increased staff since the building renovation and playground expansion plan were put into place. The stopgap fix is utilizing visitor parking passes donated by in-boundary families for staff who park on the street. This does not solve the problem of having a place to park, as it was noted it is often hard for staff to find spaces early in the morning in the neighborhood, but it does allow staff to park legally during the school day on the surrounding streets. Approximately 15 passes were needed, and the school received more than enough donated passes. The long term fix is zoned parking around the school for daytime parking. We are waiting on the city to come through with their promise to make this zoning change happen.

- 9. Think Tank & Science Curriculum.** Ms. Conant was invited to speak to discuss this issue. During SY2020-21, a decision was made to shift to a quarterly special schedule, which allowed Specials teachers to hone their content and teach a smaller set of students more deeply over a period of time. It was also decided then that Think Tank would only be offered to grades K-2, and those students would have Think Tank twice a week. Specials are not taught quarterly this school year, but the decision about Think Tank was carried over. There are already departmentalized teachers in grades 3-5 who are responsible for teaching science. Allowing Ms. Conant to focus on teaching grades K-2 fills in the gaps in lower grade level learning and provides more equitable access to

science across the school. Building foundational science in the lower grades has shown to have positive effects on how students learn in grades 3-5. DCPS has continued to add learning requirements in grades 3-5 over the last few years, not only academic requirements, but now each class has two physical education classes, and part of this Think Tank decision comes down to time management. In grades 3-5 the STEMScopes curriculum will be used in the classroom. DCPS is now requiring written science essays, which is a new testing requirement, tied to the STEMScopes curriculum that should be managed by the classroom teacher. With respect to the STEM partnerships (Living Classroom, Anacostia Watershed, etc.) Maury has cultivated over many years, Ms. Conant will continue to manage those for the whole school.

It was noted Think Tank exists at Maury because of parents' involvement, and in years past, financial support from the PTA. Many parents were surprised to recently learn about this change and are disappointed to know their upper grade level children will no longer have Think Tank. There is additional concern among parents that science in the upper grades will no longer be as robust as it had been under Think Tank. Principal PC noted that the DCPS science requirement is fulfilled in the upper grades through the departmentalized classroom teacher. Think Tank has always allowed Maury to go above and beyond DCPS science requirements, and because of Think Tank, the foundation of robust science learning at Maury has been set. Principal PC agreed to note this Think Tank change in her weekly email sent that same day.

10. Outdoor Lunch Options. (explanatory document attached) Lunch is the one time during the day when students are allowed to remove their masks. With the understanding that eating outdoors lowers the risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19, many schools are working through ways to allow students safe access to outside lunch. Across DCPS, schools are doing lunch in many different ways. Some schools have outdoor areas readily available to be used for lunch, some schools have purchased tents and tables, some schools are eating in classrooms or making use of their indoor spaces with air filtration and distancing implemented. Four barriers to making outdoor lunch work at schools are space, staffing, supplies, and permissions. Space is the biggest issue for many schools, including Maury. There are no Capitol Hill schools able to have outdoor lunch for all students. Our current configuration is: PK-K eat in classrooms, grades 1-2 eat in the cafeteria (at separate times), grade 3 eats in outdoor areas, and grades 4-5 eat in the cafeteria (at the same time due to this being the smallest cohort - and the most cooperative age level). Students in the cafeteria eat six to a table, seated only on one side, with consistent seating arrangements, and the large accordion door stays open during the lunch period. The cafeteria is also equipped with two large HEPA air filtration systems.

A proposal was shared that involves making a request to the city to close 13th Street and set up a permanent streetery-style outdoor eating space. This would require getting permission from DDOT, rerouting traffic along 13th Street, and putting up concrete barriers to block traffic. Principal PC noted she spoke with staff who would have to implement such a plan, and it was determined it would require extra help to set up, clean, monitor, and breakdown, and there is not enough manpower to do this on top of the other requirements already in place during the day. Other schools with outdoor lunch have relied heavily on parent support; one school has 75 shifts per week of parent volunteers, and their tables are permanent outdoor tables.

Current mitigation efforts are deemed satisfactory, and the school has seen zero positive cases in the first few weeks of school. Once the playground upgrade is complete, we will have additional outdoor space to work with at lunch time. Additional equipment, like stumps used to create outdoor areas designated for eating or learning and indoor barriers to separate the cafeteria space from the PE space have been ordered (it was noted the internal divider intended to separate the cafeteria from the PE space is broken, and has been on a DGS list for repair for awhile).

Additional discussion:

- Are there ways to address this issue, even if it is just one classroom at a time? What about putting tables on the front spaces, in the garden spaces, in the medians around the school? We should continue to think creatively about this as we settle into the school year.
- Outdoor eating can be messy, and during last school year, the trash on the playground from lunches was an issue.
- PK-K students eating in their rooms may have less space than if they were eating in the cafeteria, but the distance has been measured to conform with the 3-feet of distance recommended between students. Windows remain open during lunch in these classrooms.
- Principal PC agreed to note lunch configurations in her weekly email sent that same day.

11. New Business. Discussion at the end of the meeting was about schoolwide communication and concern regarding the safety of all students, but specifically the 4-5 graders. Principal PC noted school staff are making every effort to keep everyone safe and balancing that with other school requirements. Current mitigation strategies are working, but the staff is ready to

change strategies quickly if necessary. She agreed to share more regarding COVID protocol and other issues discussed during the meeting with the community.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:39 pm.

The next LSAT meeting will be held at 4pm, on Tuesday, October 12, 2021, via teleconference.