



Capitol Hill Cluster School
Where Every Child Achieves

Peabody | Watkins | Stuart-Hobson | A DC Public School

LSAT Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 4, 2023
6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

I. Welcome and Introductions:

- Henri Rowe (Watkins teacher, co-chair)
- **Peabody:** MScott Berkowitz (Peabody/Watkins Principal), Sara Cissna (Peabody parent rep; Amber Williams (Co-Chair/Peabody parent rep); Annie Slattery (Peabody teacher rep);
- **Watkins:** Kathy Zeisel (Watkins parent rep);
- **Stuart Hobson:** Eric Fraser (Stuart-Hobson Principal); Carmen Tull (Secretary/Stuart Hobson parent rep); Kerslyn Featherstone (Stuart-Hobson parent rep); Bethany Rosera (Stuart Hobson teacher/building rep); Karen Gordon (Teacher rep)
- Jess Pannett (PTA rep)

II. Call for LSAT Nominations for 2023/2024 School Year

- If you are interested in running for one of the above positions, please email complete the nominations form **by May 31st:**
- If you're interested in joining the LSAT, please contact Henri Rowe.
- Information on open positions can be found here:
 - [Call for nominations](#)
 - [Link to Nomination Form](#)
- If you are interested in learning more about the school budget and the comprehensive school plan, the LSAT is a great place for you to be active and have your voice heard.
- Kathy Zeisel is also willing to discuss the role of the LSAT for anyone who is interested.

III. Peabody and Watkins Budget Submissions

- **Presentation by Principal Berkowitz:**
- Comprehensive School Plan Priorities: 1) Prioritize special education; and 2) Maintain support for social-emotional learning and core instructions
- Peabody: Budget in Millions FY'24 is \$3.09 million vs. \$3.19 in FY'23 (Projected enrollment is 222)
- Watkins: Budget in Millions FY '24 is \$4.74 million vs \$4.98 in FY'23 (Projected enrollment is 385)

- Head Scratchers: Peabody enrollment projection is 12 students higher than current enrollment but \$100,000 less in funding; Watkins is renewing Title 1 status but has approximately \$150,000 less in funding. Limited additional funds for Title 1 status.
- **Peabody, FY '23 staffing is \$185, 815 in reductions.**
- **Watkins, FY'23 staffing is \$325,304 in reductions.**
- Budget highlights: 1) We still have master schedules that work; 2) Special education continues to be prioritized; 3) Shared position with Stuart Hobson to maintain compliance with special education; 4) Despite less funding, no major changes to programming; 5) SEL support for students and instructional support remain
- **Given budget cuts, the summary of the impact is below:**
 - **Peabody positions added**
 - .5 psychologist
 - .5 social worker – this position will spend .5 time at Stuart Hobson
 - **Peabody positions reduced**
 - Music teacher
 - Instructional aide
 - Administrative aide
 - **Watkins positions added**
 - Special education coordinator shared with Stuart Hobson
 - Special education teacher – there will be a total of 5 special education teachers at Watkins due to the projected enrollment of kids with IAPs.
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 - **Watkins Positions Reduced**
 - 5th-grade teacher (we will have 3 versus the four we have now)
 - Spanish teacher/World Language
 - .5 psychologist (.5 remains shared with Peabody)
 - Behavior Technician
- **Two major factors going into the school budget this year that impacted us:**
 - The budget model has changed in favor of kids at risk, the budget model does not favor us as much as the previous years.
 - Enrollment impacts us. Peabody enrollment is okay, but our Watkins enrollment is low this year and that has impacted our budget. Please enroll your children as early as possible.
 - Please note we had to make tough decisions this year.

IV. Open discussion in reaction to Principal Berkowitz's presentation:

- Co-Chair underscored the LSAT Role is advisory and we do participate in the decision, and final decision-making does come into the final decision comes from the Principal. In addition to being an advisory body, it does not need to be in agreement.
- **Question:** Is there a smaller number of 5th graders projected for next year?
 - **Berkowitz's Answer:** On count day we had 58 fifth graders, we are projected close to this number, so we do anticipate we may reach up to

60. We spent a lot of time looking at the numbers and we are optimistic we will get to 60 in 5th grade.

- **Question:** Are there other grades that have low enrollment?
 - **Berkowitz's Answer:** Answer No, we do not anticipate this in other grades
- **Question:** If actual enrollment is higher than projected, does the budget increase?
 - **Berkowitz's Answer:** If there is an unpredicted surge of 5th grade seats, DCPS would have to give us another teacher if enrollment hits 80, but this is highly unlikely.
- **Question:** Is foreign language not a required DCPS elementary subject?
 - **Berkowitz's Answer:** World language is not required
- **Question:** With 60 5th-grade classes, we should expect classes of 18-22, correct?
 - **Berkowitz's Answer:** Answer, yes this sounds right
- **Question:** And how do you see the Math/ELA departmentalization working for 5th grade?
 - **Berkowitz's Answer:** We will discuss with the 5th-grade team soon, we have talked about two models, two teachers share 40, and one teacher teaches 30, or we have every kid switch. The 5th grade position is cut, but there is a process that plays out to figure out what person that is and they would be available to apply for other vacancies in the building.
 - Response for parents: Please figure this out as quickly as possible.
- **Question:** Are we actively recruiting from Bowling
 - **Berkowitz's Answer:** that pipeline is in place
- **Question:** Were the budget challenges a theme across the district? How did Peabody/Watkins budget impacts compare across DCPS?
 - **Berkowitz's Answer:** Many schools in Capitol Hill were cut.
Question: I have really valued the music teacher at Peabody, I believe it is Ms. Frederick. What are the options for music education in her absence?
 - **Berkowitz's Answer:** We are reviewing with the PTA, we certainly don't want Peabody to be without any elements of music.
- **Question:** Were there alternative cuts proposed other than cutting staff positions? If so, can you explain what those would have been and why that wasn't the chosen option?
 - **Berkowitz's Answer:** Yes there were alternatives, I don't think any of our other options were good. All of the alternatives included staff cuts.
- **Question:** All the positions cut @ Watkins are kid-facing, not Admin. Can you explain the thought process behind cutting kid-facing positions and not Admin?
 - **Berkowitz's Answer:** Having both an AP and a Director of Strategy and Logistics (DSL) at Watkins were my decision for sure. Having a school without an AP is not sustainable. I need an AP. The Director of Strategy and Logistics is often the first to go on a tight budget and our DSL does a lot and is shared between the two schools. Examples of duties include - all facilities and maintenance, procurement and enrollment, and field trip planning, etc. Without the DSL, the Principal or AP would have to absorb these costs.

- **Question:** Can you clarify the petition efforts, out of the \$350 cut from Watkin's budget, is there a number associated with the petitions?
 - **Berkowitz's Answer:** The \$100,000 we received prevented other positions from being cut from both campuses.
- **Question:** Could you have appealed the entire cut?
 - **Berkowitz's Answer:** I negotiated with my boss and this is what we decided was reasonable to appeal and what my boss would support.
- **Question:** Is the LSAT signing off on the plan?
 - **LSAT co-Chair Answer:** Initially, the questions asked of the LSAT were: 1) Was the LSAT engaged and do you agree with the submission; 2) Was the LSAT engaged and do you disagree with the submission; 3) Was the LSAT not engaged at all. Originally, we thought we were aligned and we signed off with option 1, but we are considering retracting our signature of the agreement and switching to option 2.
 - **Principal Berkowitz:** We should have an offline LSAT discussion on this issue.
 - **LSAT Co-Chair:** There were a lot of decisions made at the last minute without full understanding from the LSAT
 - **Principal Berkowitz:** This is a hard budget and it is not easy to address this in this forum, so let's have a separate meeting.

V. Stuart Hobson Budget Submission

- Principal Fraser presented an overview of the budget process.
- Key Considerations: Total municipal budget and budget model; projected enrollment, position costs, and inflation, CSP goals, and Progress.

Presented some framing data:

- Sent out staff and family surveys and the FY'24 surveys identified the following priorities:
 - Maintain all current staff positions and avoid reductions
 - Add positions to reduce class sizes
 - Invest in experience and resources for students
 - Where should we cut if we have to make cuts? Professional Development, technology, partnership, overtime, and administrative premiums.
 - We are currently at 475 students. Our project enrollment is 443. We will probably come in actuality above that.
 - Our Projected budget is \$6.28 million for FY 24, down about \$300,000 from where we were initially last year.
 - In FY'23 \$6.61 million was distributed as follows:
 1. 67% instructional positions
 2. 12% student support positions
 3. 10 % school leadership
 4. 4% daily operations positions
 5. 3% administrative positions
 6. 35% non-personnel spending
 7. 15% over time

- o In FY'24 \$6.28 million +192,899 Budget Assistance = Reductions **-\$137,519**
- o LSAT priorities: 1) Maintain current staff; 2) Maintain investments in non-personnel spending, and maintain class sizes under limits
- o To balance the books, we: 1) Made cuts to instructional positions that were not used or mandatory in SY 20022 and 2023; 2) Made cuts to administrative, student support, and or operational positions that were not leveraged in SY 2022-23; and 3) loss of school partnerships for SY 2023-24
- o Stuart Hobson FY'24 Budget Highlights: 1) Staffing model of teachers can accommodate enrollment and projection+; 2) Shared position with Watkins ES to maintain compliance with special education; 3) Maintain investments in resources and experiences for students; 4) Continue improvements to physical plant; and 5) Maintain almost all operational student support and administrative positions.
- o Not in FY'24 budget:
 1. Teacher Special Education, TLI
 2. Social Studies Teacher
 3. Partnership with City Year
- o '24 Additions
 1. Special Ed Coordinator
 2. AP for 6th grade Academy
 3. Aid Administrative
 4. Auditorium upgrades and equipment
- o We were able to keep people, and titles, and maintain a staff-to-student ratio.
- o How do they account for the extra people that are coming in from Two Rivers, etc? Principal Fraser- DC only has one count day, so we are accountable for everyone who came in after Oct 1 but we won't be able to get money for them.
- o People expressed appreciation to Mr. Fraser for taking into account the LSAT priorities.

VI. Open for public comment on Stuart Hobson Budget

- **Question:** Is the funding for the 6th Grade AP a one-time gift
 - o **Fraser's Answer:** Yes, it is one-time funding, but hopefully will be something that will be sustained
- **Comment from LSAT member:** The way the Stuart Hobson budget was submitted reflected the discussions we had.
- **Question:** Were you able to petition for the funds to make up the entire gaps
 - o **Fraser's Answer:** Think of petitioning as separate from the budget assistance requests. Budget assistance is when you make a request to make up a gap, after you have spent all of the funds.
- **Question:** What is the 6th grade Academy? Does this mean we will have three APs, per grade?
 - o **Fraser's Answer:** It is something new, there will be an AP completely dedicated to the 6th grade. Yes, we will have one AP per graded

- **Question:** Do you have a Dean?
 - Fraser's Answer: Yes going into next year you will see we have a Dean on the budget.
- **Question:** What will be the impact of the loss of City Year?
 - Fraser's Answer: Yes it will be significant, but it varies from year to year, but we will be able to manage next year. Anytime you lose an adult body in the school, there is an impact.

VII. Stuart Hobson Campus Updates:

- APs and Librarians appreciation week
- Principal Fraser will be at Watkins Open House to speak with 3rd and 4th grade families
- Please enroll as fast as possible.