DRAFT

Liberty STEAM Charter

Minutes

LSC Board of Directors Meeting

https://www.youtube.com/@thelibertydifference

Date and Time
Monday October 26, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Location
LSC Elementary and Junior Academies, 1057 Broad 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. **BOARD CORE VALUES:** Commit to Excellence, Lead with Integrity, Welcome and Expect Accountability.

Directors Present
Bill Bennett, Cameron Chandler, Greg Thompson, Heather Bass, Jenny Knopf, Kimberly Rauschenbach, Marion Newton, Rodney Thompson, Shafara Douglas

Directors Absent

None

Ex Officio Members Present
Brenda Hafner

Guests Present
Amy Hansen, Heather Green, Micah Vaughn, Michelle McDonald

I. Establishment of a Quorum

A. Record Attendance

Marion Newton departed the meeting at 6:21 PM.

II. 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 Oct 26, 2026 at 5:30 PM.

B. Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, Reading of Mission and Vision Statements, Reading of Core Values

The board participated in an invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the reading of the school's mission statement, vision statement, and core values.

III. Approval of Consent Agenda

A. Meeting Agenda and Minutes from Previous Meeting

Motion to With no objections, the consent agenda, including the minutes of the previous meeting and the current meeting agenda, was approved LSC Board of Directors Meeting on 09-28-26.
With no objections, the consent agenda, including the minutes of the previous meeting and the current meeting agenda, was approved.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

IV. Board Recognition

A. Scholar Recognition: SC READY Math Perfect Score

The board recognized scholars who earned Exceeds Expectations scores on the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Assessments (SC READY). The presentation celebrated scholar achievement across multiple grade levels and subject areas.

The board also recognized scholars who earned perfect scores on the mathematics portion of SC READY. Yard signs were presented to scholars in attendance to celebrate their achievement.

B. Staff Recognition: National PLTW Launch Teacher of the Year

The board recognized Tameko Wilson, a Liberty STEAM Charter School educator, who was named the national Project Lead The Way Launch Teacher of the Year. The recognition highlighted her more than 20 years of educational experience and her work providing hands-on, project-based learning experiences that encourage curiosity, innovation, perseverance, and problem-solving.

V. Public Participation

A. Public Participation

No individuals registered to speak during public participation.

VI. Superintendent's Report

A. Monthly Update

State Assessment Results
Dr. Hafner welcomed Dr. McDonald who presented a review of SC READY assessment data and opportunities to strengthen instruction.

The presentation highlighted progress in fourth-grade science, including a decrease in the percentage of scholars in the low-performance band and an increase in the high-performance band. English language arts (ELA) strengths included writing, research and evaluation of ideas, and vocabulary.

Priority areas for improvement included mathematics reasoning, informational text comprehension, and identified grade-level standards. The presentation emphasized that category-level data should be considered alongside overall achievement, student growth, subgroup outcomes, attendance, and participation.

Instructional strategies include explicit modeling, academic vocabulary development, guided practice, evidence-based explanations, frequent checks for understanding, and common formative assessments.

Professional development and support initiatives include curriculum coaching, collaborative planning, instructional rigor training, and targeted support for teachers in mathematics and other identified areas.

Social-Emotional Learning

Micah Vaughn provided an update on the school's newly implemented PurposeFull People, also known as CharacterStrong, social-emotional learning curriculum.

Beginning-of-year assessment results identified strengths and areas for growth across grade bands. The curriculum focuses on character development, relationship building, self-awareness, self-control, social problem-solving, and understanding others.

Teachers received training before implementation. Initial lessons focused on kindness and respect, with responsibility and cooperation included in the planned instructional sequence. Lessons are designed to promote positive classroom relationships and provide opportunities for scholars to practice character skills. Families are also engaged through information provided in the school's weekly newsletter.

Discussion emphasized the connection between social-emotional well-being and academic achievement, including the importance of supporting scholars experiencing anxiety or other challenges. The school's counseling supports, interventions, and community partnerships were noted as resources for scholars.

Dr. Hafner reviewed progress across five priority areas:

1. Learning Framework: The framework is being refined, with grade-band guidance and classroom implementation supports under development. Professional development is scheduled for January 4, 2027.
2. Multi-Tiered System of Support: The school is working toward a coordinated system for tracking academic, attendance, and behavioral interventions. A platform has been selected, with staff training forthcoming.
3. Operational Efficiency: Financial controls, meal participation, and staff communication practices continue to be monitored and strengthened.
4. Family, Community, and Engagement: School and community events continue to support family involvement. Parent volunteer hours remain an area of focus.
5. Leadership Transition and Accountability: The Dr. Hafner reported completion of the initial leadership transition process and the transition to full operational leadership, with the former leader focusing on the foundation.

Dr. Hafner also reported that a mathematics specialist from the South Carolina Department of Education had begun working with staff on classroom observations, lesson plans, and instructional alignment.

VII. Board Committee Updates

A. Executive Committee Update

Greg Thompson reported that the executive committee received updates from the three academy directors. Reports highlighted scholar achievement, instructional growth, reading progress, family engagement, community partnerships, and attendance. The

committee emphasized the need for continued instructional improvement and data-driven decision-making.

B. Academic Committee Update

Jenny Knopf reported that the academic committee reviewed the state assessment and social-emotional learning presentations. Priorities include strengthening mathematics reasoning and informational text comprehension, monitoring assessment results, using common formative assessments, and continuing curriculum coaching, professional development, collaborative planning, and social-emotional learning implementation.

C. Development Committee Update

Heather Bass reported that the development committee reviewed family and community engagement, attendance, enrollment, scholar persistence, upcoming events, and the draft fiscal year 2026 audit. Attendance was reported at 99.62%, with 182 applications received toward the recruitment goal. Parent volunteer participation and educational sessions remain areas of focus.

The committee reviewed progress toward the $2 million fundraising goal. Pledges represented 51% of the goal, while funds received represented 9%. Updates were also provided on grant administration, philanthropy, policy and advocacy, the early college and technical high school initiative, and the PATH program. Discussion emphasized aligning career exploration with regional workforce needs, economic mobility, wages, and career advancement opportunities.

D. Finance Committee Update

Heather Green reported on the finance committee review, which included that approximately $570,000 in building-related expenses remained unreimbursed. Cash reserves were below the budgeted target, and management continues to monitor expenditures and reimbursement timing.

Based on updated enrollment calculations, state funding was projected to increase from the budgeted $13.1 million to approximately $13.3 million. Approximately $177,000 in philanthropic and grant funding had been received through September, with an additional $250,000 grant anticipated. Salary and benefit expenses remained on budget, while operating expenses were elevated due to supply and technology purchases.

The committee discussed construction funding, federal reimbursement timing, food-service implementation, purchasing controls, staff training, payroll and attendance procedures, and credit card compliance.

The independent audit for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2026, received an unmodified opinion, with no findings, material weaknesses, or instances of noncompliance reported. This marked the fifth consecutive year of a clean audit. Reported financial highlights

included approximately $36 million in capital assets, $11.2 million in annual revenue, an unrestricted fund balance of $1.7 million, and 44 days of cash on hand at fiscal year-end.

The committee also discussed the decrease in fund balance and the relationship between revenue growth, operating expenses, enrollment, and facility costs.
Rodney Thompson made a motion to accept the FY26 audit as presented.
Heather Bass seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

E. Governance Committee

Cammy Chandler reported that the governance committee reviewed a proposed multiyear athletics project roadmap, including a potential golf program launch and phased expansion of additional sports. Discussion addressed projected costs, transportation, supervision, coaching, and opportunities for parent and board involvement.

Cameron Chandler made a motion to establish an ad hoc athletics committee consisting of Shafara Douglas, Jenny Knopf, and Rodney Thompson, chaired by Shafara Douglas. The committee will research and evaluate athletic opportunities, needs, and considerations and present recommendations to the full board. The committee will serve in an advisory capacity, with authority limited to responsibilities assigned by the board, and at the pleasure of the board.
Shafara Douglas seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

VIII. Executive Session

A. Purposes of Discussion of Negotiations Incident to Proposed Property Contractual Agreements, Proposed Contractual Agreements, and/or Discussion of Personnel Matters.

Cameron Chandler made a motion to enter into executive session for the discussion of negotiations incident to proposed property contractual agreements, proposed contractual matters, and personnel matters.
Shafara Douglas seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

At the conclusion of executive session, the board returned to open session.

IX. Action Items

A. Any Action Related to Executive Session Item(s)

Cameron Chandler made a motion to authorize submission of a replication application to the South Carolina Public Charter School District for a second Liberty STEAM Charter School K–8 campus in western Sumter County, at a location to be determined, with an

anticipated opening in July 2030. The proposed campus would initially serve 200 scholars in kindergarten and first grade, with 100 scholars per grade, and expand annually through eighth grade. The proposal advances the long-term vision of two K–8 campuses feeding into one countywide early college and technical high school. The superintendent and the co-founder/CEO of the Liberty STEAM Charter School Foundation to be authorized to submit the application and pursue conditional approval, subject to all required governance, financial, facilities, staffing, and pre-opening requirements.
Bill Bennett seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of Liberty STEAM Charter hereby authorizes the submission of a charter school replication application to the South Carolina Public Charter School District (SCPCSD) to establish a second Liberty STEAM Charter campus in the western portion of Sumter County, at a location to be determined, with an anticipated opening in July 2030. The replicated school will implement Liberty STEAM Charter's existing K–8 educational model, initially serving 200 scholars in kindergarten and first grade (100 per grade), with planned incremental expansion through eighth grade. This replication will expand access to Liberty's educational model for additional families in Sumter County, with the long-term vision of both K–8 campuses feeding into one countywide Liberty STEAM Early College & Technical High School, creating a unified K–12 educational pathway for scholars across the county.

Adopted and Approved: October 26, 2026, by the Board of Directors of Liberty STEAM Charter at a duly convened meeting.

B. Superintendent's Monthly Personnel Report

Cameron Chandler made a motion to approve the monthly personnel report.
Bill Bennett seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

C. Proposed Property Contractual Matter

Rodney Thompson made a motion to to authorize the board chair to negotiate a proposed lease agreement for property under consideration for the expansion of Liberty STEAM Charter School, subject to any required further board approval.
Heather Bass seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

X. 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 7:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Hansen

Documents used during the meeting

- Academic Cmte. Updated Copy of SC READY Data Review (1) (1).pdf
- Academic SEL Purposeful People.pdf
- ALL_202610_Committee_School_Updates.pdf
- Minutes 20261022 Executive Committee Minutes.pdf
- ALL SEL Break down 2026-27 School year.pdf
- Minutes 20261021 Academic Committee Minutes.pdf
- Dev. Cmte. Foundation Board Report 10.18.26 (1).pdf
- Dev. Cmte. TI Foundation October Board Update August 2026 (1).pdf
- Dev Cmte. LC FACES October Mtg. (1).pdf
- Minutes 20261021 Development Committee.pdf
- Sept 26 Dash Board 1.0 (1).pdf
- Sept26 RevExp New Form_PDF.pdf
- 2026 Audit at a Glance.pdf
- FY26 Audit Liberty STEAM Charter 2026 Financial Statements.pdf
- Minutes 20261021 Finance Committee Minutes.pdf
- Gov Athletics Multi Year Budget (1).pdf
- Minutes 20261022 Governance Committee Meeting Minutes.pdf