



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 SY13-14 LSAT guidelines document and can be found by copying and pasting this link into your browser.

<http://dcps.dc.gov/DCPS/Parents+and+Community/Local+School+Advisory+Teams#1>

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 10).

Question 2: What if we didn't hold elections at the end of the school year? When can we hold elections?

Answer 2: 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 10).

Question 3: Do elections for parents, teachers, staff, and community members need to be held in any particular order?

Answer 3: 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 within the school's boundary (see page 6).

Question 4: Who can be an LSAT Chair or Secretary?

Answer 4: The LSAT chair *must* be the parent of a current student, a current teacher or a current non-instructional staff member. There can also be co-chairs, typically a current parent 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 5: How are parents elected to the LSAT?

Answer 5: The school's Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), Home School Association (HSA) or other formalized parent organization within the school can hold the election. Please note: a parent/legal caregiver does not have to be part of the parent organization in order to run or be elected to the LSAT (see page 10).

Question 6: Can LSAT members stay on the team if they miss LSAT workshops hosted by central office?

Answer 6: Yes. The workshops are held to ensure that members of an LSAT are trained and can share information with other members. The workshops are not mandatory, but are tools to strengthen the parent leadership at your respective school and the connection with DCPS central leadership.

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: At a minimum, the LSAT should meet 4 times a year, preferably in September, December, February and May. 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.

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 the the school newsletter, fliers sent home with students and posted in a prominent place where parents and staff see the notice.

Observers may attend meetings in a non-voting capacity and are allowed to participate in meetings at the discretion of the LSAT. Meeting notes must be made available to the school community as soon as possible.

The only time a meeting is closed is when confidential information will be discussed (see page 13).

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 14). 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 14). The minutes should be emailed to lsat.help@dc.gov so they can be posted on-line.

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 (page 8).

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 13). 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 lsat.help@dc.gov or call us at 202.442.5036 and a staff member from the Office of Family and Public Engagement will respond within 24 hours.