

SES LSAT August Meeting Minutes

Time: 4:00 PM August, 26, 2026

Location: In person at SES and on Zoom

Candace opened the meeting, introduced members, and reviewed expectations for maintaining a respectful and productive environment. Members also received updates on new staff and changing staff roles.

Updates and Announcements

- The Education Technology Working Group is awaiting DCPS guidance on classroom technology use.
- DCPS will host a Parent University forum on September 1 from 6–7 p.m.; working group members plan to attend.
- Families were reminded to register for PTBoard.
- Back-to-School Night is scheduled for September 3 at 5:30 p.m.

Principal's Update

Dr. Hooks explained that the LSAT advises and supports the principal, who retains final decision-making authority. Key data and issues discussed included:

- Enrollment totals 420 students.
- The current schedule does not meet certain instructional-time requirements, largely because of the number and length of specials, lunch, and recess. Scheduling changes will be considered for next year.
- Student Panorama Survey results improved, while parent results declined in several areas.
- Math performance increased slightly, while ELA declined. Significant gaps remain for African American and economically disadvantaged students.
- Most academic growth occurred between beginning-of-year and end-of-year assessments, with limited midyear-to-end-of-year progress.
- Chronic absenteeism increased from 7.71% to 8.25% and may have contributed to assessment results.
- The school continues to outperform DCPS overall but needs significant literacy, reading, and math growth to meet district goals.
- Dr. Hooks briefly discussed the Cahn Fellowship grant.
- The next IB evaluation will occur during the 2029–2030 school year.

Discussion

Members asked whether attendance had been recorded accurately in the past. Dr. Hooks noted that he could not speak to last year's practices but expressed confidence in the system currently in place. ECE absences count toward the school's chronic absenteeism rate, even though they do not carry the same consequences for families. Dr. Hooks encouraged ECE families to use their seats.

SES LSAT August Meeting Minutes

Much of the discussion focused on the school schedule and compliance with instructional-time requirements. Dr. Hooks explained that students missed approximately 150 minutes of required instruction per week last year because time was allocated to other activities. Although students were in class, those activities did not satisfy the applicable instructional requirements. ELA and math are currently receiving their required minutes.

The school's seven specials, along with 45-minute lunch and recess periods and transition time, make it difficult to meet all requirements within the current school day. Members discussed whether specials could vary by grade and whether additional staffing, including another PE teacher, might help. Dr. Hooks said all options remain under consideration but noted that other schools generally offer fewer specials and that the school cannot continue adding programming without determining what time or activities may need to be reduced.

Members also discussed why STEM is categorized as a special and whether performing arts could help satisfy physical education requirements. Dr. Hooks explained that only certain courses would qualify and that general performing arts would not necessarily address the PE requirement.

The group considered how IB requirements affect scheduling. Dr. Hooks will attend an upcoming meeting about the school's IB model and will continue discussing the issue with staff. He emphasized that IB requirements do not replace DCPS requirements; the school must identify activities that are not required by either program and consider whether some may need to be discontinued. The next IB evaluation will occur during the 2029–2030 school year.

In response to a question about instruction during teacher absences, Dr. Hooks stated that students should not spend an entire day completing worksheets and that this is not the school's intended approach to coverage.

Members also asked about equipment funded through the previous year's gala. School representatives indicated that the printer, laminator, and cutter were in the process of being obtained or installed.

A request was made to share presentation graphics for use in the newsletter.

Adjournment: 4:56 p.m.