

Ludlow Taylor LSAT Meeting

Date: 9/12/24

Time: 6:00 pm

Location: LTES (In-Person)

In Attendance: Penelope Miller (Principal); Sandy Watson (Assistant Principal); Beth Ward-O'Connor (Parent Rep, Co-Chair); Channing Cooper (Teacher Rep, Co-Chair); Elisabeth Golub (Teacher Rep, Secretary); LaQuontinesha Atchinson (WTU Building Rep); Janice Casimir-Joseph (Teacher Rep), Yakeema Blackstone (Teacher Rep); Chris Hanley (PTO Co-President); Shoko Satoh (Parent Rep); Michelle Lerner (Parent Rep). Approximately 2-dozen other members of the school community, mostly parents, were present.

Planned Agenda

1. Welcome and LSAT overview ☒
2. LSAT introductions ☒
3. Nominations and elections of LSAT chair & secretary ☒
4. Scheduling of meetings ☒
5. Funds reprogramming discussion, especially implementation & messaging considerations ☒
6. CSP review - last year's goals & this year's goals with insight and suggestions from LSAT on how the school can share goals and keep them at the center of the school's messaging to caregivers and in what ways the community could support their students to achieve our goals ☒
7. Diversity committee & how we can recruit for members ☒
8. Open question period for non-members ☒

Meeting Notes (**action items in red**)

1. Welcome and LSAT overview ☒
2. LSAT introductions ☒
 - Dr. Miller began the meeting by going over slides 2-5 from her presentation. LSAT members who were present introduced themselves. Dr. Miller explained that she is not technically a member of LSAT and that LSAT serves an advisory role in school decisions. Dr. Miller shared she tries to listen to and take the discussion into consideration when making decisions.
3. Nominations and elections of LSAT chair & secretary ☒
 - Dr. Miller explained that in future meetings the LSAT Chair will run the meeting.

- Ms. Atchinson, WTU building rep, opened nominations for the Chair and Secretary. There was a discussion about the possibility of having co-chairs and it was shared that there can be co-chairs if one is a parent and one is a teacher. Beth Ward-O'Connor and Michelle Lerner were nominated for parent co-chairs; in a secret ballot, Beth was selected. Channing Cooper was nominated as teacher co-chair, and Elisabeth Golub was nominated as secretary.

4. Scheduling of meetings ☒

- Beth had already circulated a tentative schedule for meetings to LSAT members. Generally the 2nd Thursday of the month unless there was a holiday or previously scheduled school event. **Chair will recirculate the dates for LSAT members to review & weigh in on.**

5. Funds reprogramming discussion, especially implementation & messaging considerations ☒

- Dr. Miller began this discussion by sharing current enrollment number: 513 students (slide 7). This was the number pulled this morning by Miller. Last year enrollment was in the 490s.
- There is an imbalance in 1st grade, which has 76 students. Current class sizes are: 28-25-23.
- Dr. Miller specified that the current WTU contract recommends class size of 20 students but there are certain situations where classes can exceed this number (not sufficient space or teaching staff).
- Dr. Miller stated that the current proposal to address these large class sizes is to reprogram the funds designated for a sped inclusion teacher to hire a support teacher for the 1st grade. Dr. Miller will also petition DCPS for additional funds that the sped inclusion teacher can also be hired.
- A parent rep asked when the school could expect to receive the additional funds and thus proceed with hiring the sped inclusion teacher. Dr. Miller stated that the money should come in as soon as the enrollment is final, and that she has already petitioned for additional funds. Dr. Miller stated that she is also asking for additional aides.

- A parent rep pointed out that the DC Charter school Eagle Academy closed just before the start of the school year, noting this might be a promising pool of teachers to recruit from. Dr. Miller responded that the school's Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) partner, Dr. Gong, actually came to LT from Eagle Academy, and he's been trying to facilitate conversations with possible candidates.
- A parent rep asked Dr. Miller to describe current staffing for sped. Dr. Miller responded that we currently have 3 sped teacher and a TLI (Teacher Leadership Initiative) sped position, which is supposed to be ½-time teaching and ½ time coordinating.
- A parent rep asked Dr. Miller to confirm whether the extra money from the increased enrollment would cover both an additional sped inclusion teacher and an additional teacher to support 1st grade. Dr. Miller specified that under the current budget we have funding for one of these positions, and since the school is over-enrolled in 1st grade, we should be able to get the additional funds from DCPS specifically to hire another staff member (i.e. the funds couldn't be used for something else like more technology).
- A parent rep asked Dr. Miller if she thought it would be easier to hire an additional first grade teacher than a sped teacher. Dr. Miller responded that hiring teachers right now is just very challenging. She provided more detail about the new position (supporting 1st grade position), explaining that they would probably designate the role as "Not to Extend" teaching position till the end of the school year. It would still be a full-time teaching position, but the position would not automatically role over into next year's budget. However, if they found a good candidate they would plan to keep them on for next school year.
- A teacher rep asked if AP Watson (who oversees sped services) could speak about the Sped schedule. Dr. Watson responded that the school doesn't have staff to cover all student IEP hours, but is trying to cover as many as possible. She added that gen ed teachers can provide those hours if they are co-planning with special education teachers. Dr. Watson stated that the school has not communicated this information directly to families of students with IEPs, and that she's not sure when this communication will occur.

DRAFT NOTES

- Several questions and comments came up related to the information shared by AP Watson. A parent rep asked if there was anything that the family community can do to advocate/support. A teacher rep pointed out that currently many teachers don't have a schedule for sped services. A parent rep noted that the school currently has 3 ½ sped teachers, and asked how their time is being divided until the additional teacher is hired.
- A parent rep asked for further clarification about why the 1st grade teacher position was being prioritized over the sped inclusion teacher. AP Watson shared that she has been actively interviewing for the position, and she plans to continue to interview candidates.
- A teacher rep shared that, speaking from the perspective of a 1st grade teacher, the additional support for 1st grade might be most crucial later in the school year (i.e. January). In other words, while this support is important it doesn't necessarily take precedence over hiring the sped inclusion teacher.
- A teacher rep stated that an email was already shared with 1st grade families that this was the plan (hiring an additional 1st grade support teacher first). A parent rep added that it sounds like the school is recruiting for both positions even if we don't yet have the funds for both.
- A parent rep asked if there are ways that the parent community could specifically support the 1st grade team. A teacher rep stated that after the first 6 weeks of school she would be open. Another teacher rep shared that she would especially welcome support with instruction, and that parents may not be equipped for this. She added that bringing parents into the classroom in this way could also raise issues with student confidentiality.
- A teacher rep stated that she felt it was important to communicate to families of students who are being impacted by lack of sped teacher (i.e., who weren't getting their IEP hours met. A parent rep brought up that there could be issues with confidentiality when it came to communicating about special education services.
- Admin will move forward in recruiting for both teaching positions (1st grade support & sped inclusion); and communicate progress with families as allowed.

6. CSP review - last year's goals & this year's goals with insight and suggestions from LSAT on how the school can share goals and keep them at the center of the school's messaging to caregivers and in what ways the community could support their students to achieve our goals ✓

- Dr. Miller went over the Comprehensive School Plan (CSP) from last year (slide 8). She pointed out that LT met many of last year's goals. She began discussing each goal, what it was measuring and whether it was met.
- A parent rep asked for more discussion of two goals that were NOT met:
 1. 70% (or above) of students in grades 3-5 will score on or above by June 2024 (EOY) as measured by the iReady Reading assessment - No – 58%
 2. At BOY 31.66% of African American students were on level in iReady reading, compare to 71.66% of their white peers. By EOY, 55% of African American students will be on or above level as measured by the iReady reading assessment. - No –35%
- A teacher rep added on to this question to ask how many of these students also had an IEP.
- Dr. Miller responded that the school did not disaggregate Sped students in the data b/c sped students can achieve at high levels with the appropriate support. She added that this year's CSP directly targets students farthest from opportunity.
- A parent rep asked: what do you think are the most important things we need to do to close the gap? Dr. Miller responded that she thinks weekly data and planning meetings would be ideal. This is not realistic, but teachers will have these meetings every other week. She also identified co-planning between gen ed and sped teachers as a priority. If time weren't a constraint, she would love to have a schedule where students were never pulled from Tier-1 instruction, and instead other teachers pushed into the gen ed classroom.
- A parent rep pointed out that another takeaway from the data presented from last year's CSP was that math scores were lower. Dr. Miller responded that Kindergarten teachers are happy with how they're seeing students coming from ECE since the adoption of the new ECE math curriculum, Building Blocks. She also mentioned the fluency curriculum, Building Fact Fluency, that DCPS has adopted for K-5.

- A parent asked if chronic absence was a root cause behind the CSP goals that were not met. Dr. Miller responded that the school has a low rate of chronic absence, but that students who are chronically absent typically are struggling.

7. Diversity committee & how we can recruit for members ☒

- A parent rep noted that we were at time (7:00 pm), and we still hadn't discussed the Diversity committee. She noted that there were several parents at the meeting who came specifically to hear more about this initiative.
- A parent rep asked the role Dr. Miller envisioned for this committee. Dr. Miller replied that it would be a chance to hear the perspective of families from across different areas of difference, including but not limited to: race, in-boundary vs. out-of-boundary families, families of students receiving specialized services, LGBTQ families.
- A parent rep noted that there are several organizations that have done work around creating/guiding these kinds of committees, such as the now-defunct organizations Kindred. Dr. Miller noted that the school is currently partnering with Restorative DC and they had some experience in this work.
- A teacher rep asked if there was the possibility of LSAT inviting an outside expert to come to a meeting to speak more about this. The Chair replied this was allowed. The secretary collected contact info for parents who had come to the LSAT meeting hoping to learn more about the DEI committee.

8. Open question period for non-members ☒

- Meeting adjourned a bit after 7:00 pm before getting to this portion of the agenda.