



MAURY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LOCAL SCHOOL ADVISORY TEAM

1250 Constitution Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002 • (202) 698-3838 • mauryelementary.com/lSAT

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 9, 2022, 4 pm via remote teleconference

School Leadership Present: Principal Helena Payne Chauvenet; Assistant Principal Andrew Lardell

LSAT Members Present: Amy Daniels, Richard Parker, Ashley Quarcoo, Shavanna Miller, Emily Paterson, and Rachel Schwartz

LSAT Members Absent: Darchiniquia Smith, Amy Toner, Maria Cali, VanNessa Duckett, Rebecca Sanghvi, Abby Sparrow, Angela Stover, and Elizabeth Nelson

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 pm (EST).

1. **Previous Meeting Minutes.** Minutes of the October 11, 2022 LSAT meeting were unanimously approved by roll call vote. The motion to adopt was put forward by Amy Daniels and seconded by Emily Patterson.

2. **Community Comments.**

None.

3. **LSAT Focus Topics**

- **Budget**

Principal Payne Chauvenet explained Maury's Fiscal Year 2023 DCPS Submitted School Budget. (Attached). Budget overview: Total FY23 submitted budget was \$5,988,891, which was an increase of \$220,359 over the FY22 submitted budget. Maury's FY23 submitted budget was based on a projected total enrollment of 547, which reflected an anticipated increase of 38 students.

The budget sets out DCPS allocation - confirming enrollment #, city metrics, how much funding per student, per student with special needs and other categories such as at risk - to arrive at the overall total dollar amount.

At the beginning of the budget process, the school's leadership looks at both personnel (staff) and non-personnel needs (e.g., supplies) then submits a requested budget based on projected needs for the following year. DCPS budget funds are typically allocated in November (although technically fiscal year begins in October), and the school typically has to spend the funds by the end of June (of the following year).

The submitted FY23 budget discussed reflects what was actually submitted and not what was actually allotted by DCPS.

The teaching numbers reflect what was submitted, and not how actually allotted. The school was able to make decisions with respect to flexible positions. For example, not every DCPS school has the following positions: science teacher, Assistant Principal, math interventionist, and reading teacher. These are discretionary and Maury chooses to have these positions, e.g., Think Tank, as supplemental spending in accordance with the school's vision and mission. There were additional positions: a behavioral technician was new this year, and a TLI math intervention teacher was added back.

As to non-personnel allocations - this includes overtime (admin premium) and supplies. At the beginning of the budget process, school leadership focuses primarily on current staffing (to fund that level) and to determine additional staffing needs. Staff is the most important consideration. Next, the school considers secondary needs such as supplies. With respect to necessary supplies, Principal Payne Chauvenet noted that the school has requested ESSER funds which has helped with supplies, but ESSER funds are short term. She also wished to acknowledge the PTA's support in the form of funding that has allowed the school to enhance the supplies provided to classrooms.

DCPS's School Fiscal Year runs from October 1 to September 30. The budget does not coincide with the school year calendar, and there is actually a gap in the summer. The school spends down funds, particularly at the beginning of the summer. The bulk of the budget is available in November in terms of non-personnel spending. Staffing is different - personnel expenditures fall under a separate category of spending.

Enrollment projection - Finished Count Day, and while there are no official numbers yet, the school's current enrollment is about 530 students. (A few students may have enrolled after Count Day.) The enrollment projection for this year's budget was 547. As the school did not meet that projection, there could be risks to next year's projection. Principal Payne Chauvenet noted, however, that an enrollment of 530 is larger than last year's enrollment number at this time - so it will hopefully help that we have more students at this point in the year as compared to last year. There may, however, be shifting around by DCPS and looking at formulas among schools due to variations. Again, there are question marks about projections and what those will look like for next year's budget.

Question: Is it too early to know about hold harmless funds, etc., that were made available last year?

Answer: Yes. There will be questions about the implications for this year's budget. DCPS has indicated they will be providing more predictability with budgets year over year so there will not be as much fluctuation to fund core expenditures. But that has yet to be seen. DCPS will likely tweak the new budget formula implemented last year.

Question: What happens after budget submission - are there opportunities for back and forth negotiation?

Answer: Last year, what Maury submitted was what the school received. There was no opportunity to go back and forth or to request supplemental funds. In past years, there had been opportunities (over a couple of rounds) to request supplemental funding and to reallocate received funds.

Principal Payne Chauvenet, in response to a question, explained that DCPS provides an overall budget allocation and the school determines specific allocations. For example, supply funds get subtracted from personnel funds, so the budget amount cannot be increased simply by increasing requested line item amounts. There is a careful balance. There is an allocation and the school prioritizes, within that top line, the allocation across people versus supplies. She noted that there are limits on what the PTA can fund, e.g., supplies, meaning the school has to make tradeoffs.

- **Comprehensive School Plan**

Maury's beginning-of-the-year (BOY) academic data (reading and math data) from the "big" assessments given at the school - was discussed at the October 11, 2022 LSAT meeting. School leadership is now looking more at social/emotional data. Referrals for behavior support (e.g., requests for help) are up more this quarter as compared to last year at this time. Moreover, last year the referrals mostly came from the playground and unstructured times of the day. This year the school is seeing relatively more referrals coming from the classrooms. Some staff are looking for more practical strategies to work with specific types of behaviors. In response, the school's new psychologist will be providing training for most common behaviors, and then looking across the spectrum to create more proactive plans for the classroom. Teachers are using proactive strategies such as having calm down spots, connecting with students, etc., but it was acknowledged that there is more that can be done to support student behavioral needs.

Attendance data: The school's student attendance rate is 95% at this point of year, which is high for DCPS. School leadership wants it to stay there. The school is looking more at chronic absences and tracking that data. Because chronic absenteeism is based on a percentage of missed days to the total number of school days, Term 1 is not a good indicator as there have been fewer school days and things such as an illness

or a vacation can trigger the chronic absenteeism percentage of 10%. Term 2 data will provide a more accurate trend line. Some students will go off the list as there are more total days in calculation. Last year, chronic absenteeism at Maury was 8%. That is low for the District but still significant, so Maury school leadership is closely monitoring that data.

Question: Does chronic absenteeism calculation include excused and unexcused absences?

Answer: Yes. They are looking to identify anyone missing 18 days or more of school. That is the pivotal number where a drop in performance is noted based on historical data. Missing days of school correlates to lower academic performance and impact on academic achievement. Because there is a drop in student academic performance as a result of missed school days - whether it is an excused or unexcused absence doesn't matter.

4. Discussion on vision for the school.

Principal Payne Chauvenet's vision is that Maury is a place that can accept any student in DC and allow them to thrive, because it is a school that is inclusive, that models equitable practices, and that cares about the whole child. There is a school mission (inherited from before Principal Payne Chauvenet's tenure), and a vision statement that she and school leadership have developed that correlates to the mission. The vision and mission are referenced at school staff meetings and professional development activities.

Mission: Maury Elementary School offers a nurturing environment to its community of involved learners, fostering creativity, cultivating curiosity, and forming lasting connections to develop self-empowered citizens.

Vision: We will create a nurturing and responsive learning community where learners are equipped with the skills and mindsets necessary to pursue their goals in and beyond school.

It was noted by an LSAT parent representative that these are a bit amorphous. And the question was asked: What does this really look like at Maury? How will it play out in the classrooms? There has been rapid growth at the school. Maury is a much different school, in many ways, than it was just five years ago. And it seems like much of the change has been passive or responsive rather than strategic. For example, Think Tank was lost for upper grades last year, there have been changes in specials' scheduling, the 5th grade capstone has been in-flux (no longer Space Camp). Are we looking at continued enrollment growth although we are at or near capacity? If enrollment continues to grow, what are the implications and considerations that will need to be made? For example: Are we going to lose Pre-K? Will we put Specials on carts as they once were at some point in Maury's past?

Principal Payne Chauvenet believes that enrollment at Maury is leveling off. This year's inability to meet the enrollment projection may be based on various considerations, including that we are no longer in a brand-new building with a "wow" factor. The school could have reached the projected enrollment number for this year by letting more students in off the waitlist. But there are considerations weighing against that decision, including budgetary limitations on staffing and impact on other schools and the school system. Based upon the number of students currently enrolled and on projected numbers zoned for in-bounds attendance, the school is hopefully at an equilibrium with growth and predictability.

Unfortunately, the school's student rapid enrollment growth corresponded with the pandemic and with a change in the DCPS budget model. In previous DCPS budget models additional funding would have been received at the 500+ enrollment mark, but under the new budget model that was used last year - the school did not get additional funding based on that previous tiered budget element.

Question: What does the future look like in the face of potential continued growth given that the school has various space limitations, both physical school building and the size limitation of the school's grounds. If we add an additional 4th grade and/or 5th grade class in the next year or two, will the school have to drop a Pre-K class to gain a classroom?

Answer: There are other factors to consider before dropping a Pre-K class, which would be a decision of last resort. The school does have flex space for an additional classroom as well as a couple of discovery areas. As of right now, the school does not have to worry about dropping a Pre-K class in the next year or two. It is, however, always something in the background. There has to be a slow down in enrollment growth or hard decisions will have to be made.

An LSAT parent noted that DCPS cut a special education position from Maury's budget last year (despite DCPS' purported commitment to equity and serving students with special needs and those at risk), and asked: Where does the school stand with respect to the number of students with IEPs and those receiving intervention or other academic services?

Principal Payne Chauvenet responded that the school does see raw numbers increasing. The school usually has around 10% students with IEPs. The number of students at the school with 504 Plans is usually in the "teens" across the building. As to interventions, that is a more fluctuating number. There are students who receive small group intervention for short periods of time during the day, and those who receive intervention in the classroom with their respective homeroom teacher as well - and those students might not be captured in the numbers used by DCPS for budget allocations. With respect to intervention efforts at the school, it does not get specific structured budgeted funding for those efforts. It is not like government funding received to support students with IEP and students who are English-language learners. The school does

not get dedicated funds to provide academic support for kids who are below grade level or who fluctuate in academic areas (e.g., strong in reading but weaker in math or vice versa).

The parent also noted that the number of interventionists at Maury has been stable although the number of students has greatly increased. In that regard, it seems like the school would need more interventionists / intervention services to meet the needs of the growing student population.

Principal Payne Chauvenet stated that whenever she has had the opportunity, she has put in the request for more staff. But that hasn't yielded any new staff. She noted that there was a great deal of advocacy by the Maury LSAT parents last year for additional DCPS funding - particularly for additional staffing. But that did not yield additional funds. She hopes that the school will get a larger budget for next year that can include funds for increased intervention supports as there is an increased and identifiable need at the school.

Question: Looking at a scenario based model and strategic vision. Is it better to keep Pre-K and have large upper-class (e.g., 4th / 5th Grade) cohorts or to reduce the number of Pre-K classes at the school?

Answer: Principal Payne Chauvenet has thought about that. If the school was to drop Pre-K it would result in lost funding for teacher and aide positions and would also reduce the number of students and corresponding budget allocation from DCPS. She also noted that PreK is good for identifying needs for early intervention and that bodes well for facilitating the services to meet students' needs. So reducing the number of Pre-K classes would be a choice of last resort.

It was also noted that school boundaries are redrawn every several years, as contentious as that always is. [Under a recent law (D.C. Code § 38–221), redistricting is to occur every ten years (due next in 2024)]. Last time around, Maury's boundaries were expanded despite the Maury community's position that they not be so greatly expanded. It is possible that Maury's boundaries will be reduced this time around, particularly as several surrounding schools are currently under-enrolled and Maury continues to grow in enrollment.

Question: Do DC schools have any say in DCPS boundary decisions?

Answer: Principal Payne Chauvenet stated that she has not been within the DCPS system during a change in boundaries. A teacher representative noted that last time around, there were listening sessions during PTA meetings, but community comments/feedback did not appear to have much impact on the final boundary decision. It was noted that the school, during the next round of boundary decisions, should point out that the school has exceeded its geographic footprint - there is no space for trailers or for additional classroom construction. It was pointed out that Maury has one of the smallest, if not the smallest, geographic footprint of pretty much any DCPS elementary school.

Question: With respect to staffing, Principal Payne Chauvenet was asked if she thinks that teacher retirements and losses have stabilized? What is her projection with respect to staffing?

Answer: Principal Payne Chauvenet said that Maury tracks with broader trends in large metropolitan areas like the District. She observed that a number of teachers at Maury had to make big life decisions/life questions about their career, their location, their health, etc., over the last several years because of the COVID pandemic. She does think that staff losses have leveled some. She said that she recognizes that teaching is a tough job and her priority is to retain teachers. And there is competition for teachers, and competitive factors that can't be controlled at the school level. Maury is fortunate to have typically more demand/interest in its teacher positions than availability. But having said that, there's also certain positions that are hard to fill and certain times of year when vacancies are hard to fill - so the school can't take staffing for granted

Comment: One of the teacher members noted that currently a big issue hanging over a lot of DCPS teachers' heads when they are making long-term career decisions is whether teachers will get a contract. They have been working without a contract for the past three years. She encouraged parent advocacy to encourage DCPS to provide teachers with a contract.

Question: Maury's Comprehensive School Plan under the Shared Leadership category set a smart goal of 75% teacher satisfaction and growth by the end of SY22-23. That seems rather low - would you please elaborate on that goal.

Answer: Principal Payne Chauvenet noted that there has been emphasis on teacher wellness and teacher satisfaction - and the goal comes from those conversations around the panoramic survey last year. She observed that it was a hard year last year - back to an in-school pace, ramping up, and students not all at the same place. She said that school leadership obviously wants to see gains in teacher satisfaction and professional growth - hopefully 100%, but have to set realistic goals.

Question: With respect to Maury's five stances - we hear a great deal about those from the student experience and perspective - but what do they look like for Maury's teachers and staff? For example, how do teachers and staff experience empathy from school leadership/administrators?

Answer: Principal Payne Chauvenet noted that the school has various methods of supporting teachers, such as staff shout outs, a sunshine committee, secret buddies, bi-weekly regular staff meetings, etc.

A teacher representative noted there is a big emphasis on social-emotional connection and wellness among the staff, and Maury rates highly there as a school.

Principal Payne Chauvenet noted that the school has a new whole child behavioral health technician this year, who is trying to also host small wellness groups.

Principal Payne Chauvenet also observed that Maury has a large number of staff members who are grieving this year (and last year). This includes those processing secondary trauma (where a teacher may experience a traumatic experience secondhand from a student's experience, and is processing that experience). Principal Payne Chauvenet stated that school leadership is always trying and always open to new ideas and suggestions.

Comment: A teacher representative noted that it might be helpful to reestablish the Maury PTA Grants Committee, which was active in the past.

A parent member noted that this year PTA leadership has been trying to get a parent chair/co-chair for that committee.

Comment: There have been many changes over the past few years in response to rapid growth and the COVID pandemic, and the parents/community at times were not included in conversations about those changes in advance. Is there a way to include community conversations when changes to policies, events, experiences, etc., are being considered and that may take place over the next several years?

Suggestion: It would be helpful to hold a facilitated, school-wide discussion about what defines "The Maury Experience" so that the community (teachers, staff, administrators, parents, students) can have a community conversation to look at what the process is that supports or makes those experiences possible.....and then align strategically, figure out how to hardwire in the things that matter most to the community. For example, it may be time for a paradigm shift about what is the 5th grade capstone experience and who carries the burden for fundraising for that experience.

Comment: Given changes to Maury's world language (Spanish) program this year - there are implications of students having Spanish class every three days for just two terms a year. It does not seem like a real language program any more. So the community may want to explore this in light of budgetary and other constraints.

A teacher representative noted that foreign language offerings at the school have been historically tricky in the past. DCPS has at times required elementary schools to offer a world language but then dropped the requirement. When required, it led to competition for foreign-language teachers and it was hard to recruit and retain a foreign-language teacher who was willing to teach in a non-immersion, whole school student body model. Maury is fortunate to have a great Spanish language teacher who wants to be here and teach all the students. Without being an immersion school, however, it is hard to build out the world language program.

It was also noted that DCPS does not, as of last year, require elementary schools to offer a world language.

It was noted that students currently attend specials every three days. As a result, the Spanish teacher is actually seeing students more frequently than the prior "once a week" Specials schedule. But there are limitations and the school will monitor to see how having an off-term schedule impacts student learning with respect to Spanish.

5. Community Questions and Comments.

Comment: Expressing agreement that a community-wide discussion on what essential elements and experiences the Maury community would like to see define Maury as a school.

Question: What school-wide events and activities are upcoming this year, e.g., GeoBee and Scripps National Spelling Bee?

Response: An LSAT member noted that the GeoBee was sponsored by National Geographic, which no longer sponsors the event. If Maury were to do something similar, the school would have to come up with its own model. The national spelling bee will take place, and the school has enrolled in the program for this year. Information will be sent out to the school community later this month.

6. New Business.

None.

7. Adjournment.

The chair adjourned the meeting at 5:17 pm

The next LSAT meeting will be held at 4 pm, on Tuesday, December 13, 2022, via Teams.