

LSAT Meeting

Thursday, November 20, 2025

Teacher/staff representatives: Andral Hills (principal), Larin Rottman (assistant principal), Dawn Gray, Skyelar Haith, Beth Prince, LaToya Hutchins, Timothy Leonard

Parent representatives: Andrew Paciorek, Shari Rose (PTA co-president), Julia Krahe, Sara Rastegar (PTA co-president), Darria Turner

Observers: Mia Olsen (parent)

Enrollment

Projections for next year:

- Initial projection for this year was 390; current enrollment is 385
- For the next school year, aiming for 400 or so
- Need additional classrooms in 2nd grade and 4th grade
 - 2 PK, 3 K, 3 1st, 3 2nd (+1), 3 3rd, 3 4th (+1), 2 5th
- Aim to add kids in 3rd grade for next school year, since 2nd grade cohort is only two (large) classes as of now, and a small number of additional kids would allow for three smaller classes
- Ms. Gray noted that there can be challenges in taking in students at older grades, from an academic standpoint
- Principal Hills said that more students means an increased budget, which in turn allows for more hiring

Question from Julia: Where do we put the extra classes?

- There is room for that many homerooms, but it could require “co-teaching” or consolidation of traditional homerooms and SPED or MLL teachers in a single space.
- Use classrooms for classes, rather than offices, as some are at present

Question from Mia: How would it work to have more kids, if there aren’t more support staff and teachers outside of homerooms?

- Need to expand for budget to meet needs. If we don’t grow, there is more chance of getting budget cuts from DCPS. A larger school is allocated more staff beyond just the additional homeroom teachers.
- Principal Hills: Dr. Chen regretted not opening up for growth earlier, because Hearst’s small size led to problematic budget allocations from DCPS
- Need to be strategic about opening slots to waitlisted students, in particular in 2nd grade.
- Mrs. Cole: Enough kids on 3rd grade waitlists to be able to pull and fill the three classrooms
- Confident that teachers and staff can get incoming students to where they need to be
- Will need to be creative about inner core classrooms with more kids, possibly rotating by quarter

Budget updates

- There was a DC council hearing earlier this week. No news from DCPS or other sources.

Staffing

- Parents seem to be happier
- The K-2 CES classroom is back to full staffing, with two partner teachers plus Ms. Marber. Other CES classrooms are fully staffed, with 9 teachers total.
- Principal Hills would like to hire one additional partner teacher in K-2 CES, as we have a high enough CES enrollment to justify it.

Question from Ms. Prince: Is there a long-term sub plan for K?

- The current sub, Ms. Elkind, will remain to provide to maintain continuity in the classroom

Attendance

Question from Julia: There has been a clear focus on attendance in recent communications from Principal Hills. What's the reason for these communications? Is attendance a problem at Hearst?

- Principal Hills questioned whether Julia's attendance question/concern was based on comments made in the most recent faculty meeting about award categories (not specifically about attendance).
- Julia clarified that her question was not based on the staff meeting; rather, it was initiated by multiple families asking her about the repeated attendance content in the principal's weekly email. (As an observer, Mia spoke up to note that hers was one of the families asking about this issue.)
- Principal Hills noted that attendance is an important focus city-wide for DCPS, as indicated by communications from the Chancellor.
- Hearst is doing great, and Principal Hills wants to celebrate that.
- Her vision as principal is to make sure that children are recognized and celebrated for their achievements, including attendance.
- She also wants attendance messaging to motivate and encourage those who don't always have perfect attendance.
- Principal Hills then clarified that this topic also came up at a recent faculty meeting. Teachers saw it as important that students not feel ostracized if their attendance wasn't perfect.
- Julia noted that it's also important to be aware of the impact of attendance messages on equity, since historically Hearst has provided targeted supports to families with greater challenges in this area, and attendance is not the child's responsibility, especially in elementary grades. Public health is another important consideration, since we want parents to keep their kids home when they are sick.

After-school enrichment classes through CLS

- There are five or six teacher enrichment options via CLS for the winter, which is great
- Lots of good feedback from parents on options for the winter
- The blended learning program will continue

- Comment from Shari: Thanks for helping get the word out. The winter session is short, and March will be here before we know it. Teachers should start thinking about class offerings for the spring session.
- Spring classes are supposed to start on March 15, so class ideas would need to be ready to go in early February.

Maintenance

Follow-up on maintenance requests

- DCPS and DGS have been very responsive to maintenance requests for the school building lately. Everything that's been put in has been resolved.
- The playground still has some substantial issues, as discussed at previous LSAT meetings
 - Mr. Sidhu checks in frequently, but those requests are still in queue
 - In addition to previous issues (see-saw, fences, exposed wiring in light pole, broken basketball hoop, bees, trash, soccer netting, etc.) there is also a new hole in the turf field by one of the soccer goals
- The playgrounds is a DPR facility open to the public outside of school hours, so it may make sense for the neighborhood community to take the lead on seeking repairs
- Hearst PTA could provide funding if needed
- Andrew will reach out to Allison Koester about possible coordination with Friends of Hearst Park
- We will need someone from the community to step up and take the lead on these issues

Next meeting

December meeting will be canceled; see you in January!