

Ludlow Taylor December LSAT Meeting

Date: 1/16/25

Time: 6:30 pm

Location: Zoom

In Attendance: Penelope Miller (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) ; Chris Hanley (PTO Co-President); Shoko Satoh (Parent Rep), Quiana Hooker (Parent Rep), Yakeema Blackstone (Teacher Rep), Josiah Barnes (Manager of Strategy & Logistics)

About 15 additional teachers/parents/community members on the call

Planned Agenda

1. Checking in on past LSAT topics
 - Hiring updates
 - Technology/device distribution updates
 - L-T enrollment projections finalized by DCPS
 - School communication updates
 - Playground policy updates
2. Crafting a community survey on budget priorities
3. Community proposed agenda item: Lice

Notes **[action items in red]**

1. Checking in on Past LSAT Topics

- Hiring [Slide 4]
 - The meeting began w/discussion of LSAT action items about hiring updates. Mr. Levy (the music teacher)'s last day will be next Friday, 1/24. There have been some interviews for a new music teacher.
 - Discussion turned to the 1st grade staffing situation. Dr. Miller stated that she hasn't sent anything out to first-grade families explaining that her request for a support teacher was denied. She's spoken to some families but not all; when asked for a percentage, she estimated around 30%.
 - Parent rep asked if there is any data to indicate whether the support measure put in place for 1st grade classrooms are working. Dr. Miller stated the school doesn't yet have data for DIBELS (assessment measuring reading fluency). We do have some I-Ready Math Diagnostic (assessment measuring students grade level in math). According to the I-Ready math results, that's, we've doubled the

- number of 1st graders who are on grade level, and we've also seen a reduction in students who are a grade level below.
- Two 1st grade teachers on the call stated that these results seem to be typical for math at the middle of the year. However, they noted that the additional support provided to 1st grade classes has not been consistent, due to staff members being out or getting pulled to substitute in other grade levels.
 - **Action item: Dr. Miller will email all 1st grade families on Friday, 1/17 with an update explaining that the additional teacher request was not approved.**
 - Discussion turned to the unfilled Sped Teacher position. Dr. Miller stated that AP Watson has communicated with all families of affected students about the ongoing teacher vacancy, and case managers are tracking the hours that have been missed. Dr. Miller added that Sped vacancies remain a challenge across DCPS—she believes there are about 25 sped teacher vacancies across the district.
 - A parent rep asked what the vacancy/missed hours means for the families of impacted students. Dr. Miller replied that they can be eligible for compensatory services (e.g. funding for out of school tutoring). Another parent asked if compensatory services are granted automatically, or if this is something parents need to know to ask for. Dr. Miller replied that it's not necessarily 1:1 (e.g., 15 missed hours of sped services wouldn't automatically equal 15 hours of compensatory services), and some of this depends on whether we are able to hire a new teacher. If the school is able to bring in a new teacher soon (an interview is scheduled for Tuesday, 1/21), it might be feasible to make up students' missed hours before the end of the school year.
 - A parent rep asked if there are any specific updates about the schools' efforts to mitigate the challenges presented by the Sped teacher vacancy. The parent noted that parents across the city are making decisions for the DC School Lottery, and some discussions on parent message boards have specifically criticized Sped services at LT. Dr. Miller stated that in her view the school is in a better position as far as Sped support than last year, when there were two teacher vacancies for CES classroom teachers. She said that she would be happy to provide any "anonymous" information that she can (i.e., information about sped staffing that doesn't violate student privacy).

- **Action Item: AP Watson will let LSAT know how many students are not meeting full sped hours due to teacher vacancy, and how many hours have been missed so far.** While we can discuss this information at the next LSAT meeting, parents on the call stated that it would be helpful to have this sooner given that families are making decisions about lottery rankings.
- Technology/Device Distribution [Slide 5]:
 - Co-chair reviewed updates on securing additional student devices as well as accessories for existing student devices (e.g. keyboards, cases & chargers). Mr. Barnes has requested additional keyboards and chargers. Things seem to be moving in the right direction. A parent rep asked if there is any other area where PTO/parents can support. A teacher rep replied that there may be once we receive and try out the new keyboards.
 - **Action Item: Mr. Barnes will work on getting devices & accessories distributed to teachers as they come in. Mr. Barnes/the teachers will submit any requests for additional items to the PTO if there is a need (e.g., if we need more keyboards).**
- LT Enrollment Projections [Slide 6]:
 - Co-chair shared that DCPS rejected Dr. Miller's adjustment to total student enrollment, but did adjust projections for Multi-Lingual Learners (MLL) and Sped student. Adjustments still seem low and at odd grade levels, but should be enough to maintain 0.5 ELL teacher and secure sufficient funds to staff Sped teacher positions
- School Communication [Slide 7]
 - Co-chair shared that initial list of families that weren't getting Remind messages seem to be getting them; however, it seems some families are losing access during the school year. One possible "band-aid" solution is that individuals can add a second contact email to their Remind account, and thus get messages to parent/guardians that haven't been able to get on the Remind distribution list.
 - Dr. Miller added that the school can add families through a QR code; she can start including this code in her weekly bulletin to families and share this information with teachers to push out in their own bulletins.
 - Co-chair added that a list of families who aren't getting blackboard updates is now w Central Office, and they will try to fix it.

- **Action Item: PTO will let families know about “band aid” solution for adding contacts to Remind. Dr. Miller will include the Remind QR code in the Principal Bulletin and also send to teachers to distribute.**
- Playground Policies [Slide 8]:
 - Co-Chair shared lots of parents have offered to help with playground upkeep (to facilitate opening the playground up to the community during the weekend) and to help with snow removal (to facilitate students using the playground for outdoor recess, temperatures permitting).
 - Dr. Miller will be meeting with the PTO and the PTO Grounds Committee to talk about how they can support with weekend playground upkeep. She stated that Mr. Barnes will coordinate with families that volunteered to help clear snow and ice.
 - There were some questions about the process for calling indoor recess, and what indoor recess looks like for kids. Dr. Miller explained that DCPS policy requires indoor recess when the temperature or wind chill is below 32 degrees. Schools call indoor recess based on the current temperature, but DCPS has also been sending out hypothermia alerts. What indoor recess looks like varies from classroom to classroom/grade level to grade level. A few teachers on the call shared what it looks like for their students; e.g., a pre-K teacher explained that her grade level will use the hallways for indoor movement activities.
 - A parent asked if it would be possible to know the specials schedule so that parents could know what to send their children to school in (e.g., sending snowpants if students are scheduled have outdoors PE).
 - There was a question about whether the playground will be open over the long weekend if it snows. Dr. Miller stated that she can email the grounds committee to ask for help with opening & closing.
 - **Action Items: Dr. Miller will meet with PTO & Grounds Committee to come up with a plan for weekend upkeep. Mr. Barnes will coordinate with families about snow/ice removal. Dr. Miller will email PTO & Grounds Committee to see about opening the playground for use in the snow over the long weekend.**

2. Community Survey on Budget priorities [Slides 10-13]

- Co-chair explained that as part of budgeting process, LSAT creates and distributes a survey to parents and teachers/staff to measure community priorities. She shared examples from last year's survey items.
- Discussion turned to items to add to this year's survey, as well as to any changes in survey formatting. Possible things that we may want to ask about in this year's survey include: class sides & ECE specials (e.g., ECE students are no longer getting Spanish this year since the Spanish teacher is also serving as the ELL teacher and didn't have the space in her schedule). Several meeting participants advocated for asking more specifically about direct budget tradeoffs. For example, rather than asking respondents to say how important an area of funding was, asking them to pick three priorities from a list. There was also a request to add more context to the survey about the financial role that the PTO can play—i.e., what items must be funded through the budget (e.g., teacher positions) vs. what items can be offset by PTO funds. One parent on the call noted that sometimes the items on last year's survey were not ones she felt equipped to answer.
- There was a question about which Specials are a requirement for DCPS elementary schools. Dr. Miller explained that 2 PE teachers are essentially a requirement since students are required to get 90 minutes of Physical education a week. Music and art are also required specials, and DCPS Elementary schools are required to staff a library position. Dr. Miller added that while a language teacher is required, LT has historically offered Spanish.
- A parent rep asked if it was possible to see last year's survey results. Co-Chair responded yes, but not sure how helpful that data is. There was also a question about what demographic information was collected from respondents. Respondents could identify as a parent, a teacher/staff member, or both. Child's grade level was collected from parent respondents, as well as whether their child received special education services.
- There was a question about whether any LSAT members or parents on the call had expertise in survey design. A parent rep stated she could reach out to a member of the LSAT collective who is a statistician. Several participants noted it could be helpful to have parents look at a draft of the survey to give feedback.

- **Action Items: Beth will begin drafting edits to the survey, and share with LSAT members. Qiana will reach out to contact on LSAT Collective who is a statistician.**

3. Community-Proposed Agenda Item: Lice

- Parent who had requested this agenda item spoke about the challenge of dealing with ongoing lice outbreaks. Asked if more could be done by the school as far as: communication with families about lice outbreaks, checking students for lice, ensuring that families are following up with treatment, and providing support to families who need it to pay for treatment (this would be through the PTO).
- There was a discussion of what the school nurse is able and required to do as part of lice monitoring and mitigation. Dr. Miller stated that the school nurse does not perform lice checks; some participants asked if this was her personal preference, or whether it was part of her contract that she not have to perform lice checks. There was a question about what reporting currently looks like at the school; Dr. Miller stated that when parents inform the school that their child has lice, the nurse will make a copy of a lice fact sheet and send it home with all the students in that child's class.
- There was quite a bit of back and forth about this topic, both on the call and on the chat. The parent who brought up this topic felt very strongly that lice was not being handled with enough urgency; he mentioned a program run through a lice clinic in Virginia (<https://liceremovalnova.com/swl/>) that partners with schools and school nurses. Another parent mentioned a fact sheet created by an LT parent with more up-to-date and detailed information about how to treat lice in your home. A parent shared that they didn't know that parents were asked to let the school know if their child has lice. A teacher expressed that they didn't know this was a school wide problem since she hadn't heard about it. Another teacher shared concerns about student privacy if the nurse is conducting lice checks, as well as whether the nurse was well-positioned to share information about lice outbreaks with families. The parent who raised this topic stated that he hoped we could revisit it.
- **Action Item: Dr. Miller will share the nurse's contact information with families, and ask families to reach out to her as well as their child's classroom teacher if their child has lice.**