APPROVED

Liberty STEAM Charter

Minutes

LSC Board of Directors Academic Committee Meeting

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Date and Time
Thursday August 27, 2026 at 3:00 PM

Location
108 N. Main Street, Sumter, SC 29150

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.

MISSION: Liberty STEAM Charter works to provide all students with equal access to a world-class K-12 education in an academically rigorous and student-centered learning environment, creating graduates who will be thoughtful and engaged citizens prepared to take on the leadership challenges of the 21st century. **VISION:** In partnership with our families and community, our vision is to provide real-world interdisciplinary, personalized, and project-based learning experiences through a STEAM-based academic program where graduates become the next generation of leaders, employers, and employees who contribute to the economic well-being of their communities and families.

Committee Members Present
Brenda Hafner, Cameron Chandler, Jenny Knopf, Shafara Douglas (remote)

Committee Members Absent
None

Ex Officio Members Present
Trevor Ivey

Guests Present
Amy Hansen, Glenn Huggins (Committee Non Director), Kelli Carlisle, Michelle McDonald, Rayshira Smiling

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I. Opening Items

A. Record of Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Jenny Knopf called a meeting of the Academic Committee Committee of Liberty STEAM Charter to order on Thursday Aug 27, 2026 at 3:00 PM.

C. Invocation

Jenny Knopf gave an invocation.

D. Pledge of Allegiance

Jenny Knopf led the Pledge of Allegiance.

E. Reading of Mission and Vision Statements

Jenny Knopf read the mission statement. Cameron Chandler read the vision statement.

F. Approve Consent Agenda (Meeting Agenda and Previous Meeting Minutes)

Motion to with no objections approve the consent agenda consisting of the meeting agenda and the minutes from LSC Board of Directors Academic Committee Meeting on 06-16-26.
With no objections, the consent agenda was approved.
The committee **VOTED** to approve the motion.

II. Academic Excellence Topics for Discussion

A. Superintendent's Report

Beginning-of-Year MAP Assessment Review
Dr. Hafner introduced Dr. Michelle McDonald, who welcomed Rayshira Smiling, Dean of Curriculum and Instruction for the Primary Academy, and Kelli Carlisle, Teacher Support Specialist for the Elementary Academy.

The team presented an overview of the school's first administration of the beginning-of-year MAP assessment. The presentation included current proficiency levels, areas of strength and opportunity, intervention needs, and instructional action steps designed to move scholars toward the school's goal of 85% proficiency.

Primary Academy Academic Data
The committee reviewed kindergarten and first-grade MAP results.

Kindergarten:

- Reading proficiency was reported at 46%.
- Math proficiency was reported at 47%.
- A significant number of kindergarten scholars were identified for Critical Scholar Intervention (CSI).
- Vocabulary was identified as a strength in reading.
- Written communication was identified as an area of opportunity.
- In math, data, probability and statistical reasoning were identified as strengths.
- Patterns, algebra and functional reasoning were identified as areas of opportunity.

First Grade:

- Reading proficiency decreased from 71% at the end of kindergarten in spring 2026 to 65% at the beginning of first grade.
- Math proficiency remained at 82%.
- Reading vocabulary and applications were identified as strengths.
- Foundations of literacy was identified as an area of opportunity.
- In math, data, probability, measurement and geometry were identified as strengths.
- Patterns, algebra and functional reasoning were identified as areas of opportunity.

The Primary Academy's stated goal is to reach approximately 75% proficiency by the winter MAP checkpoint and 85% proficiency by spring.

Primary Academy Instructional Action Steps. The team outlined the following instructional priorities and action steps:

- Use MAP instructional-area data to identify specific learning gaps and guide instructional decisions.
- Utilize UFLI and decodable text to strengthen early literacy skills.
- Maintain a protected, uninterrupted 35-minute writing block in kindergarten.
- Increase emphasis on writing, which has historically been an area of need.
- Continue using hands-on math manipulatives.
- Move scholars from concrete to pictorial to abstract representations in mathematics.
- Use instructional-area data to identify and address specific needs in first grade.
- Maintain conceptual understanding through continued use of manipulatives.

- Use CFA results, scholar work, anecdotal notes and other appropriate progress-monitoring tools to inform instruction.
- Strengthen alignment between Tier 2 intervention data and MTSS discussions.
- Continue coaching teachers around identified areas of need.

The team reported that progress will be monitored through multiple data sources, with the goal of reaching approximately 75% proficiency during the winter checkpoint and 85% proficiency in the spring.

Winter MAP testing is expected to occur in mid-December.

Kindergarten Background Data and Comparative Performance:
The committee discussed whether the school currently tracks kindergarten scholars based on whether they attended preschool prior to enrolling at Liberty STEAM Charter School.

The team explained that preschool-related information is collected through the school's hopes and dreams process, but that an official tracker is not currently in place. The possibility of developing a more formal tracking process was discussed.

The committee also asked how Liberty's MAP results compare with other districts and schools.
The team explained that MAP data can be reviewed using district comparisons, national norms and the South Carolina Linking Study. The team noted that comparisons with local schools are also considered when reviewing performance.

Elementary Academy MAP Assessment Review

The committee reviewed beginning-of-year MAP results for grades two through five in reading, math and language.

The following results were presented:
Second Grade:

- Math: 52% meets or exceeds
- Reading: 38% meets or exceeds
- Language: 44% meets or exceeds

Third Grade:

- Math: 46% meets or exceeds
- Reading: 48% meets or exceeds
- Language: approximately 43% meets or exceeds

Fourth Grade:

- Math: 41% meets or exceeds
- Reading: 57% meets or exceeds

- Language: 51% meets or exceeds

Fifth Grade:

- Math: 36% meets or exceeds
- Reading: 41% meets or exceeds
- Language: 31% meets or exceeds

The committee was also provided with grade-level cut scores and comparative information related to the MAP national norms.

MAP and SC READY Data Discussion. The committee discussed differences between the beginning-of-year MAP results and previous SC READY performance.

Staff noted that the same group of scholars who had previously demonstrated higher proficiency on MAP at the end of the prior school year showed lower percentages at the beginning of the current school year.

The team explained that MAP and SC READY are different assessments and that differences in assessment design, standards, cut scores and testing windows may affect comparisons between the assessments.

The team also discussed the South Carolina Linking Study, which provides a relationship between MAP Growth performance and SC READY performance. Staff explained that the school is using the South Carolina Linking Study cut scores in its current data analysis rather than relying solely on the national norms previously used.

The team noted that the South Carolina Linking Study cut scores differ from the national norms and that this change contributes to differences in reported proficiency percentages. Staff also discussed historical MAP predictions compared with actual SC READY performance. In prior years, MAP reading projections had generally been lower than the school’s actual SC READY performance. The team noted that the differences observed this year were greater than expected in both reading and math and that staff are continuing to analyze the data to better understand the results.

Standards Alignment and Instructional Rigor. The committee discussed changes to state standards and the importance of ensuring that instruction is aligned with current standards.

Staff reported that new mathematics standards were implemented during the FY26 school year and that there are areas where additional time and professional development have been needed to fully understand and unpack the standards.

Instructional leaders are conducting deeper weekly reviews of lesson plans to ensure that teachers understand the standards and the skills scholars are expected to master.

The team reported the following instructional priorities:

- Deep review of weekly lesson plans.
- Alignment of instruction to current standards.
- Alignment of assessments to the standards being taught.
- Use of SC READY-type questions to help teachers understand the expected level of rigor.
- Increased classroom observations and real-time instructional feedback.
- A goal for instructional leaders to complete five classroom observations per week.
- Frequent use of Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) to obtain timely data.
- Strengthening Tier 1 instruction.
- Continued attention to Tier 2 intervention and MTSS.
- Increased collaboration among instructional leaders and teacher support specialists.
- Providing teachers with feedback and support during the planning process.

The team emphasized the importance of ensuring that instruction, standards and assessments are appropriately aligned and that the expected level of rigor is reflected in classroom instruction.

Schoolwide Culture and Community Updates

Dr. Hafner provided several schoolwide updates. PATH Partner Update - The committee was informed that the PATH touchpoint deadline was August 28. Participation was reported to be nearly 100%, with only one or two partners requiring additional time due to scheduling availability. The team reported that the school is on track to meet the deadline.

PEACE - The recent event was reported as successful, with approximately 180 participants. Appreciation was expressed to the staff members who organized the event and to Dr. Ivey for leading the lesson.

The following upcoming events were shared:

- A Culture and Community Celebration is scheduled for August 28 across the academies. Kindergarten scholars were scheduled to participate in a shirt reveal, while sixth-grade scholars will receive shirts representing their respective houses. The sixth-grade houses were identified as:
- House of Independence
- House of Resilience
- House of Loyalty
- House of Fearless
- House of Stillness
- Back to School Bash: September 6 at the Sumter Aquatic Center, hosted by PTO.
- Sunrise with Someone Special: September 12 at the Mall Campus. Activities will take place across the EA and JA areas, with groups rotating through different stages.

- Dads on Duty: Program begins September 15.

Committee members were encouraged to participate in these events when possible.

POSSIP Reports - The committee was reminded that POSSIP reports had been provided in multiple formats. Staff reported positive participation and satisfaction among both staff members and families.

III. New Business: Requests for Future Agenda Topics/Committee Recommendations

A. Requests for Future Agenda Topics/Committee Recommendations

Jenny Knopf asked whether committee members had any additional recommendations, reminders or follow-up items. No additional business business was brought forward.

Committee members were reminded that requests for future agenda items should be submitted to Dr. Hafner prior to the next scheduled meeting.

IV. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Hansen