



Capitol Hill Cluster School
Where Every Child Achieves
Peabody | Watkins | Stuart-Hobson | A DC Public School

LSAT November Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2020

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

LSAT Member Attendees: Ramona Burton (Parent Co-Chair), Kimberly Griffin (Teacher Co-Chair), Katherine Antos (Secretary), Shannon Russell, Ebon McPherson, Annie Slattery, Pamela Dickerson, Steve Sweeney, Gerty Johnson, Vernastene Black, Kate Fiske, Rachel Houghton, Tatiana Sheppard, Beth Dewhurst, Brittney Prophete

Principals MScott Berkowitz and Eric Fraser

Bijan Verlin

Approximately 6 parents and community members in attendance

Meeting recorded and available upon request.

LSAT Updates from DCPS:

Ramona Burton announced that DCPS Central Office has shared [SY20-21 LSAT Guidelines](#) and information on DCPS Budget Hearing that will be on November 23 from 5:30 – 7:30 pm. Bijan Verlin (DCPS) noted that DCPS has created a [video](#) to explain on how enrollment affects school budgets. Recommended LSAT members and interested parties watch the webinar in advance of the hearing. Mr. Verlin also explained the hearing will be higher level than the budget for an individual school and therefore may not be as valuable for LSAT members.

Feedback on Watkins Building Inspection:

The [School Building Readiness Checklist](#) and a [statement](#) from the Washington Teachers Union (WTU) on reports of an agreement to reopen schools to in-person learning has been shared on the school listservs as part of the LSAT agenda. The purpose of this agenda item is to summarize the walkthrough, which occurred November 4, and allow LSAT members to ask questions of those who were on the walkthrough. LSAT attendees on the walkthrough were Katherine Antos, Rachel Houghton, Tatiana Sheppard, and Ebon McPherson. Other attendees included Principal Berkowitz; DSL Montgomery; Ronnie Hooker and Donnell Starkey of the custodial team; Nurse Tuitt; and PTA representatives.

Overview:

- DSL Montgomery shared detailed inventory tracking system that includes everything on hand and will allow the school to monitor rate that supplies are being reused, when they should be reordered
- PPE: Saw adult and children's face masks and face shields. Discussed but did not show communicator masks (for students who are deaf or hard of hearing). Unaware if that is a need at students coming back to Watkins since still determining which students will accept in-person seats.

Given young children learn phonics and reading in part through watching lips, wanted to know if communicator masks would be available for ECE teachers

- Principal Berkowitz – good point, will ask. Noted school leadership team will work to ask and advocate for any supplies students or staff need. One of questions asked in offering slots is around particular student needs, supplies or accommodations
- Medical gowns, shoe covers, gloves – noted the number of gloves that would be provided to teachers daily was increased during walkthrough based on teacher feedback during walkthrough
- Toilet paper, soap present in inventory and in some of bathrooms but not all. Inventory checklist calls for 2 months supply on hand, though discussed 1 month at walkthrough
 - Berkowitz will request more. Ensure 2 months available. Will provide numbers in inventory so can assess if 2 months available
 - Understand concern/distrust of supplies comes from past experience, including issues with soap. Part of monthly supply calculation will be tracking use given # of students who accept seats (which right now is unknown)
- LSAT representative on walkthrough noted that not all signs at level students could see.
- Helps to hear concerns regarding aspects of the walkthrough (supplies, signage, setup) asap so can address asap
- In response to questions on what happens if reusable water bottle is left at home, Principal Berkowitz noted that single use bottles as well as cups and pitchers will be available
- Principal Berkowitz welcomes any teachers, staff, parents to come in and check any classroom before reopens.
- LSAT representative on walkthrough also noted hourly checklists for bathrooms, other high use areas will keep these areas clean and also assess supply inventory (eg, soap, toilet paper)

Discussion

- Stuart-Hobson now having reopening conversations and learning from elementary schools. Interested in actual flow among classrooms, health suites, etc of the various classes
- Principal Berkowitz: DCPS set up some model elementary schools, including Maury, for others to view. May offer model middle schools as well. If not, welcome to come to Watkins any time. Watkins' [reopening operations plan](#) is also available online and was posted early
- Principal Berkowitz noted that at the time of the walkthrough, knew not going back to school next week so school was not ready to go back next day. If were going back, would have shown more details and done more to prep all rooms. The purpose of the walkthrough was to show sample classrooms, how addressing the elements of the checklist, and build trust
- As of now, the first class to open would be a single CARES class. Some schools may open CARES classrooms on 11/16, but not Watkins. Need to first know if have staff available (currently have 1, potentially 2). Not going to offer classes until have staff, and also need to build in time to prepare classrooms, provide professional development. WTU teacher rep noted that now seems goal is to have CARES classrooms open by 12/2. Principal Berkowitz seems to think will be opened at some point in November. Principals do have say in who the CARES classroom staff are. For now basing on willingness. Have heard there are job postings for these positions, but unsure if any new hires would come to Watkins. DCPS' goal is ≥ 1 CARES class/school
- Principal Berkowitz unsure what the next plan will be for in-person learning. If more students than the original plan, social distancing will be a greater challenge
- WTU reps who were on walkthrough are being asked to respond to walkthrough: Whether/not passed; comments on each section; checklist with notes.
 - Recommend checklist be submitted with notes of what saw, noting school was not prepared to open the next day because knew not opening the next week
 - Do not want comments on a few items that could be readily resolved to be used to say a school is not ready to open, however. Again, share concerns asap so can address

- Concern not all staff not wearing masks properly. Teachers/staff haven't been trained on how to put on, wear PPE. Will be trained before reopen

LSAT Open Business:

Equity updates – Principal Berkowitz:

- Staff Kindred Group: 13 staff members – 5 Peabody, 8 Watkins; 1 paraprofessional, rest teachers; 2 males; PK3 – 5th. 6:7 ratio of POC:white teacher.
- Parent Kindred Group: PTA is selecting two parent participants, Race, Class and Equity group is selecting two parent participants, and Kindred will select rest of parents. Will likely include a parent new to the Cluster. Group should be finalized by the end of this week and start meeting soon
- Proud of staff discussions that are already starting around equity. Teachers and staff are leading groups to talk through issues, including creating psychologically safe space, dimensions of privilege and how manifest themselves, and a school equity audit

Comprehensive School Plan (CSP) updates – Breakout groups for Stuart-Hobson and Peabody/Watkins Peabody/Watkins – Principal Berkowitz

- Academic Leadership Team (ALT) still following up with staff
- Homework pre-ALT meeting: Review CSP and comment on how strategies relate to their work. Discussed which strategies resonate with work now, which need to be tweaked or don't resonate
- Shared leadership goal
 - ALT members “closing the loop” on why strategies important will help create strategies that all are invested in.
- Academic leadership goal
 - Resounding support for writers' workshop, creative curriculum, 8 practices of math
 - Noted that reading should be identified at same level as writing, math
- Response to Intervention (RTI) practices – tiered based on level of support that's needed. Ability to intervene is limited in virtual space and need to be prepared for large amounts of intervention when return to in-person
 - Looking at how doing higher tiers of RTI for marginalized students. Very limited in virtual setting; hard for students to see teachers as real ppl, not characters on a screen
 - Marginalized students now differ from a typical school year. Thinking about how to make students excited to learn. Working with City Bridge
 - May need to reframe how define marginalized – eg not whether/not on screen, but also consider assessments, etc. Used to be able to quickly look at data and id who is marginalized
 - A teacher shared that got very interesting answers from students on what wish for. Some higher achieving students want to stay in distance learning because they like the flexibility
 - Need universal screening; can't make assumptions based on data
- Culture – how celebrate, build culture virtually. Takes energy. Pleased teachers thinking about this
- May adjust strategies to build retention:
 - Principal Berkowitz wants strategies focused on joyful kids. Have data on whether students feel loved, challenged, prepared and could gather more frequently than Panorama survey.
 - LSAT member noted parents should be aware of loved/challenged/prepared data, as often it's parents who are making decisions re: enrollment.
 - LSAT member noted that retention is lowest among white families, so should consider strategies targeted at white families
 - Principal Berkowitz wants retention strategies to address building authentic, cross-cultural relationships because harder to walk away from relationships

Stuart-Hobson:

- Applying lessons learned from Term 1 to Term 2., and changes are being informed through the lens of the CSP. Teachers are learning from each other
- Changes to advisory classes will step away from Term 1's focus on technical aspects of distance learning. Term 2 will engage more on social/emotional learning, self-regulation, self-management
- For instance, will change how teachers doing assessments to reduce anxiety, simplify and be more effective. Paring down # of assignments in grade books – reduce volume without compromising outcomes. Less grades in gradebook, more time for feedback to students
- Also rethinking how Wednesdays asynchronous time is used to provide more individual help to students who need it. City Year staff will be using Term 2 more to help students outside of synchronous time
- Family engagement/school culture: Hard to tell which indicators update frequently enough to guide interventions, outreach. Looking at something more reliable than progress reports, esp b/c families not on Aspen Parent Portal aren't getting progress reports for weeks after they go out.

Campus Updates/News:

- Frustration that few answers on what's happening with Peabody, including teachers' ability to get belongings and supplies. Have elevated to Supervisory Superintendent
- Aspen Parent Portal starts this week for elementary families

Public Comments:

How are specials being graded for elementary?

- Most important thing is whether kids are learning
- There will be many cases where teachers have no evidence of learning, and report card may show NM (no mark). Comments should be robust enough to explain why. Parents can talk to teachers if unclear
- Research shows clearer standards for grading lead to higher achievement
- At Stuart-Hobson, checking grades on Aspen led to more conversations on compliance and less time for meaningful feedback, so reducing number of graded assignments, as discussed in breakout

Meeting adjourned 7:50 pm.

Remaining 2020-2021 Meetings

2020-21 Meetings	Location
December 1	Virtual
January 5	TBD
February 2	TBD
March 2	TBD
April 6	TBD
May 4	TBD
June 8	TBD
July 6	TBD