LSAT Nominees
We have six wonderful parents who have decided to run for the four Local School Advisory Team representative positions. Please read through their statements in preparation for the election at our next General Meeting on Thursday, May 15.

Kerrie Bouker
I am the mother of a two children, Katherine (a Lafayette-alum who is now in 6th grade at Deal) and Jonnie (3rd). I feel very blessed to be able to send my children to Lafayette. As such, I have been a very active parent volunteer, serving as Auction Co-Chair in 2011 and as a room parent and classroom volunteer for many years. Additionally, for the past two school years, I have helped to organize a group of Lafayette parents (and parents of future Lafayette students) to actively study and monitor the redistricting of DCPS school boundaries. I also have participated in a DC Ward 4 educational cooperative group, which monitors the Mayor and Chancellor's activities as they relate to Ward 4 schools. Most, importantly, this past school year I have had the honor of representing Lafayette parents as an LSAT representative.

I'm asking for you to please re-elect me as an LSAT representative. I believe that my knowledge of Lafayette, my relationship with the school's faculty and administration, and my involvement in educational issues city-wide will enable me to continue to serve as an effective member of the LSAT. As a scientist, I have a particular interest in helping to expand the science and technology curriculum at Lafayette. I am excited by the opportunity to serve as a parent representative to the LSAT again next year. Thank you!

Eden Burgess
I would like to serve a third term as one of Lafayette's parent representatives on the Local School Advisory Team (LSAT). With a new principal coming in and a major construction project on the horizon, I believe my 2 years of experience will be valuable to LSAT in 2014-15.

As a member of LSAT, I have worked with Principal Main and the other LSAT members -- who include parents, teachers, staff, and a community member -- on a broad range of issues, such as construction planning, budget, testing and curriculum, classroom technology, DCPS bonus and salary policies, and other important topics that affect Lafayette and all our kids. I hope I can continue to help address these and other challenges as Lafayette welcomes a new principal next year.

My husband and I have a daughter in 1st grade, and I have found several ways to support Lafayette over the past 3 years: I have served as a room parent, helped to organize two past Wine Parties, and currently head the Shout-Out fundraiser. I have lived in DC since 1998, moving with my family to Chevy Chase in 2004. I attended GWU Law School and practice art, cultural heritage, historical preservation and museum law.

I look forward to the opportunity to continuing serving the Lafayette community through LSAT. Thank you.

Jared Cohen
Since July 1, 2013, Jared has served on the Lafayette HSS Board as Early Childhood Liaison. Since May of 2013, Jared has been facilitating the Lafayette School Boundary Working Group, which consists of more than 30 Lafayette parents and future parents who meet regularly to monitor the school boundary/feeder pattern revision process. In this capacity he manages communication with HSA leadership and parents regarding this important issue as well as builds consensus relating to group positions and actions.

Previously, Jared served as Executive Director of Multicultural Community Service (MCS), a non-profit organization that encourages, promotes and facilitates broad and inclusive civic participation. MCS has programs in interpretation and translation for DC's immigrant community. Additionally, for five years until the 2012 conclusion of a U.S. Department of Education grant, MCS operated the DC Parent Information Resource Center, an effort to increase student academic achievement through effective parental engagement practices and policies. In this role, he supported the development of DCPS's system-wide Student Handbook, which was distributed in 2013. Jared currently serves as President & CEO of the Parkinson Foundation of the National Capital Area.

Jared has a background in non-profit management, development and marketing/communications. He earned his MBA from Johns Hopkins University and an MA in Communication from American University where he also earned his undergraduate degree.

Jared, who will have two children (one in 1st grade and one in Pre-K) at Lafayette next year, is interested in serving on the LSAT to provide the perspective of a parent with young children at the school. This is needed even more with the period of change Lafayette will experience in the future including a new principal, a planned renovation and an evolving landscape relating to Lafayette's feeder pattern.

Laura Dunleavy Nelms
I have lived in DC since 2000, except for two years abroad in Moscow, and recently moved to the neighborhood with my husband, Jonathan, and our two daughters. Our daughter Chloe is in Pre-K, and our Lafayette student-to-be, Leyla, is eighteen months old. I am currently a stay-at-home mother and a part-time environmental consultant.

We are excited to have joined the Lafayette community, and I would welcome the opportunity to become more engaged with the school as a member of the LSAT. My experience working in an advisory capacity, both as a Program Manager for community-based forestry projects at American Forest Foundation, where I helped landowners develop best management practices that made environmental and economical sense, and as an Environmental Specialist at the DC Department of Environment, would serve me well on the LSAT. While with the DC government I helped co-found the DC Schoolyard Greening Consortium and worked closely with teachers at many DCPS schools to create school gardens and outdoor learning spaces that were aligned with curriculum goals.

Wonderful things are going on at Lafayette, and I want to participate in shaping the opportunities that lie ahead for the school and its students with the upcoming modernization and new leadership. I am eager to serve as a parent representative on the LSAT team and be a part of these changes to help ensure that opportunities for learning continue to grow both inside and outside the school.

Vonda J. Orders
My name is Vonda J. Orders. As a former public school teacher, attorney in the public sector and the mother of two sons at Lafayette Elementary School, I am passionate about education issues and committed to making public schools better. I have the background and demonstrated commitment to public education and this community to be a strong advocate for our children on the Local School Advisory Team (LSAT). My son Lee Orders is a fourth grader in Mr. Catapano's class. My youngest son James Orders is a third grader in Mrs. Yedwab's class. I am currently the Vice-President of the Lafayette After School Program. I am interested

in becoming a LSAT member during the 2014-2015 to help the new principal coming to Lafayette Elementary School and to continue to make the school a place where all children can achieve. One of the roles of LSAT is to advise the principal on matters that promote high expectations and high achievement for all students. I would like to assist and support our new principal so that he or she can pick up where Mrs. Main has left off and make Lafayette Elementary School an even stronger institution.

I graduated from the University of Maryland at College Park in 1996 with a B.A. in Journalism and graduated with honor from the University of Maryland School of Law in 2002. After graduating from the University of Maryland at College Park, I worked as a Teach for America Corps Member in Houston, Texas. I taught elementary school for three years in Houston, Texas and Baltimore City, Maryland. After graduating from law school in 2002, I began my career as an associate in the business transaction group at Gallagher, Evelius and Jones, LLP in Baltimore, Maryland where I spent five years I decided that I wanted to work for the public good and accepted a position as an Assistant Attorney General in the Real Estate Section of the District of Columbia Office of Attorney General in 2008. I received a promotion a year later and became the General Counsel for the District of Columbia Department of Housing and Community Development. I have served in that role since September 2009. I became a resident of the District of Columbia in 2010.

Laura Phinizy

Hello! I would like to serve on the LSAT. As a member of the Principal Selection Committee, I and my fellow committee members have spent a lot of time mulling over what makes Lafayette successful for students, parents, and staff, and drafting questions that will let us see if a prospective Principal shares our priorities. As a new Principal comes on board, I would like to help the new Principal understand, and, I hope, respect the priorities that parents, teachers, community members, and students shared with us. I am the mother of first graders at Lafayette, and have been a middle school teacher since 1997.