



## ELIOT-HINE MIDDLE SCHOOL LOCAL SCHOOL ADVISORY TEAM

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### **Meeting Minutes—DRAFT**

December 8, 2021, 4:55 pm via Microsoft Teams

School Leadership Present: Marlene Magrino, Suriya Douglas, Donya Wright

LSAT Members Present: Mandrell Birks, Sherri Anna Brown, Narissa Cooper, Michael Edgerton, Lena Heid, Jean Kohanek, Evette Lang, Ophelia Morgan, Sasha Silverman, Brittney Slaughter, Latashsa Williams-Tolson, Bradley Winans

LSAT Members Absent: None.

Other Attendees: None.

The meeting was convened at 5:01 pm.

1. **Enrollment update.** Principal Magrino reported that we are still waiting on final information for next year. Projection for the current year was 317; current enrollment is 323. We have petitioned to take it up to 341 for SY2022–23, but don't yet know if it will be granted. It's always tricky to balance adding students from the lottery, because we don't want to be understaffed. Ms. Slaughter requested that we review the Vision of Excellence (VOE) descriptions for all stipend positions (to include teachers and all non-teaching staff) prior to upcoming budget meetings.
2. **Safety concerns, student consequences.** Mr. Edgerton stated that based on his own observations and talking with students, there is a big concern about safety. He asked if it was possible to get more security in the building; particularly concerned that perimeter checks may not be sufficient and that kids may be able to bring items into the building by retrieving them at recess. Principal Magrino and Dr. Morgan confirmed that it is not possible to add security mid-year per budget, but we can use existing resources to increase perimeter checks and address specific issues. Mr. Edgerton suggested that students should also be made aware of the increased security measures.

Mr. Edgerton also asked for clarification around what kinds of actions qualify for suspension, noting that district policy now discourages suspension except in the most egregious cases. He shared an example where a student used a pencil to harm another

student; there was no injury as a result, but the action was very serious. Principal Magrino stated the new regulation regarding the use of suspension (recently voted into law by the DC Council), was meant to address abuse of the practice that caused the closure of some schools in the city. The use of suspension is meant to be limited, though we are still able to use it in certain situations based on judgment. She noted that suspension is not helpful as a consequence for students, but it gives the school time to make a safety plan and figure out how to best serve the student moving forward. With regard to the specific example, the school needs to assess each case individually to assess if there was intent to cause harm, and to use non-exclusionary practices before using an exclusionary practice like suspension.

3. **Support for inner core teachers.** Mr. Birks brought up a concern regarding a lack of equity in support for inner core teachers. He noted that the school decided to fund support staff through City Year in last year's budget, but due to the City Year program requirements, there are limits on the kinds of classes their staff supports. Some teachers get a lot of support, co-teachers, etc. but it doesn't seem to apply to teachers of inner core classes due to their subject matter. He wondered if there are other programs available that could support teachers in all classrooms. Principal Magrino stated that it's a good question to ask now as we approach budget season for next year, and suggested that the LSAT research programs that could offer that support.
4. **Staff morale.** Ms. Kohanek stated that she had heard from teachers at other schools that this year had been particularly challenging and many teachers and staff are feeling more stressed than ever. She asked how staff were feeling at this point in the year. Mr. Edgerton said it was great to be back on the building. Students definitely seem to have more social and emotional needs than in the past, but also more open to talking about what's going on in their lives—it's been more stressful, but also more rewarding. Mr. Birks agreed that the benefit of in person instruction has been good, but it has also been stressful. He noted that he has heard more concern among colleagues in general about whether teaching is the right career for some of them, which is new.

Principal Magrino stated that lots of people are reassessing life after COVID. It's been emotional for students and teachers; the trauma is acute and also ongoing for many. Even when working 80-hour weeks, there are still things that we can't get done. The large sums of Federal funding also come with a need for people to staff these programs, and there is a shortage of people—there's an all-around reshuffling in society. We are fortunate to have support within the cluster; and our staff is dedicated and professional and shows up for each other and for kids. We are advocating for adding an asynchronous day back into the schedule to allow teachers and staff enough time to complete all the work and preserve their planning time.

- 5. Reinforcing community values regarding hate speech.** Assistant Principal Douglas stated that a student had reported feeling unsafe based on hearing homophobic and anti-Asian language among fellow students, and she believes that others may also be feeling unsafe. While many teachers address this as it happens, she wondered how we can address it more widely as a community. Mr. Edgerton related that he had a similar incident, and had a conversation with the entire class about hate speech. He believes more straightforward conversations are needed about this, noting that many kids may not even be aware that what they are saying is derogatory. He suggested a blitz advisory about hate speech and behavior so it can be addressed by the community as a whole.

Mrs. Slaughter added that staff training around race and equity may be helpful. While experienced teachers can have these conversations in the moment, it would be hard as a first-year teacher to be equipped to do this. Ms. Silverman agreed, stating there is high sensitivity around these issues, and staff should feel like they have the tools to have these conversations, so students can walk away feeling heard and respected.

- 6. Potential implications from redistricting.** Dr. Brown noted that DC Council appears to have approved the new ward boundaries (may not be final), which would mean that Eliot-Hine will be in Ward 7, and its feeder schools split between Wards 6 and 7. From an advocacy standpoint, we need to consider this as the school will have interests in councilmembers and school board representatives for both wards moving forward.
- 7. Preparing for next year's budget meetings.** Principal Magrino noted that we will likely have only one more LSAT meeting before the budget meeting. Based on discussions today regarding safety, student accountability, and support for all teachers, it would be helpful for members to do some research in the next few months on additional programs or interventions so we have that information available when we begin budget planning. Mrs. Slaughter suggested that in addition to gathering VOEs for next month, we should also try to survey staff on how City Year has gone. Principal Magrino agreed and also suggested doing some focus groups with students so we have data.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 pm. The next meeting will be Wednesday, January 12, 2022 at 4:55 pm via Microsoft Teams.