



Local School Advisory Team (LSAT) Frequently Asked Questions

A Local School Advisory Team (LSAT) is a group of elected and appointed members that shall exist in every DCPS school. The team consists of parents, teachers, non-instructional school staff, a community member, and in some cases students, to advise the principal on matters that promote high expectations and high achievement for all students.

This document provides information at a glance for anyone interested in learning more about how the LSAT should function. In some instances, this document references pages in the full SY17-18 LSAT guidelines document that can be found at bit.ly/dcpslsat.

Question 1: How often are LSAT elections held?

Answer 1: Elections occur annually between May 1st and June 30th. The newly elected LSAT serves through the following school year. In cases where the LSAT is part of a critical initiative and continuity is necessary, the LSAT can serve an additional year. This exception, with the rationale provided above, must be submitted to the Office of Family and Public Engagement for approval (see page 9).

Question 2: Should a formal election still be held if the number of nominations is the same as the number of open slots?

Answer 2: Yes. For example, even if only four parents are nominated for the four parent slots on the LSAT, a formal election should still be held, and a record of that election kept for the record.

Question 3: What if we didn't hold elections at the end of the school year? When can we hold elections?

Answer 3: Every effort should be made to hold the elections between May 1st and June 30th to allow the new LSAT time to plan for the following school year. However, if there are extenuating circumstances where this didn't happen, schools should hold elections immediately after the new school year begins and with a minimum of three weeks' notice to the school community (see page 9).

Question 4: Do elections for parents, teachers, staff, and community members need to be held in any particular order?

Answer 4: The parent, teacher, and non-instructional staff elections can happen in any order, but must all be completed *before* a decision is made about whether a community member will serve on the LSAT. If the LSAT decides to have a community member on the team, the community member must be a resident of the local school's boundary, work within the school's boundary, or be a member of one of the school's official partner organizations (see page 6).

Question 5: Who can be an LSAT Chair or Secretary?

Answer 5: The LSAT chair *must* be the parent/guardian of a current student, a current teacher or a current non-instructional staff member. There can also be co-chairs, typically a current parent/guardian and a current teacher. The community member representative on the LSAT *cannot* serve as LSAT chair or co-chair. The secretary can be any member of the LSAT (see page 8).

Question 6: How are parents elected to the LSAT?

Answer 6: The school's formalized parent organization (PTA, PTO, HSA, etc.) can hold the election for the parent representatives. Please note: a parent/guardian does not have to be part of the parent organization in order to run or be elected to the LSAT (see page 9).

Question 7: The LSAT is not representative of the diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, and grade configuration of the school population. What can we do to develop a more representative LSAT?

Answer 7: If all LSAT members agree, the LSAT can be expanded to include more members to ensure academic and social diversity. The maximum number of LSAT members permitted is 15 (see page 6).

Question 8: How often does the LSAT have to meet?

Answer 8: LSATs are expected, at a minimum, to meet monthly. However, there is no limit to the number of times an LSAT can meet. Keep in mind the schedule needs to accommodate the various schedules of parents, school staff and the principal. Comprehensive School Plan updates should be an agenda topic at every meeting.

Question 9: Are all LSAT meetings open to the school community?

Answer 9: All LSAT meetings are open to the school community unless otherwise stated. Notice of the meeting should be communicated to families and staff through a variety of school communication methods (e-newsletter, fliers, robocalls, etc.).

Observers may attend meetings in a non-voting capacity and are allowed to participate in meetings at the discretion of the LSAT. The only time a meeting is closed is when confidential information will be discussed (see page 11).

Question 10: Are the LSAT meeting minutes confidential?

Answer 10: Meeting minutes are not confidential and should be a summary of the meeting; not a verbatim transcript. Confidential matters should not be included in the public minutes (see page 12). Notes should indicate closed/confidential session.

The minutes should be posted in the school where parents and staff can read them and sent to the Office of Family and Public Engagement as soon as possible but no later than 20 days after the meeting (see page 12). The minutes should be emailed to ofpe.info@dc.gov.

Question 11: Does the LSAT handle school personnel issues?

Answer 11: No. Personnel issues are addressed by the school leadership and affected staff, and are beyond the purview of the LSAT.

Question 12: If an LSAT member can't attend a meeting, can someone else sit in for them instead?

Answer 12: No. The LSAT member should instead make arrangements to receive a copy of the meeting minutes following the meeting (see page 7).

Question 13: Who sets the agenda for each LSAT meeting?

Answer 13: The agenda is set in consultation with the LSAT chair, LSAT members and the Principal. The agenda needs to be sent to all members and the principal at least one week in advance of the meeting (see page 12). At times, the agenda may be amended at the last minute to address an issue requiring immediate action.

Question 14: Who should the LSAT contact if there are questions?

Answer 14: Email ofpe.info@dc.gov or call us at 202.719.6613 and a staff member from the Office of Family and Public Engagement will respond within 24 hours.
