



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

LSAT Meeting Minutes
September 1, 2020
6 - 8 pm

Zoom Meeting

LSAT Member Attendees: : Ramona Burton (Parent Co-Chair), Katherine Antos (Secretary), Shannon Russell, Kimberly Griffin, Ebon McPherson, Annie Slattery, Pamela Dickerson, Tatiana Shepherd, Steve Sweeney, Andrea Tucker, Vernastene Black, Kate Fiske, Rachel Houghton, Jenn Loeb

Principal Berkowitz, Principal Fraser, AP Boisvert

Approximately 15 parents and community members

LSAT Open Positions/Election Update

Stuart-Hobson Parent Representative

- Since the last LSAT meeting, one of the LSAT Stuart-Hobson parent representatives resigned
- Based on consultation with DCPS Central Office, PTA can appoint interim LSAT member. PTA appointed Andrea Tucker
- Chair solicited nominations for parents of 6th and 7th graders at Stuart-Hobson. Nominees are:
 - Lee Berger
 - Brooke Jamison
 - Gertrude “Gerty” Johnson
 - Gail Sullivan
 - Andrea Tucker
- Voting will open shortly and run through Monday, September 7

Community Representative:

- LSAT appoints a community representative
- The following nominations were received:
 - Bill Horne
 - Brittney Prophete
- Pamela Dickerson nominated and Katherine Antos seconded Brittney Prophete as the community representative. There were no objections, and Brittney Prophete is the LSAT community representative for SY20-21

Teacher Representatives

- Teachers have until September 30 to elect campus representatives and a teacher co-chair
- Peabody: Rachel Houghton will remain the WTU representative, and Ebon McPherson and Annie Slattery will continue as teacher representatives
- Watkins and Stuart-Hobson have not held elections yet, so for the September meeting the SY19-20 representatives continued. SY20-21 representatives will be finalized by the end of the month

Revisit LSAT Goals/Structure for SY20-21

- Norms and goals for LSAT in SY20-21 were discussed at the August meeting with intention of finalizing at this meeting. In August, LSAT also discussed making at least some goals SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) so LSAT could hold itself accountable for progress
- LSATs must advise principals on culture, instruction and budget. Culture and instruction are addressed in a school's Comprehensive School Plan (CSP)
- Beyond that, LSATs can advise on any other aspect of the schools. Given the wide range, members agreed it made sense to identify a few goals after have a chance to review schools' CSPs and determine whether/how to track progress toward these goals
 - Action: Principals committed to share snapshots of CSPs
- DCPS is considering modifying model for how school budgets developed to provide principals with greater flexibility. LSAT members have until Friday, September 4 to provide input to DCPS
- At August meeting, LSAT also discussed whether to develop bylaws. Based on subsequent conversations with DCPS, learned no other LSATs have bylaws. This highlighted the question of if bylaws are necessary and the time and effort to develop is justified
 - LSAT indicated the main value of bylaws would be to address gray areas not spelled out in DCPS' LSAT toolkit. To date, gray areas have been:
 - Filling an unexpected vacancy
 - Whether or not to record meetings and, if so, whether recordings should be posted or only available on request. DCPS indicated that if LSATs maintain minutes, they do not need to keep recordings and that the Cluster LSAT's minutes are sufficiently detailed. Previous LSAT and school leadership were concerned with recording in-person meetings in the event personal information about students is shared
 - Timing of sharing minutes: DCPS timeframe of 3 days is not sufficient to allow principal and LSAT review
- Given DCPS is developing SY20-21 LSAT guidelines, LSAT decided to provide feedback to DCPS Central Office on gray areas that should be addressed as well as changes to existing guidelines rather than developing Cluster-specific bylaws

Back-to-School/Distance Learning Updates

Peabody/Watkins – Principal Berkowitz:

- Always expected start of school wouldn't be perfect, but overall impressed by how it has gone so far
- LSAT parent representatives and parents and community members in attendance had overall positive feedback and appreciation for leaders' and teachers' efforts and communication
- Will use Wednesdays to hear and address feedback and lessons learned from first two days
- Using Canvas for communications
- Enrollment not yet final
- Devices: Estimates of need vs promised is close. Final tally of need not yet final due to enrollment still shifting. In process of distributing devices. Confident will be able to meet the needs of students
- Concerns that LSAT has heard:
 - Recording live lessons and making available asynchronously – awaiting guidance from DCPS. Ok to record teacher-facing recording, but have not received permission to record and distribute full lesson with students in order to protect student privacy. Therefore will not make available unless guidance from DCPS Central Office changes
 - Some class sizes may exceed limit – May seem high because some students who will not enroll are still on lists. Per WTU Contract, limits in normal year: K-2: 20 limit; 3-12: 25 limit. With virtual learning, grades 6-8 limit has increased by 5 students to 30, so same may be true for lower grades. Principal Berkowitz will review class sizes and limits and is committed to staying within limits
 - Size of specials classes (entire grade level at Watkins) – At Watkins, doing specials by homeroom would create irregularities that teacher and families consulted over summer felt

was a bigger hardship than large specials class sizes. Principal Berkowitz subbed for a specials teacher and experienced large class first hand. Principal Berkowitz committed to discuss strategies for improving specials experience, including addressing technical issues, on Wednesday. Any changes to the schedule would need to be rolled out slowly, deliberately and transparently

Stuart-Hobson – Principal Fraser

- Stuart-Hobson’s first two days featured “advisory classes” that gave students and teachers time to become accustomed to virtual learning and technologies. Feedback from LSAT parent representatives and other attendees that this approach was well-received and also greatly appreciated communication from school. Will start A/B schedule Thursday
- Maintaining help desks for families, students and teachers. Most of family concerns have been addressed through user error/explaining steps, vs a technology shortfall
- Creating time for teachers to lead “genius classes” or tutorials for other teachers to support peer-to-peer learning
- Has been focusing school opening on 2 aspects of CSP in particular:
 - Building relational trust: Working towards weekly touch points, including quick calls with families. These touch points will identify issues that can be directed to support teams
 - Supporting teachers to consistently model the behavior we expect from kids: One aspect is having teachers build consistent canvas structures so easier for students and families to navigate across classes. Also working to ensure any interventions, such as through small groups or work with Corps members, are integrated with classes. The virtual A/B schedule may make this easier. Looking to take advantage of opportunities provided by distance learning
- Devices: Close to every student who has requested device is getting one. If student is in-bounds and was in school last year, still shows up as enrolled until officially withdraws or can demonstrate not attending. Therefore not sure all students who show up as needing devices actually will be enrolled

Public Comments (7:45 - 8:00 pm)

- Specials: 1) Will students be asked to come to specials with certain materials in order to be able to participate in a particular activity (eg, art project)? 2) Having specials at end of day, as well as large class size, contributes to disarray. As noted above, Principal Berkowitz will discuss feedback with specials team and have them communicate to students and families any materials to have on hand
- Principal Berkowitz referred question about basis for grading to https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/faqs/?_school_days=assessments
- Budget: if principals do have greater flexibility, LSAT’s review of the budget will be even more important. Principals indicated this flexibility is an important opportunity, but will also put more tough decisions on them. They are both committed to a transparent budget process
- Enrollment: Stuart-Hobson now 100% enrolled at target of 513. 3rd school in its cluster of middle schools to hit target. Quickly hit re-enrollment targets. Was 6th grade that took longer and went to wait list for first time in a while. Peabody has been at 100% for a while. Watkins is at 96% of target. Checking if kids are showing up before offering spots off waitlist to ensure not giving away a spot. Waitlist activity will pick up after first week of school. Healthy waitlist, so not concerned about hitting target

Future meetings: Next meeting will be held virtually on October 6. November 3rd meeting will be rescheduled to another date in November based on availability of LSAT members.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Remaining 2020-2021 Meetings

2020-21 Meetings	Location
October 6	Virtual
November 3*	Virtual
December 1	TBD
January 5	TBD
February 2	TBD
March 2	TBD
April 6	TBD
May 4	TBD
June 8	TBD
July 6	TBD