



MAURY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LOCAL SCHOOL ADVISORY TEAM

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

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 10, 2022, 4:00 pm via remote teleconference

School Leadership Present: Principal Helena Payne Chauvenet; Assistant Principal Andrew Lardell

LSAT Members Present: D'Ann Lettieri, PTA VP Lora Nunn (for PTA President Ross Kyle), Richard Parker, Alison Schwartz, Kenyon Weaver, VanNessa Duckett, Katie Jondal, Becca Sanghvi, Tess Winters, Elizabeth Nelson

LSAT Members Absent: Angela Stover, Shanna Williams-Carr

Called to order at 4:00 pm (EST)

1. **Previous Meeting Minutes.** Minutes of the April 26, 2022 meeting were unanimously approved by a roll call vote. The motion to adopt was put forward by Richard Parker and seconded by Alison Schwartz.
2. **Community Comments.** There were no community comments.
3. **Specials Overview: Spanish.** Erika Torregroza Meza joined Maury at the start of SY 2021-2022 as the Spanish teacher, starting a bit late due to final DCPS employment procedures and requirements. She was invited to speak to the LSAT about this first year of Spanish education at Maury. Ms. Torregroza began by expressing her pleasure at teaching at the school. She explained that the Spanish language curriculum at Maury follows the DCPS world language curriculum, which has four (4) units for each level. Students are currently working on language basics including the alphabet and conversational greetings. She is pleased to note that students use these Spanish greetings both in her classroom as well as in the hallways throughout the school day. Ms. Torregroza noted that she had recently met with Principal Payne Chauvenet to discuss the acquisition of additional resources that might further support the Spanish curriculum. One idea she shared is to make Spanish workbooks available for use both in and outside

of the school as a resource to support ongoing learning. Ms. Torregroza also noted that while she was unable to fully engage in the school's Hispanic Heritage Month programming this past September/October 2021, she is already planning and looking forward to celebrating the month with various activities next school year.

Q: Are all students at the same level of understanding and learning given that this is the first year that Spanish is being taught at Maury? And do you anticipate that students will become better immersed in the language as the program develops?

A: There are some differences in levels of understanding as expected with the students who speak or are exposed to the Spanish language outside of the school. In this regard, students are able to get peer support from those who are familiar with the language through greetings and conversations.

Q: Is the goal to see the Spanish curriculum, language and cultural studies ingrained throughout the school curriculum and activities as was the approach previously taken with respect to Chinese?

A: The school does anticipate incorporating more cultural elements into various school programs and activities throughout the school year, such as cultural celebrations.

Q: We have heard from other Specials teachers that teaching all 500+ students each and every term is difficult and that different scheduling approaches such as alternating terms during which grade cohorts are taught. How would such an alternate approach impact the teaching and learning of a foreign language? In this regard, is the school's goal toward teaching Spanish basic conversational fluency or rather introducing students to the language and various cultures?

A: The current schedule of 45-minute classes once a week is not enough for fluency. If alternative schedules are introduced, Ms. Torregroza would like to use virtual platforms to provide additional opportunities she can use to support students and enable them to continue their language practice outside of school.

- 4. Discussion: Inclusive Practices to Support SEL & Academic Efforts.** Principal Payne Chauvenet asked the LSAT parents to discuss inclusive practices that the school can provide for parents to support social-emotional learning (SEL) and academic efforts at the school. Specifically, she is interested in engaging parents in ways to support students and families with students who learn differently, for example, related to disabilities and different learning styles. The school has taken differing approaches in the past - tutoring, parent conferences, literacy nights, math nights. She would appreciate any insights and thoughts on subsets under the umbrella of inclusive practices, noting that there are glaring equity pieces in this work - achievement, performance, and opportunity gaps. She and the staff are committed to the principle that demographics don't determine outcomes. She noted that based upon recent data, the school continues to have gaps in average

performance within certain student subgroups. With respect to math - mid-year data indicated gaps of 40% between black students and average scores overall. There was less of a gap in reading, but it was still wide. The mid-year data also indicated continued gaps in academic performance with respect to students with disabilities when compared to average scores. Principal Payne Chauvenet asked whether the current approach of progress reports (with ratings of 1 to 4), parent conferences, and APTT meetings were helpful to parents. She also asked what additional family engagement support might the school provide to parents/guardians/caretakers, for example, ways of helping parents/guardians/caretakers could understand how their child learns.

She asked the following general questions:

A. What family supports could the school provide to support SEL & academic efforts?

A member noted that the earlier students receive intervention, the better - and the school should be intervening as soon as possible. The member observed that it would be helpful for parents/guardians/caretakers to know what resources are currently available and how those are going - including keeping parents/guardians/caretakers abreast of their child's achievements.

Another member shared that while APTT meetings are good with respect to older students, the APTT meetings are not, however, as helpful and informative as one-on-one discussions with teachers - such as happens with parent/teacher conferences. The parent noted that during APTT meetings families might not be sure they are getting individualized information specific for their child as to where and how to help. It was shared that while Maury teachers have overall been wonderful at offering to meet with parents/guardians/caretakers, some families may feel like they are imposing or creating an additional burden for the teachers by requesting a one-on-one meeting.

B. Are there specific academic and/or behavioral support programs or initiatives that would be helpful to families?

One member noted that families might find it useful to be provided with a reference guide to city-wide community resources, for example, explaining what are their rights and resources available, to make it easier to identify and access available city resources.

Another parent shared that students with special needs have difficulty making friends and being part of the community, and that social and emotional learning, including respect and understanding, happens when students of diverse abilities and backgrounds play, socialize, and learn together. The parent shared that providing inclusive education opportunities at school throughout the day would help and support the SEL and academic efforts he undertakes with his children at home. The parent noted that inclusive education means different and diverse students learning side by side not just in the same classroom,

but throughout their school day and year by participating in shared activities and experiences. The parent shared various ideas that might support inclusive education at the school, including the following: creating safe spaces – in classroom and for other times like lunch and recess, such as the Peace of Mind mindfulness and SEL program at Lafayette Elementary School; provide structured play at recess; bringing in speakers – on important topics impacting children and their education (such as experts talking to teachers about the latest research on ADHD and autism), and also bringing in speakers with various backgrounds and experiences with whom students might emulate and in whom the students might see themselves; offering more extracurricular and after-school activities (for example, environmental club, international club, chess club, math club, Spanish club); ensuring that all sports are inclusive, i.e., that all eligible students who wish to participate are allowed to join and actively participate. The parent noted that teachers can plan opportunities for social interaction, nurturing friendships, and other supportive behaviors, and serve as positive role models, and that teachers should learn how to deliver differentiated curriculum and instruction. The parent also shared that inclusion means thinking about multiple ways to reach out to parents, guardians, caretakers on their own terms. In addition, he added that it is important for administrators, teachers, and staff to effectively model inclusive behaviors in their interactions among themselves as well as with the students.

Principal Payne Chauvenet shared that they have money in this year's operating budget for structured recess efforts but that the nonprofit program vendor (Playworks - information is available on the organization's public website at <https://www.playworks.org/>) the school had hired while at Maury Village no longer provides staffing but instead limits its current services to training. This is an obstacle for Maury in that it would require additional personnel responsibilities or increased staffing. LSAT parent members expressed hope that Playworks will reinstate its staffing availability, and that Maury will be able to hire the nonprofit to provide services for SY2022-2023, or that other options for structured recess will be pursued.

C. Are there specific topics that are of interest to parents/guardians/caretakers on which they might like greater support from the school?

One parent noted that prior to the pandemic, the school offered the Parent Engagement Program (PEP), which was a good program that had been well-attended and appreciated.

Another parent noted that with respect to various activities at the school to support SEL and academic learning, such as math night, STEM night, and other engagement activities, it was helpful in the past when the events could be held at the school, and it is hoped that there will be school reengagement opportunities that will take place within the school building for parents/guardians/caretakers and their children at the school next year.

5. Whole School Update

- *Current COVID Protocols.* Principal Payne Chauvenet noted there has been an uptick of COVID cases at the school. She noted that recent new DCPS guidance led to some changes in notifications to the community. She also clarified that the current policy is that all students in a class in which there is a student who reports a positive COVID test are considered "close contacts" and therefore all of the students in that class have to wear a mask in the school building for 10-days. General information on DCPS COVID-19 protocols is available at: <https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/health/response/>. Please email Maury facilitator Jennifer Thompson at Jennifer.Thompson@k12.dc.gov to report a case.
- *Enrollment.* Principal Payne Chauvenet asked members to continue to encourage families to enroll if they intend for their children to attend Maury next school year. She reported that they are currently processing 70 enrollment applications and that more than 200 applications have already been processed. The school's goal is to have 90% reenrollment by the beginning of June. This month, the school began its grade-level enrollment competition. Grade levels with the highest participation will receive an extra recess with a fun treat. PK3 and PK4 are currently leading with the highest percentages of students who have enrolled. Kindergarten (current PK4 cohort) and 5th grade (current 4th Grade cohort) are tied for third.

5. Parent Advocacy Support.

LSAT parents asked how they and the general parent community might be more supportive of the school and teachers and of those students who are in need of additional supports, and specifically those students who are in crisis.

Principal Payne Chauvenet noted that the school has seen this year an increase in the number of cases of students in crisis. The behavior team meets every week to identify trends, consider referrals, and discuss plans and observations. She reported there is now a behavior clinician in the school who is on contract through the D.C. Department of Behavioral Health. She noted that it did take quite some time to get the clinician into the school due to the DCPS clearance process. She indicated that delays in the DCPS clearance process is an area upon which parents could advocate. Now that the clinician is in the school, they have a caseload, are meeting with families, and developing bonds with students who now have another support person at the school who can also provide clinical guidance.

Principal Payne Chauvenet shared that she had requested additional funding from DCPS this school year to hire a behavioral technician (which falls within an aide position

category), arguing that such a position was justified by the fact that the school's enrollment surpassed projections. Despite initial approval, the request did not receive DCPS budget approval. As a result, the school could not get this needed position. Principal Payne Chauvenet noted that existing school programs, policies, and procedures were refined and adapted this year so that students are receiving supports they need. She also noted that the school will be able to hire a behavior technician for next year as included in the submitted SY22-23 school budget.

6. **New Business.** There was no new business.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 pm.

The next regular LSAT meeting will be held at 4 pm, on Tuesday, June 14, 2022, via teleconference.