

APPROVED



Liberty STEAM Charter

Minutes

LIBERTY STEAM CHARTER FOUNDING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NOTIFICATION OF REGULARLY SCHEDULED MONTHLY MEETING

Date and Time

Monday March 28, 2022 at 6:00 PM

Location

CCTC Advanced Manufacturing Training Center
Room A101
853 Broad Street
Sumter, SC 29150

[Google Map of Meeting Location](#)

This meeting is held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. A copy of the agenda has been made available to the local media & general public.

Directors Present

Cameron Chandler, Dexter WJ Davis, Elayne Brunson, Greg Thompson, Jenny Knopf, Ken Lee, Kimberly Rauschenbach, Marion Newton

Directors Absent

Rodney Thompson

Guests Present

A representative from The Item: Cal Cary, Dixie DuRant, Khalil Graham, Trevor Ivey, Tyler Hamilton

I. Opening Items

A. Call the Meeting to Order

Greg Thompson called a meeting of the board of directors of Liberty STEAM Charter to order on Monday Mar 28, 2022 at 6:10 PM.

B. Invocation

Rev. Dr. Marion Newton provided an invocation.

C. Pledge of Allegiance

A group of founding Scholars from LSC led the Pledge of Allegiance.

D. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Chairman Thompson thanked the board for their service and acknowledged the tremendous audience participation. He also requested a moment of silence for the war in Ukraine.

II. Reading of the Mission & Vision Statement

A. LSC Mission Statement

Dexter Davis read aloud the mission statement.

B. LSC Vision Statement

Cammy Chandler read aloud the mission statement.

III. Board of Directors Election Update

A. Delivery of the Certified Election Results from PCASC

Dr. Trevor Ivey read aloud the certified results of the Inaugural Board Elections. He shared 87% of families and Staff voted which was the highest participation rate for a first year election according to the Public Charter Alliance of SC. The following four directors were certified as appointed to the Board: Greg Thompson (Two-Year Term expiring in 2024), Dexter Davis (Two-Year Term expiring in 2024), Cammy Chandler (One-Year Term expiring in 2023), and Dr. Rodney Thompson (One-Year Term expiring in 2023). The following five Directors were elected: Jenny Knopf, Rev. Dr. Marion Newton, and Kimberly Rauschenbach all to a two-year term expiring in 2024 while Ken Lee and Elayne Brunson receive a one-year term expiring in 2023.

B.

Swearing in of the New Board

Dr. Ivey introduced Chris Neeley, Superintendent of SC Public Charter School District, to the group. Mr. Neeley provided brief words of encouragement for the LSC mission and noted some of the major successes in its Inaugural year. At this time he then proceeded to individually call each Director to the front with their respective guests to take the official oath of office.

C. Recognition of Board Directors

During this portion of the agenda, Dr. Khalil Graham and Chairman Thompson recognized two members of the original Charter Planning Committee for their three years of service and now coming off of the board. Both Ben Griffith and Steve Creech received a plaque acknowledging their service and shared words of inspiration in support of moving forward in partnership with the new board.

IV. Election of Officers

A. Election of Officers

Kimberly Rauschenbach made a motion to Nominate Greg A. Thompson as Chairman
Nominate Dexter Davis as Board Vice-Chairman Dr. Rodney Thompson as Treasurer
Nominate Cammy Chandler as Board Secretary.

Marion Newton seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Committee Assignments

Cameron Chandler made a motion to Academic Committee: Jenny Knopf, Chair Cammy Chandler Dr. Rodney Thompson Development Committee: Rev. Dr. Marion Newton, Chair Elayne Brunson Dexter Davis Development Committee Advisors: Ken Lee Steve Creech Ben Griffith Finance Committee: Kimberly Rauschenbach, Chair Cammy Chandler Governance Committee: Cammy Chandler, Chairman Greg Thompson Kimberly Rauschenbach.

Greg Thompson seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

V. Approval of Consent Agenda

A. Today's Meeting Agenda

Cameron Chandler made a motion to approve the meeting agenda as presented by the Staff.

Kimberly Rauschenbach seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting (January 31, 2022).

Greg Thompson made a motion to approve the minutes from LIBERTY STEAM CHARTER FOUNDING BOARD OF DIRECTORS on 01-31-22.

Cameron Chandler seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

C. Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting (February 9, 2022)

Greg Thompson made a motion to approve the minutes from LIBERTY STEAM CHARTER FOUNDING BOARD OF DIRECTORS on 02-09-22.

Kimberly Rauschenbach seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting (March 4, 2022)

Dexter WJ Davis made a motion to approve the minutes from LIBERTY STEAM CHARTER FOUNDING BOARD OF DIRECTORS on 03-04-22.

Marion Newton seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

VI. Board Recognition

A. Staff Recognition

During this portion of the agenda, Chairman Thompson joined Dr. Graham in recognizing the following Staff members:

February 2022

1. Katy Ardis (Operations)
2. Micah Vaughn (Lead Teacher)
3. Keon Wilson (Teaching Fellow)

March 2022

1. Latoya Pearson-Bradley (Operations)
2. Kierra Calhoun (Teaching Fellow)
3. Alexis Jones (Lead Teacher)

Staff of the Year Recognition:

1. Shasta Smith, Lead Teacher of the Year
2. Lisa Wilson, Teaching Fellow of the Year
3. Russell Whitaker, Support Staff Member of the Year

B.

Parent Partner Recognition

During this portion of the agenda, the following parents were recognized:

Parent Partners

1. Jamie Lotts, Book Fair Parent Organizer
2. Timeko Watts, Book Fair Parent Organizer
3. Patricia Hightower
4. Domonique Miller
5. Shereza Middleton
6. Debroah Pringle
7. McCall Campbell
8. Marta Holder
9. Jane Hray
10. Sarah Delbert
11. Robin Thames

C. Community Partner Recognition

During this portion of the agenda, the following community partners were recognized:

1. Julie Hines from the Sumter County Library.
2. Angie Marshall from Pilgrims Pride.

VII. Executive Director's Report

A. Updates from the Executive Director & Network Team

During this portion of the agenda, Dr. Graham provided a Directors Update on the school's progress towards meeting the organizational goals.

1. College and career readiness: we are above 90% school-wide in reading and math MAP growth targets. Currently our scholars are right at 50% personal RIT, which is where we need to be to reach that 90% by the end of the school year. Now teachers are revising their priority Scholar lists for intervention services as a part of the MTSS process. We have identified our priority students and have created a plan to further assist them. Currently, 10% of the Kindergarten class and roughly 20% of our 1st grade class have been identified as high priority students. We are off-track with the STEAM graduate profile creation due to prioritizing other

campus needs but initial conversations have begun among Network leaders that will continue into the summer.

2. Operational Excellence: Scholar attendance and persistence are on track even due to Covid-19. Closing up Smart Fusion data. The new hiring season continues for 22-23 school year. To date 35% of vacancies have been filled for next school year. Campus leaders are finishing up the mid-year 2x2 conferences with the goal for all work agreements to be deployed by the first Friday of April.
3. Mission Alignment: Mid-Year family survey is above 90%. Parent satisfaction is high according the mid-year parent satisfaction survey. The Williams-Brice-Edwards Charitable Trust have finished their second and third installment of the one million dollar pledge and the money is in our donations account. We are closing out our December books and on track for our 22-23 budget. Finalized budget in April for next school year continues to be in-progress with a first draft shared with all Directors by the end of April. Dr. Ivey and Dr. Graham have been doing instructional walks throughout the campus on a weekly basis. Finally, we are processing the results of the Great Place to Work pulse check survey, which 92% of our staff completed to provide feedback on adjustments made to strengthen school culture, communication and collaboration, and to make LSC a safer and more rewarding workplace.

Priorities from Q4 include more professional development with teachers and leaders to close the year strong. Budget season conversations with Executive committee has also begun. Recruitment is well under way of being fully enrolled and April 30th is our Welcome to Liberty Event for new families. Currently 87% of the 161 newly admitted families are fully enrolled.

VIII. Academy Highlights

A. Academy Highlights

Dr. Ivey provided Academy Highlights: Read Across America Week. 67 guest readers, 100+ books read and 25k additional words.

- Giving back to the community: \$4,195 for the American Heart Association called "Kiss the Pig". Also the students got to tape Mr. Logan to the wall. Coming up on 750k words in reading. Creech Roddey Watson reached out and offered to give each child a book and brought entire team to come out and read to the students. Midlands Father Coalition came out to read and gave a \$1,000 grant.
- Nightly Read alouds have been occurring to assist in the Million Word Reading Challenge/being posted at 6:30pm every night until Spring Break.
- Community Culture Celebrations continue and celebrating Women's History Month. Also had some female airman come in. Parents come in and read a "love letter" for their child during CCC. Jimmy McCain came in for Black History Month.

- Nearly \$5,000 has been donated via Kindful account from our Invitational Tours. Packed house from February with Realtors.
- LSC has nominated Micah Vaughn as Elementary teacher of the year!
- Promo video for LSC to ramp up communication efforts is being completed. In fact, the school posed for the first whole school picture with a drone.
- Social Media has been one of the biggest successes for LSC, with nearly 4,500 followers on all platforms.
- Taekwondo and gardening has been added as an enrichment activity during Wednesday community days for LSC. Profe continues teaching PE, Art, and Music in Spanish.
- In STEAM, Kindergarteners are finishing up coding presentations. Scholars are learning to code on the iPads now thanks to the funding raised by the Holiday Eagle Giving Tree.
- Goal Data Tracker Boards were also highlighted with each teacher having their individual boards outside of their classrooms tracking their progress towards their three organizational goals.
- Teachers are engaging in their 2x2 with their managers and which is an opportunity to give their manager feedback on what they're doing well and what they need to do better.
- Books and Blankets was a success with over 150 families participating.
- Our first ever Book Fair raised nearly \$12,000.
- All female Scholars participated in a Ladies STEAM tea.

IX. Board Committee Updates

A. Executive Committee

During this portion of the agenda, Chairman Thompson shared the following updates from the Executive Committee Meeting:

- Depending on our 135 day count, that will determine how much we will be reimbursed for next year with regards to per pupil spending.
- We may need to reconsider as a board to open up seats in the middle of the year. Scholars are on the waiting list. If the campus is not ready to take on the extra students, that's a consideration.
- Two children have left in the last month due to military orders.
- Be much more thoughtful of adding children mid-year due to credits needed in order to pass their grade
- To bring two children in right now, it would be roughly \$3k each. Due to us being a lottery-based school, we cannot guarantee the scope of services those two scholars will require. Our charter says that no new scholars will be admitted after week five of the school year. Also, they would not be counted in our 135 day count.

- Several directors commented on the need to revisit school culture, specifically student discipline.
- Each classroom has bands associated with which Scholars need intervention.
- Dr. Graham is ensuring that the Instructional Coach and Director are going into classrooms where Scholars need more help and intervention. A plan has already been put in place and being executed.
- We expect to have a higher SPED case load next year. Many students do not have their IEPs as LSC will be the ones that are creating them. This is part of the current MTSS system in place identifying scholars that may need to receive special services.
- Needing STEAM requirements to see where Scholars are and if they are ready to move onto the next year. This will start at 2nd grade.
- Staff retention is at 83%, Scholars are at 92%, talent reviews will be completed by the first week of April.
- Lack of discipline in the school is where the teachers are becoming frustrated. Possibly need KG at the campus more due to discipline issues. Greg believes we need to pivot due to discipline issues and we cannot have teachers so overwhelmed.
- Teachers are asking for support due to discipline issues. Teachers are wanting discipline issue children to stay out of their classrooms but that is not how LSC operates. If the child stays out of the classroom, then they are not learning.
- Deanna Brown is meeting with Grade Team Leaders so we know where the priority students are. She keeps a documented list about the priority students.
- LSC is following our discipline policy. It is geared towards the needs of the Scholar.
- Parents can appeal their Scholars suspension records.
- Currently, 8 Scholars are causing issues within the school and it's making teachers not want to continue with our school.
- Greg wants to ensure we are not overly lenient with problem children. He wants to ensure we are providing support with our Staff.
- LSC needs to give more training to teachers. Starting assertive discipline training starting 3/28/2022. Will happen weekly.
- Daily culture updates to school leadership/Network team. Promotion meetings to Tier 3 Scholars.
- When it comes to high priority children, LSC is trying different things with the Scholars.
- Improvements are based on the data we have.
- A priority Scholar is someone who potentially will leave, or behavioral issue Scholar, or chronic absentee.
- McKay Kitty declined to renew their agreement with us. They wanted to be paid 5k per month to do what Harmony is doing now.
- Dave Loadholt has to update SmartFusions and that has been a few months behind. Dave needs to give Gantt Williams access to that. Currently we haven't paid for it but we cannot close our books due to Dave having full access.
- Greg is confident with Gantt's ability to close our books.

- LSC does not have assets other than chairs and our liabilities are limited as well.
- LSC has no debt or delinquency on any payments. By state standards, we are in the green.
- By the end of April, we need to clean up our accounting.
- Q3 and Q4 priorities = Map data, culture walks (all ongoing), STEAM Scholar Pathways (not complete).
- Talent reviews will be complete by the end of March.
- Mission Alignment is ongoing. We are at 80% PTG.
- 75% of new Scholars for next year are making expected progress.
- Steve Creech recommended looking into someone who can do some grant writing for LSC on a part-time basis.
- Dr. Graham is providing professional development twice per month to Grade Team Leaders starting on Monday.
- Welcome to Liberty will happen on April 30th for all new parents & scholars in the 2022-23 school year.
- Staff APRs will be completed in late May 2022.
- A major priority in quarter 4 will be to finalize 22-23 hires and budget.
- The original goal was to be 5k above Sumter School District. SSD raised their pay scale.
- If the SSD is 41k starting, Mr. Thompson believes we should start at 45k. We need to remain 4k ahead of the local school district.
- Need to potentially up the Teaching Fellow positions to a max band of 35k.
- Currently, LSC will offer 1k for instructional staff and \$750 for Network Staff for retention.
- Directors commented on the need to be more intentional about retaining our top talent.
- Mr. Thompson agreed to donate the difference to the school depending on what that final cost will be.
- Dr. Graham noted that what LSC is struggling with is not uncommon and that most charter schools around the country struggle with the same things.

B. Finance Committee

During this portion of the agenda, Mrs. Rauschenbach shared her reflections from the recent finance committee meeting. She highlighted the fact that the committee heard a presentation from Ed Ops, a firm that could provide additional support with financial services. Consultants came in and listened into our finance meeting. Major things: we have not enrolled Scholars after the 5th day count. Right now we are at enrollment mark. We get paid by the state by 23rd of the state and February was the first full allotment from the state. Moving forward we should have the full personnel funding. In July we are funded based on our projected enrollment. 5th day count, 45th day count, and 135th day count for funding purposes. Next years budget, we are tracking accounts in SmartFusion software. Needing to increase funding in SPED for next year. USDA lunch program ends

June 30th. Looking to possibly transition to cooking the food for Scholars vs having it shipped in.

C. Academic Excellence Committee

During this portion of the agenda, Mrs. Chandler shared the following reflections from the Academic Committee Meeting:

- Children may need grade-level instruction in order to catch up.
- The state will compensate for SPED for next year.
- We did lose 2 teachers in Q3. One left on their own accord and they were both in the same class. 2 teaching fellows have joined the class to support.
- Consulted with Mary Allison Caudell to see where our next steps would be due to confidential personnel matters.
- Dr. Ivey and Dr. Graham to check in tomorrow, 3/25/2022 to see how they can support the campus moving forward.
- Q3 & Q4 Priorities = supporting culture walks, MAP testing data, building STEM Scholar pathways
- Twice a month, Dr. Graham will leverage PD for teacher leaders so they have the opportunity to get more practice.
- High engagement with parents and parent satisfaction. Little student turnover.
- Are we a school that should expel kids? A child might not be able to come to our school now, but we need to push the leaders to do more check-ins with the child to ensure that they are doing better. Dr. Graham does not see any child as a problem, we just need more training and support with our Staff.
- We have added weekly teacher support that includes commanding students in the classroom. Doing it in the least invasive way possible. Use positive reinforcement with the children.
- Daily culture updates where school leadership and Network leadership where we will be given updates with the kids who are the highest priority.
- The ideal chain of command looks like: Teacher has an issue and should go to grade team leader, who then goes to leadership.
- Promotion to the next grade is contingent on behavior within the classroom along with their grades. Parents need to be involved along the way as they are our partners in success.
- We want families to understand that we are doing the right things and communicating the children's needs.
- Looking to start a parent panel to show other parents what the expectations are.
- Doing more planning in June so everyone understands their roles and responsibilities.
- Q4 has laser focus on instruction and teachers do everything they can to prioritize it from the top down.

- In addition, a \$500 Wellness Reimbursement is being offered to the Staff for the month of April

D. Development Committee

During this portion of the agenda, Mr. Ken Lee shared the following highlights from the Development Committee Meeting:

- Dr. Graham has been in contact with Harry Lesain (Darla Moore Foundation) and the next steps include him coming to visit with Meeting Street Academy at LSC. Setting up a meeting for mid-April to have their Superintendent come which could increase our funding.
- Dr. Ivey and Dr. Graham have been looking at grants and we just completed a 25k one for Covid Relief and an additional in the same value for curriculum from Building Hope.
- Ken Lee is working on getting some grants from BD. Ken is concerned about BD not being able to support LSC the way we need them to.
- Meagan spoke to Curtis about the Foundation giving some donations and it's dry right now.
- Once the Quixote club is established and operating, then they will be able to turn a profit.
- The Quixote club does not have enough staffing to help with fundraising.
- The committee is still looking for a part-time grant writer.
- The goal is to create a sustainable budget while being fully enrolled for the schools moving forward.
- Every time we open a school, we are able to ask for P&I grant.

X. Additional New Business

A. 10-Year Strategic Plan

During this portion of the agenda, Dr. Graham shared an update on the board's 10-year strategic planning efforts. Simmons Lettre, an external consultant, has been working with LSC since July 2021. The goal is to have a codified playbook from opening of a new school to full scale operation. Looking at any expansion and draft will be ready at the end of the month. Campuses will support over 2,000 students. Need to understand facilities debt capacity. 23-24 SY, we can afford 600,000 in facilities. As part of our enrollment expansion amendment to the SCPCSD, they have requested a facilities map for the site of the next campus by April 8th. Dr. Graham informed the board that the first draft of the 10-year strategic plan will be shared by the end of April.

XI. Public Participation

A. Public Participant #1: Robin Thames

Mrs. Thames, a founding parent of a Kindergarten and 1st grade Scholar, communicated to the board secretary her written comments to be read aloud during this section of the agenda in her absence. In her written comments, Mrs. Thames requested that the board conduct a needs assessment survey of all current parents to determine what additional grades of siblings in their households are needed. She stated that she would like for her older sibling who is an upper elementary grade student be able to attend LSC. She expressed her overwhelming support for additional grade levels being added and stated that LSC has been the best educational experience for her children. Chairman Thompson asked Dr. Ivey to follow up with this parent in writing the board's response within 10-days, as outlined in the board's public participation policy.

B. Public Participant #2: Jane Hray

Mrs. Hray, a founding parent of a Kindergarten Scholar, addressed the board in-person to share her enthusiasm and excitement for LSC's continued growth. Specifically, she shared with the board that she has had nothing but positive experiences of her child at LSC and communicates this often with anyone who asks her about her perspective on the charter school. Chairman Thompson asked Dr. Ivey to follow up with this parent in writing the board's response within 10-days, as outlined in the board's public participation policy.

XII. Executive Session

A. Purposes of Discussion of Negotiations Incident to Proposed Contractual Arrangements

Cameron Chandler made a motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:35 pm for the Purposes of Discussion of Negotiations Incident to Proposed Contractual Arrangements. Dexter WJ Davis seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B. Purposes of Discussion of Personnel Matters

Kimberly Rauschenbach made a motion to add onto the topics for Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.
Marion Newton seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

XIII. Action Items

A. Return from Executive Session

Greg Thompson made a motion to return from Executive Session at 7:56 pm.
Ken Lee seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

B.

Item(s) Related to Discussion of Negotiations Incident to Proposed Contractual Arrangements

Kimberly Rauschenbach made a motion to approve the Staff proposed salary schedule for the 2022-2023 school year.

Cameron Chandler seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

XIV. Closing Items

A. Chairman's Closing Remarks

During this portion of the agenda, Chairman Thompson thanked the new Board members for their dedication and willingness to be apart of the Board. Rev. Dr. Newton thanked Dr. Ivey and Dr. Graham for their hard work and dedication to the Board as well.

B. Good of the Order

Dr. Ivey informed the Board that new board member onboarding has been scheduled for Tuesday, April 5th, from 3-6pm at the Network Office on Main Street. No other individuals commented on this portion of the agenda.

C. Adjourn Meeting

Greg Thompson made a motion to adjourn the meeting without any further action being taken at 7:55 pm.

Marion Newton seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** unanimously to approve the motion.

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:59 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tyler Hamilton