

Liberty Common School

Policy Manual

Revised 06-21-07

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. The School and its Goals
2. The Board and Governance
3. Administration
4. Personnel
5. Students
6. Parents
7. Educational Program
8. Enrollment
9. Finances and Accounting
10. Facilities
11. Athletics and Extracurricular Activities
12. School Community Relations

DEFINITIONS

- a. "Board" shall mean the board of directors of Liberty Common School.
- b. "Liberty" shall mean Liberty Common School.
- c. "District" also P.S.D. shall mean Poudre School District .
- d. "Headmaster" means the Liberty Common School Headmaster.
- e. "Parent" means a Liberty Common School parent or legal guardian.
- f. "Teacher" means a Teacher at Liberty Common School
- g. "Student" means a student at Liberty Common School
- h. "Administrator" means an Administrator at Liberty Common School

1.0 THE SCHOOL AND ITS GOALS

1.1 **Mission Statement***

According to Part I, Section (a) of Liberty Common School's Charter submitted to the Poudre School District on October 1, 1996, and as amended by contract with the PSD Board of Education on June 26, 2000:

The mission of the School will be to provide excellence and fairness in education for school children through a common foundation by successfully teaching a contextual body of organized knowledge, the skills of learning including the Thinking Framework, and the values of a democratic society. The School recognizes the value of inclusiveness, or providing access to a broad cross-section of the community, so that students from all backgrounds can benefit from the School's educational offering. The School acknowledges the leadership of teachers in the classroom, and recognizes the responsibility of each student for his/her academic effort.

Declaration of Principles

1. Children yearn for meaning and require a basis of solid contextual common knowledge for the development of mature literacy and critical thinking, for growth and communication in a diverse society.
2. The educational "playing field" between students of differing backgrounds should be level to provide all students a basis to the greatest degree practicable, upon which they can build further knowledge and to develop the skills necessary to communicate and succeed.
3. The skills of learning--reading, writing, speaking, calculating, and thinking -- are most meaningfully learned from the knowledge or content of the curriculum, modeling, coaching, and sensible practice.
4. To thrive in work, citizenship, and personal growth, children must be taught the values of a democratic society. These values include: Respect for others - their property and rights; Responsibility for actions, honesty and social justice; Resourcefulness - being ready to learn, to serve, and to share.
5. Inclusiveness is fundamental in responding to the diverse needs of children and raising academic standards. All parents, regardless of economic status, should be free to choose this educational program for their children.
6. Teachers are professionals; which implies considerable autonomy, mastery and independence. Having accepted the academic and philosophic mission of a school, the teacher needs to be free to exercise informed judgment in order to fulfill his/her primary role as an educator.

7. The principle determinants of individual academic success are individual ability and effort. The policies of the School (grading, discipline, homework, pedagogy) must support the student's adoption of a personal quest for academic growth using the clearly marked path of expectations in knowledge, skill, and character. The guiding philosophy of the School acknowledges that children can and should be held accountable for their own schoolwork and behavior with the support of teachers and parents.

*This mission statement was developed through ongoing research and discussion by approximately 500 community members regarding educational philosophy over a five-year period in parent homes, school settings and public forums. Included were discussions with teachers and administrators of PSD and other districts across the country. Over 200 books by leading educational authorities around the world were reviewed in depth. A bibliography is included in Appendix B. The writers of this Charter have each spent over 2000 hours as PSD volunteers in leadership and other capacities over the past 4 years.

Adopted: 2-24-97

Amended: 3-04-2004

1.2 Philosophy

According to Part I, Section (d) I. B. of Liberty Common School's Charter submitted to the Poudre School District on October 1, 1996, and as amended by contract with the PSD Board of Education on June 26, 2000:

Assumptions about how one learns, the purposes and goals of learning, and what constitutes effective teaching define an educational philosophy. The School's educational philosophy is *agency education*. It informs our decisions on how knowledge, skills and democratic values should be taught and how students, parents and teachers should work together to accomplish that part of education that occurs in schooling.

Agency education has as its metaphor a journey. The journey is the individual's own quest in life and includes responsibility for one's own education, which is a lifelong endeavor. The purpose of a liberal education is to lead young people on just such an odyssey of the mind and heart, which is to lead them to self-reliance. The classical allegories for a liberal education, such as the journeys of Odysseus, Aeneas, and Faust, represent a journey of the soul from one's particular time, place, and attachments to the universal and back again. The beauty of this journey is its applicability to the actual development of mind, heart, skills and knowledge in each child.

Children begin their cognitive development by first developing a broad framework of knowledge through early acquisitional curiosity, much like they

acquire their early spoken vocabulary. After they have gained a wide familiarity with literature, history, science, math, music, people, and places, as one does in the early years of Core Knowledge, they begin to appreciate patterns and forms. Following this, particularly when trained in the Thinking Framework, or Habits of Mind, the student is able to engage in mental modeling, which is possible only when one's broad background knowledge allows her/him to associate ideas and to observe patterns. By continuing the habits of mind, and the search for patterns, discernment is applied to deeper levels of knowledge, enabling one to solve problems and exercise judgment.

The beginnings of the moral journey are along a similar course. At first the focus is obedience to parental authority. Later the child focuses on rules, or the required patterns of expectation. As in writing or thinking, it is only through the formation of good habits that the ability to act, and act wisely becomes instinctive. As those habits become more and more internalized, the student journeys closer to self-reliance.

Adopted: 2-24-97

Amended: 3-04-2004

1.3 Knowledge

According to Part I, Section (d) I. B. of Liberty Common School's Charter submitted to the Poudre School District on October 1, 1996, and as amended by contract with the PSD Board of Education on June 26, 2000:

The School has selected the Core Knowledge Foundation's Curriculum Sequence as the framework of its curriculum. The Core Knowledge Sequence is distinguished by planned progression of specific knowledge in history, geography, mathematics, science, language arts, and fine arts.

Children learn by building on what they already know. Thus, it is important for them to begin building foundations of knowledge in the early grades when they are most receptive to attaining an organized body of knowledge. Children are by instinct driven to construct a contextual view of the world. Thus, it is important to provide them an educational framework that assists them in developing the constructs upon which their viewpoints will be based. Academic deficiencies in these areas in the first nine grades can permanently impair the quality of later schooling.

By specifying the knowledge that all children should share, one can achieve equal access to that knowledge. At risk children especially suffer from low expectations, which often translate into watered-down curricula. In schools using the Core Knowledge Sequence, however, all children are exposed to a coherent core of challenging, interesting, interwoven knowledge. This knowledge not only provides a foundation for later learning, but also defines a common heritage and

establishes a common ground for communication and cooperation in a diverse society.

In addition to its specificity, the Core Knowledge curriculum is characterized by knowledge that is shared, solid, and sequenced. Literacy in every subject requires a set of mechanical skills and a shared background. The shared, many-cultured knowledge that promotes effective classroom learning also promotes cooperation and respect among students, both in the classroom and in society. Because the School's teachers will be able to rely on shared background knowledge amongst their students, they will be able to build sequentially on that knowledge year by year.

The Core Knowledge Sequence will be the curriculum. Expansions of the curriculum, including Colorado History and foreign language, will be determined by the BOD. In addition, the School will develop an expanded science curriculum consistent with the Habits of Mind put forth by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Project 2061 and the Colorado Model Content Standards for Science. This effort has the explicit support of Dr. E. D. Hirsch, Jr., founder of the Core Knowledge Foundation.

Adopted: 3-04-2004

1.4 Skills

According to Part I, Section (d) I. B. of Liberty Common School's Charter submitted to the Poudre School District on October 1, 1996, and as amended by contract with the PSD Board of Education on June 26, 2000:

The skills of learning, namely, reading, writing, speaking, listening, calculating, problem solving, and exercising critical judgment, are best taught through the content of a body of organized knowledge.

The development of literacy will be one of the primary aims and focuses of effort in the School. This will include a great deal of reading from a variety of both fiction and non-fiction primary literature. Particularly in the early grades, the School will emphasize reading and more reading. In the early grades, students will receive explicit, systematic phonemic awareness and phonics instruction. Children will be provided deliberate, coherent, direct instruction in letter-sound correspondences. Practices which teach children to rely on word-memorization (the look-say method) and guessing (through illustration and/or context) will be avoided.

Mature literacy develops as students become acquainted with a broad and rich body of knowledge and become familiar with many well-written, diverse and meaningful works of literature. The literature suggested by the Core Knowledge Sequence, as well as other literature that will be introduced, is chosen not only for its place in the core body of knowledge, its multi-cultural representation, and its

rich use of language, but also because it provides access to deeper meaning of universal human problems, particularly those which preoccupy children's' minds.

The School will acknowledge the central role of language in thought and action. The School's students will be taught to write and speak through example and sensible practice. Grammar, logic, and real spelling learned from real literature will be part of these skills.

The School will teach the Thinking Framework not as a stand-alone course, but rather as instruction integrated within the content. Students often receive knowledge disconnected from features that make it understandable and meaningful. For instance, in math it is common to learn concepts without knowing their purposes. When you study history, you frequently find scant attention paid to the evidence underlying an historical fact or interpretation. Students may come to know something about history, but not much about historical thinking. Science instruction routinely pays insufficient attention to examples and images that make the concepts under study concrete and impart an intuitive grasp of them. Contemporary research shows that instruction offered in one context often does not transfer to other contexts. The School will use a Thinking Framework to teach the Core Knowledge curriculum.

THINKING FRAMEWORK SUMMARY STATEMENT

The School has a philosophy of developing thinking skills for all students.

Students will learn to **know, understand, and use** knowledge across the curriculum. In addition, student will develop skills of **patterning (likeness/difference), modeling (reproducing), and creating (producing uniqueness)** across the curriculum.

The end result will be that the students will absorb the curriculum thoroughly as well

Additionally, the School will teach the more specific critical thinking skills unique to each discipline, called "Habits of Mind." The Habits of Mind to be taught for scientific literacy are found in Benchmarks for Scientific Literacy from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Exhibit II). The Habits of Mind for historical literacy are found in the book by the same title, which is a report of the Bradley Commission on History (Exhibit XIII). The Habits of Mind for math literacy are identified in "Children's Mathematical Development" (Exhibit XIV).

The development of skills requires time, thought and active engagement of the visual and verbal imagination. The School will encourage students replace non-instructional television watching, which is passive and discourages creative play, with the myriad of activities which will foster the development of imagination and skills. Because television viewing is diametrically opposed to reading, may stifle

cognitive development and imagination, trivializes information, undermines values, distorts cause and effect, and is unable to portray thought, the School will discourage excessive (greater than 10 hr./wk) of viewing.

Adopted: 3-04-2004

1.5 A Classical Framework for Teaching Thinking

Classical Education has since ancient times included an implicit and explicit understanding of the development of thinking. In most treatments of the progression of how to teach thinking there are four natural steps. A recognition of these four steps and their application to different age groups is vital to answering questions of educational policy for both the content and assessment of schooling at each grade.

In the ancient Egyptian text from Shabako Stone these steps are 1) Reception – the proper use of the senses to acquire knowledge about the world around us. 2) Perception – the accurate processing of such input by mind and heart to understand the inherent patterns of the knowledge. 3) Formation – The organizing of one’s perceptions into language and hence thoughts, and 4) Action – taken to bring life to those thoughts.

Many years later Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the famous German poet, put forth his formula for how creativity is developed. This formula is put forward in several ways in his drama “Faust” and parallels the Egyptian formula, namely: First there is the Word, or Knowledge; Second, the Meaning or Pattern; Third, the Power or what we would call mental discipline or mental modeling; and finally, the Act which is either problem solving or composition, etc.

In our day Robert Mitchell, the Underground Grammarian, has summarized these same steps in the following lines, “Knowledge consists of the facts [1], the relations between them [2], the thinking about them [3] and the effort to understand and connect them [4]. It is not out of ignorance that we discover understanding. It is because of what we already know that we can know more [1], that we can discern organizing principles [2] and make and test hypotheses [3], and act rationally [4].” These lines tersely reiterate this old proven framework for teaching Thinking.

First identified is knowledge and herein lies just one of the great values of teaching a solid core of background knowledge as put forward in the K-8 sequence of the Core Knowledge Foundation. As John Holdren of that foundation has stated, “Without a lot of pertinent factual knowledge about an issue or problem, you can’t think critically about it – you can only have an uninformed opinion. If we’re concerned about having students think “critically,” then we have an obligation to give them the knowledge that will make them *informed* thinkers, not mere likers and dislikers. That’s why, from the early years, we should teach them a lot of factual knowledge. We should, of course, also provide frequent opportunities to discuss the facts, to analyze apparent contradictions, to challenge accepted interpretations. Maybe then we’ll produce at least some students who develop the habit of choosing words carefully, of

avoiding clichés, and resisting unquestioned orthodoxies – such as the uncritical use of a term like “critical thinking.” No one, except perhaps Joe Friday, wants ‘just the facts,’ at least not in schools. We also want – and our students need – opportunities to use the facts, to apply them, question them, discuss them, doubt them, connect them, analyze them, verify or deny them, think critically about them. All these higher-order activities, however, rely upon having some facts to work with. Without knowing a lot of facts, you lack the solid foundation upon which to build all higher order skills. And that’s a fact.”

E. D. Hirsch has stated, “...the almost universal feature of reliable higher-order thinking about any subject or problem is the possession of a broad, well-integrated base of background knowledge relevant to the subject. This sounds suspiciously like plain common sense...”

In the beginning (grades K-3) the acquisition of common knowledge about a wide variety of subjects should be the primary focus of this framework. While students will naturally be making inferences on their own about the relations of the facts and ideas they are learning, helping students make connections and see the patterns – dissimilitude in similitude, and similitude in dissimilitude – comes at the next level, generally grades 4-6. During this time teachers in addition to teaching more knowledge specifically look for ways to train students’ perceptions of organizing principles, the relations between things they have learned or observed.

During the junior high years (grades 7-9) students continue to learn many new facts and their relationships, but more and more of this is independent, and because of how knowledge builds on knowledge, schema are quicker to form and be modeled. This must continue and be expected, but at this level mental modeling – the making and testing of arguments and hypotheses (including logic) – must be explicitly and implicitly taught, and students given ample opportunity to practice. In writing this means essays that marshal several concepts with the underlying evidence. In history it means an effort to link the patterns of individual human nature with social influence to project explanations of future or past causation. In math this means symbolic representation of complex problems, algebra and geometry.

Jerome Brunner was referring to this stage when he said, “In contrast to analytic thinking, intuitive thinking characteristically does not advance in careful, well-defined steps. It tends to involve maneuvers based seemingly on an implicit perception of the total problem. Unfortunately, the formulation of school learning has somehow devalued intuition.” Using the thinking framework one could conclude that intuition became devalued when the steps that lead to it (the acquisition of knowledge and its structure) were removed from the curriculum.

TheodoreSizer also refers to his third level (mental modeling) when he says, “A science course, built on sheer memory work, that never gives examples of or experience in scientific inquiry would be as stunted as a course that engages in some sort of disembodied, abstract problem-solving that demands of the students no command of precise knowledge.” Fortunately, in science education there seems to be a more direct effort to follow the natural steps of the thinking framework.

The final step is action or problem solving or judgment or creativity. This is the stage that should be the focus of teachers' efforts for prepared high schoolers. I say prepared because this final higher-order thinking cannot proceed apace if the other three have not preceded. This is obvious from common sense and most high school teachers wish the majority of their students were prepared for this problem solving work. This is also one of the reasons for a core knowledge high school – so that the prior experience of students in a core knowledge elementary and junior high program can be capitalized upon. The less is more approach, where a fewer number of examples are tackled but each is studied more deeply, only works in this setting. The course work in our high school would take into account, and assume to the greatest extent possible the common background held by students, the perception of patterns and relations that can only come by wide exposure to a lot of factual knowledge built upon by directed help in projecting learned schema into novel situations. Such students are prepared for writing, Trigonometry, Calculus, history and economics, literature and art, taught with a high and specific expectation of productivity. As Peter Emberly said, “This is an education which is without ostentation, and education which through the gradual and sequential formation of habits and talents produces a critical and impartial mind.”

And finally by J. W. v Goethe, “Man should not scorn the only instruments he has by which he can attain to some fair approximation of knowledge and wisdom, namely his healthy senses, his power of approach to teaching thinking and will be employed at this school. It is a significant and unique element of our educational plan worthy of attention and implementation.”

Randy W. Everett
Liberty Common School
Fort Collins, Colorado

Adopted: 2-24-97

1.6 Values

According to Part I, Section (d) I. B. of Liberty Common School's Charter submitted to the Poudre School District on October 1, 1996:

The purpose of public education in a democracy is to prepare people for the demands of work, the duties of citizenship, and the obligation of each individual to make as much of herself or himself as possible. For this to be accomplished, our youth must be taught the values inherent in a democratic society, such as devotion to human dignity and freedom, equal rights for all, social and economic justice, the rule of law, civility and honesty, respect for differences, and self-respect.

Academic standards and standards for behavior and demeanor are a part of education values. In the School, children will learn sportsmanship, fair play,

sharing, and taking turns. They will be given the opportunity to lead and to follow and to respect the rights of the minority. These values will be taught from the content of the curriculum, by inference and example, and also in how we teach.

Adopted: 3-04-2004

1.7 Foundation Stones

Respect: Showing consideration for others and their property; listening to and following instructions of those in authority; honoring others.

Responsibility: Doing what we have said we will do; being accountable for our actions and consequences because we know right from wrong; being dependable.

Self Control: taking charge of our actions and feelings, even in difficult situations; making good and right decisions; being able to deal promptly with problems.

Perseverance: Sticking to a purpose and never giving up on what one has to do; being determined to improve; being committed to justice.

Cooperation: Using skills to contribute to the common good; serving others with patience and a positive attitude.

Integrity: Knowing the difference between right and wrong and having the courage to do what is right, even when it is not easy to do so.

Citizenship: Using the rights and privileges one has as a member of the community to make that community a better place.

Adopted: 6-28-01

1.8 Student Accountability

According to Part I, Section (d) I. B. of Liberty Common School's Charter submitted to the Poudre School District on October 1, 1996:

All students are capable of learning to accept responsibility for their own education. The philosophy and practices the School will acknowledge that young people are free to act and can be held accountable for their actions. The policies of the School will encourage discipline, hard work, cooperation, making decisions and living with the consequences. Such policies, and a clear understanding of academic expectations, will help the School's students to choose a personal quest for intellectual and personal growth. The students' sensing of an alignment between their personal educational goals and those of the School's will further

reinforce their desire to accept responsibility for their education. Such an approach to student accountability has been termed "agency education."

Adopted: 3-04-2004

1.9 Parental Involvement and Responsibility

According to Part I, Section (d) I. B. of Liberty Common School's Charter submitted to the Poudre School District on October 1, 1996:

The School will be characterized as a School of Choice. This means that parents will have an option to select the School's educational philosophy for their children. The School believes that its design will result in parents wanting to play a strong role in their children's education. When parents have the opportunity to choose the kind of education they prefer, they will find the necessary energy, time, and resources to devote to their children's education. The School anticipates that parents will be directly engaged in tutoring, coaching, classroom instruction, and providing other necessary and invaluable assistance.

The family naturally provides the most influential and effective context for basic life long learning and teaching. The School's governance will be structured to recognize the primacy of the family's necessary influence over their children.

The segment of any community that can be most trusted to make good educational decisions for children to the betterment of both student and the greater society are the parents. Regardless of educational level, income, or lack of support, parents of all backgrounds (particularly those who, because of limited finances, can't choose which neighborhood to live in or which private school to attend) as a group come forward when given a real option and choose successful programs.

For this reason, and at the discretion of the classroom teacher, parents will be invited to teach or assist with lesson plans or learning projects in all subjects, depending on their interests and expertise. Parents will also be encouraged to spend time reading aloud to children at school and/or in the home, coaching them in skill development, and otherwise contributing time and talents in a variety of ways.

The School will encourage every adult--parents, step-parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles--to take a special interest in the lives of the School's students, to act as mentors and tutors, and to instill in every student a love of learning.

Parents will work in conjunction with the staff to ensure the most effective education possible for their children. To this end, parents will be responsible for knowing and understanding the contents of the School's Charter, and be encouraged, but not required, to participate on school committees and provide

other volunteer services as they are able. Parents will respect the authority of the teacher in the classroom. Parental involvement will be actively encouraged, but parents will need to understand their limits when recommending specific actions or changes in the classroom. Parents will be encouraged to understand from their child's teacher the rationale behind the way things are done. However, concerns regarding issues such as curriculum, values, or philosophy will be directed centrally to the Headmaster, where they can be handled in a single united effort. Concerns not adequately addressed by the Headmaster may be brought to the BOD. The opportunity of parents to choose the School and its well defined educational program will not include the right to demand individual preferences within the classroom.

Adopted: 3-04-2004

1.10 Teacher, School and Professionalism

According to Part I, Section (d) I. B. of Liberty Common School's Charter submitted to the Poudre School District on October 1, 1996:

Teachers are at the center of both the mind and heart of every successful school. Without dedicated competent teachers the best of educational practices will never actually come to fruition in the classroom. Research on effective schools reveals that next to individual ability and effort, the organization of the school is most influential in determining academic achievement. The School's teachers will be expected to implement the School's academic mission. In the classroom the teacher will be in charge. Outside of the classroom, teachers will receive professional guidance with respect to specific goals and objectives from the BOD through the Headmaster.

Professionalism requires a body of knowledge and skill applied with a clear level of accountability that affords the flexibility to accomplish the defined task. All teachers have a different style of teaching—the unique blend of classroom characteristics that enable them to give the very best of themselves to educating their students. The teacher's style sets some basic parameters for the parents as well as the children. Within those parameters parents have the opportunity to assist the teacher. As a high level of parental involvement will be actively encouraged, teachers will be expected to incorporate parental volunteer efforts in the classroom.

The central role of teachers in the classroom deserves respect. The School will make it clear to all teachers that they must understand and accept the responsibility of teaching the entire curriculum, both content and skills, and in a way congenial to the School's attitude toward values and the student. This will be defined as their primary role.

A number of the innovations of the School (bonus pay for teachers, additional planning time for teachers, provision of a Headmaster) that have been part of the plans for the School also directly address concerns resulting from a recent report for the Department of Education by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (Exhibit XV). The report concluded that many new teachers are poorly prepared to teach, in part because of a lack of sufficient mentoring, failure to reward better qualified teachers, and a lack of planning time.

The Headmaster will be hired by and be directly responsible to the BOD. His/her foremost responsibility will be to support the teachers in their primary role by coaching them towards attainment of their professional goals. Teachers will be expected to give input regarding their needs to the Headmaster.

Adopted: 3-04-2004

1.11 Nondiscrimination

Liberty Common School affirms that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, age, national origin, religious belief, gender, or handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity.

Adopted: 2-24-97

1.12 Disclaimer

If there is no Liberty Common School policy present, then the Poudre School District policy will be in effect. If there is a conflict between Poudre School District and Liberty Common School policy, the Liberty Common School policy shall prevail.

Adopted: 6-28-01

2.0 THE BOARD AND GOVERNANCE

2.1 Charter Application, Contract, Bylaws, and Addendums

The Liberty Common School Contract, Application and Bylaws are additional parts of these policies. They can be found in their individual reference notebooks.

Adopted: 2-24-97

2.2 Decision Making

Two principles should underlie all significant decisions made by the Board and Liberty Common School's administration: All actions should fall within the parameters of the Mission Statement and the Philosophy documents; and the Liberty Common School charter is a contract between the school and the district.

Accordingly, in making any significant decision the Board and Administration shall consider the decision on the context of the Liberty Common School mission and philosophy documents and from the parents' perspective, always keeping in mind that parents should have a meaningful voice in their children's education.

Adopted: 6-28-01

2.3 Board Members Code of Conduct

Individual BOD members are committed to proper use of their authority and to decorum consistent with maintaining the integrity and discipline of BOD leadership.

- 1) While the BOD as a body cannot exercise authority over individual BOD members, the BOD is responsible for the organization's exposure to members acting as individuals. To that end, the BOD can exercise authority over the Headmaster's response to individual members and can enumerate its expectations for individual member discipline.
 - a) While the BOD expects individual members to be given common courtesy, it does not require the Headmaster and staff to heed any individual member's opinions or instructions.
 - b) Regardless of any individual member's dissent from a decision of the BOD, he or she must support that the Headmaster is bound by directions given by the BOD as a whole.
- 2) Individual BOD members may not attempt to exercise authority over the organization unless explicitly set forth in BOD policies.
 - a) Individual members' interactions with the Headmaster or staff must recognize that individual members have not authority over staff or to insert themselves into staff operations. (Nothing contained in section 2) a)

is intended to restrict or discourage normal and open communication between the BOD, staff and community.)

- i) No BOD member can place himself or herself between staff members in their disputes or negotiations.
- ii) No BOD member can engage in solving staff problems without approval from the Headmaster
- b) Although all members are obligated to register differences of opinion on BOD issues at the BOD level as passionately as desired, individual members may not direct their differences in opinion to staff in a manner which would create dissension or polarization in the organization or undermine a decision of the BOD majority.
- c) Member's interactions with public, press, or other entities must recognize that individuals have no authority to speak for the BOD unless specifically authorized by the BOD.
- d) Members will not individually render judgments of Headmaster or staff performance apart from compliance with BOD policies as monitored by the BOD as a body.

Adopted: 2-25-99

2.4 Governing Style

The BOD will govern with an emphasis on (a) strategic leadership more than administrative detail, (b) clear distinction of BOD and Headmaster roles, (c) collective rather than individual decisions, (d) future rather than past or present, and (e) proactivity rather than reactivity. The BOD will:

- 1) Deliberate in many voices, but govern in one.
- 2) Cultivate a sense of group responsibility. The BOD, not the staff, will be responsible for excellence in governing. The BOD will be an initiator of policy, not merely a reactor to staff initiatives. The BOD will use the expertise of individual members to enhance the ability of the BOD as a body, rather than to substitute the individual judgments for the BOD's values.
- 3) Direct, control and inspire the organization through the careful establishment of broad written policies reflecting the BOD's values and perspectives. The BOD's major policy focus will be on the intended long-term Goals, not on the administrative or programmatic means of attaining those effects.
- 4) Enforce upon itself whatever discipline is needed to govern with excellence. Discipline will apply to matters such as attendance, preparation for meetings, policy-making principles, respect of roles, and ensuring the continuity of governing capability. Continual BOD development will include orientation of new members in the BOD's governance process and periodic BOD discussion of process improvement. The BOD will allow no office, individual or

committee of the BOD to hinder or be an excuse for not fulfilling its commitments.

- 5) Monitor and discuss the BOD's process and performance at each meeting. Self-monitoring will include comparison of BOD activity and discipline to the Liberty Common School Charter Application, Contract, Bylaws, and approved policies.

Adopted: 2-25-99

2.5 Board Self-Evaluation

The Liberty Common School Board of Directors believes that the efficiency and performance of the Board itself directly affects the efficiency and performance of the school as a whole. Therefore, the Board will conduct an annual evaluation of its own work.

The following guidelines will apply to the Board self-evaluation:

1. The evaluation shall be a positive, constructive process, aimed at improvement rather than criticism.
2. The evaluation shall be conducted using a formal written tool. Additionally, the board will evaluate its progress on the strategic plan.
3. Board members shall evaluate the board as a whole and not individuals on the board.
4. Board self-evaluation forms shall be distributed at the first April board meeting for use at the May meetings. The board shall not be limited in its discussion to those items that appear on the form. Free discussion and informal comments are valuable.

Adopted: 6-28-01

2.6 Public Attendance at Board Meetings

The Liberty Common School board represents the mission and vision of the school and is composed of parents from Liberty Common School. It desires to provide opportunities for any member of the school community to express interest in and concern for the school. Accordingly, all members of the school community are cordially invited to attend all open meetings of the board. A time for public comment shall be a part of every regular board meeting.

Meetings are closed to the public only when the board is meeting in executive session. An executive session may be called only to discuss matters not appropriate for public discussion pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes, Section 24-6-402. An executive session may be called only upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of a quorum present. No formal action of the board may be taken in any executive session.

Although the board wishes to encourage everyone to attend its open meetings, it must be remembered that board meetings are conducted to carry on the business of the school. Board meetings are not “public meetings,” but meetings held in a public, and public participation must be controlled to some extent so that the board can deal with its agenda within a reasonable time.

Persons who wish to make requests, presentations, or proposals to the board should follow the format listed in Article 4 of the School Bylaws.

Notice of the Liberty Common School Board meetings shall be posted in the school office one day prior to the meeting.

Adopted: 3-16-98

2.7 Policy Making

The board shall be solely responsible for adopting, repealing or amending governing policies for Liberty Common School. Action by the board shall be accomplished as set forth in the bylaws. Any board action may be reversed by a vote of 5 of the 7 Board memberships at a regular or special meeting of the membership called for that purpose.

Emergencies: Upon majority vote of a quorum present at a regular or special meeting called for that purpose, an emergency may be declared. If any emergency is declared, a policy may be adopted on first reading.

Proposed policies should be referenced to the proposed table of contents policy title. If it is an amendment, the entire policy should be typed with the new language in all capitals with the language to be deleted lined out.

The Headmaster shall be responsible for reviewing, adopting, amending, or repealing operational policies, procedures or regulations. All such operational material shall be in accordance with the Liberty Common School governing policies, and shall reference the related governing policy by section and number.

Adopted: 6-28-01

2.8 Board Member Conflict of Interest

Public office is a trust created in the interest of the common good and for the benefit of the people. It is the intent of this section to maintain public confidence and prevent the use of public office for private gain. In order to avoid conflicts of interest, it is the general policy of the school not to employ or contract with BOD members or employees (except for the employee’s employment), members of their families, or persons or entities having an ongoing business or financial

relationship with them. BOD members and employees shall disclose any known or potential conflicts of interest in writing to the BOD prior to the time set for voting on any such transaction and a BOD member making such disclosure shall not vote on the matter or attempt to influence the decisions of other BOD members in voting on the matter.

Board members shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for any necessary expenses incurred by them in performing their duties as members of the board.

Any contract with the school involving a member of the board, or the board member's family, shall be approved by the full board with the interested member abstaining. Each board member is responsible to make known to the board any circumstances that could involve a potential conflict of interest.

In the event that an issue, in which a board member has a non-financial, but family or personal interest, and which does not apply to the general case, is elevated to the Board for consideration, the Board member with the personal interest will abstain from voting on the matter.

Adopted: 6-28-01

2.9 Board Review of Administrative Procedures

Administrative procedures, policies and regulations should reference existing Board policies. The employee manuals and student handbook should reference existing Board policies and numbering.

The Board reserves the right to review administrative regulations and policies at its discretion. However, the board of directors shall revise or veto regulations only when, in its judgment, such regulations are inconsistent with the board's policies.

Adopted: 6-28-01

2.10 Advisory Committees to the Board

The primary purpose of all advisory committees to the board is to contribute to the educational program of the school by conducting studies, identifying problems, or developing recommendations to assist the board in making decisions. The ultimate authority to make those decisions, however, will continue with the boards as required by law.

Advisory committees will be formed by the board at such times and for such purposes as the board may deem necessary. They will be given a clear charge in writing, and will be dissolved upon accomplishing that charge.

Membership in advisory committees will be chosen from among those who have shown an interest in education or who have special knowledge or expertise relating to the committee's purpose. Once activated, an advisory committee will report periodically to the board.

Adopted: 6-28-01

Amended: 12-16-04

2.11 Academic Advisory Committee

Per BOD policy 2.10, *Advisory Committees to the Board*, the BOD establishes the Academic Advisory Committee (AAC):

1. Members of the AAC will be appointed and removed by the Board of Directors. Members will be individuals who have demonstrated an understanding of the school's philosophy, as determined by the Board of Directors.
2. The AAC will review and evaluate potential changes to the curriculum as directed by the Board of Directors, and report back to the BOD with their evaluation.
3. No curriculum changes will be made without a review from this committee.
4. At the direction of the BOD, AAC members may mentor and assist teachers in implementation of curriculum changes.
5. This standing committee will be formalized in the LCS Bylaws.

In the process of establishing the AAC, we define the following roles in determining curriculum:

- The Board of Directors has the final vote on acceptance of curriculum after review by the AAC.
- Teachers provide input into the recommendation for curriculum decisions and guidance on the implementation of any new or modified curriculum.
- Parents are encouraged to provide their perspective and work with the AAC on specific curriculum issues in accordance to their interests and expertise. The AAC will mentor these individuals as a means to developing future candidates for the AAC.
- The Headmaster provides input and leadership in curriculum decisions and the implementation.

Adopted: 8-08-02

Amended: 12-16-04

2.12 Documents in Advance of Board Meetings

Documents for agenda items are to be provided to the BOD one week in advance of the Board meeting. Board members should be provided with a summary of the issue or concern and the proposed Board action for all agenda items, so that BOD members have time to evaluate topics prior to discussion and decision making.

Adopted: 10-16-03

Amended: 6-03-04

3.0 ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Delegation to Headmaster

All BOD authority delegated to staff is delegated through the Headmaster, so that all authority and accountability of staff—as far as the BOD is concerned—is considered to be the authority and accountability of the Headmaster.

The BOD will direct the Headmaster to achieve certain results through the establishment of Goals. The BOD will limit the latitude the Headmaster may exercise in practices, methods, conduct, and other “means” through the establishment of Executive Limitations policies.

As long as the Headmaster uses any reasonable interpretation of the BOD’s Goals and Executive Limitations policies, the Headmaster is authorized to make all decisions, take all actions, establish all practices, and develop all activities.

The BOD may change its Goals and Executive Limitations policies, thereby shifting the boundary between BOD and Headmaster domains. By doing so, the BOD changes the latitude given to the Headmaster. So long as any particular delegation is in place, the BOD members will respect and support the Headmaster’s choices.

Only decisions of the BOD acting as a body are binding upon the Headmaster.

Decisions or instructions of individual BOD members, officers, or committees are not binding on the Headmaster except in rare circumstances when the BOD has specifically authorized such exercise of authority.

In the case of BOD members or committees requesting information or assistance without BOD authorization, the Headmaster can refuse such requests that require—in the Headmaster’s judgment—a material amount of staff time or funds or are disruptive.

Adopted: 2-25-99

Amended: 12-16-04

3.2 Business Manager

The Business Manager at Liberty Common, under the guidelines set forth in our charter, is accountable to the Headmaster as the authority in the areas of:

- Finance
- Building and Grounds
- Non-Academic Personnel
- Legal Compliance of the School

Finance

Oversee the development and maintenance of a positive financial position for the school

- LCS Accountant
- Provide all necessary documentation for and oversee successful, on-time completion of LCS annual audits
- Work with the Headmaster, BOD, Core Knowledge Charter School Foundation and LCS Building Corporation to develop budget and effectively use funds.
- Provide monthly reports on
 - Budget
 - PPOR
 - Grant monies and status
- Areas of concern in budget, purchasing, facilities, or grants including specific proposals for dealing with these issues
- Develop financial support information for grant applications.
- Liaison with PSD in financial matters
- Responsible for school assets and supplies including procedures for ordering and inventory, and negotiating maintenance contracts for equipment

Building and Grounds

Oversight responsibility for all physical school facilities including safety, security, maintenance, and relationships with third party contractors to maintain and improve the facility.

- Traffic flow and effectiveness
- Student safety in building and outside on all school grounds
- Oversee safety response team and related volunteers
- Ensure that this process is in place, documented, and periodically tested
- Communicate with local authorities in regards to safety matters

Non-Academic Personnel

Ensure effective performance, communication and professionalism among all non-academic staff

- Oversee all non-academic programs
- Administrative staff
- Health office
- Custodial services
- Lunchroom attendants
- Playground monitors
- Before and after school care
- Coordinate with PSD and manage LCS portion of all non-performance related personnel issues for all school employees including payroll, benefits, hiring paperwork, documentation, etc.
- Maintain faculty and non-academic staff records including interview and hiring paperwork, benefits, evaluations, contracts

Legal Compliance

Assure LCS is in compliance with all applicable state, federal, and local laws & regulations; including adherence to charter contract. Stay abreast of changes to applicable laws and regulations, and communicate to Headmaster and Board of Directors how such changes may affect LCS.

Adopted 6-28-01

3.3 Dean of Students

The Dean of Students at Liberty Common School is accountable to the School's Headmaster, and will assume the role of the Headmaster in the absence of the Headmaster. The Dean of Students works closely with the Headmaster and other faculty and staff to successfully fulfill these responsibilities as follows:

- **Character Education** - Develops and oversees implementation of the character education program, which is based on the school's established foundational character traits: Respect, Responsibility, Citizenship, Self-Control, Integrity, Cooperation and Perseverance.
- **Discipline** -The Dean of Students is responsible for the student discipline at Liberty Common School. This includes, but is not limited to, enforcement of school rules. This requires understanding and knowledge of applicable school law. Communication with parents, school officials and staff is an integral part of the position.
- **Student Life** - Develops and encourages a positive school culture and school traditions with the help of all faculty, staff, and administration. Creates and develops student connectedness to the school by promoting a positive learning atmosphere. Knowledge of adolescent behavior and the techniques that encourage cooperation are necessary skills for this position. Manages upper school elective offerings and class scheduling. Is primarily responsible for ensuring campus security and safety.
- **Student Behavior** - Leads school-wide programs and efforts related to managing student behavior including establishing discipline policies. Responsibilities in this area include communication with parents, detention procedures, and dress code compliance. Instilling self-discipline in all students is the desired goal rather than punishment. The Dean of Students helps students set the limits of behavior by using a variety of techniques in cooperation with the parents. The Dean helps students to understand the purpose of the school and how the rules enable them to achieve their personal goals.
- **Athletics**—As the school's Athletic Director, leads and manages the upper school athletic program.

- **Other Duties**
 - Teaches one elective.
 - Provides high school guidance counseling.
 - Adheres to all school policies.
 - Attends all faculty and BOD meetings.
 - Directs and organizes annual schedule.
 - Supports and organizes standardized testing procedures along with headmaster.
- **Minimum Qualifications** - Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and demonstrated teaching experience at the lower, middle or upper school level. Possesses the ability to work with adolescents. Adheres to the standards of professional ethics and exercises discretion in dealing with confidential information.
- **Desired Qualification** – Master's degree and/or two years experience in an administrative role. Demonstrated ability to work independently and with others as a member of a school team.

Adopted: 6-28-01

Amended: 5-06-04

3.4 Upper School Specialist

According to Liberty Common School's Charter:

1. The School's curriculum, and the Thinking Framework within which it is delivered, requires specialization as the students progress through the grades. For this reason, teachers in the upper grades are to have advanced training in their specialty (English, Math, Science, or History/Economics). The typical training of an elementary teacher does not prepare them to deliver the Core Knowledge Sequence, nor the related thinking skills required. (*Section (d) I. A. School Design, page 12**)
2. "The interaction of faculty between lower and higher level classes is fundamental to providing the preparation support, higher order thinking mentoring, and the coherence of the curriculum which builds on itself over time." (*Section (d) I. A. School Design, page 13*)
3. "Upper grade teachers will mentor elementary grade teachers in their areas of specialization. They will help ensure continuity in subject content throughout the curriculum." (*Summary, page 2*)

In order to meet these requirements of our Charter, Upper School Specialists:

- Have primary oversight responsibility for the academic programs of the school in the areas of English, Math, Science, and History/Economics. Report

annually to the Headmaster and the BOD about the state of the curriculum and skill development in their area of academic specialty.

- Assist in developing improvements to the K-9 curriculum as directed by the BOD.
- Oversee continuity of subject content and cohesive delivery across all grades.
- Review content and skills assessments and other methods of gathering data to assess student progress in English, Math, Science, and History/Economics. Recommend necessary improvements and changes based on assessment data to staff, Headmaster, or BOD as appropriate.
- Train and mentor teachers in the content of the Specialist's area of academic expertise.
- Suggest opportunities for teaching English, Math, Science, or History/Economics across disciplines such as identifying historical connections in literature, historical roots of math concepts, economic concepts in politics, Latin vocabulary in science, and cooperative projects between teachers in all areas.
- Define the specific critical thinking skills unique to their area of specialization, i.e. the Habits of Mind. References for Habits of Mind in Science, Math and History are included in the Charter (*Section (d) I. B. Philosophy and Approach, Skills, page 16*).
- Train and mentor teachers and suggest methods for teaching skills (which are reading, writing, speaking, listening, calculating, and thinking) (*Section (d) I. A. School Design, page 13*) in accordance with our Charter which requires skill instruction integrated with content. (*Section (d) I. B. Philosophy and Approach, Skills, page 15*).
- Communicate regularly with Headmaster on issues of scientific, historical, mathematical and/or English literacy at Liberty Common School.
- Communicate regularly and professionally with colleagues.
- Communicate annually, or on an as needed basis, with the BOD on the progress of their mentoring program and advancement of the curriculum in their area of academic expertise.
- Have and continue to seek advanced training annually in order to bring new ideas, programs and curriculum to school at various grade levels. Present annual plan for advancement and training and assesses need for and requests budget for necessary training for self and others.
- Teach content classes for grades 7-9 and follow all criteria for the Teacher job description.
- Develops annual plan for advancement and refinement of Upper School Specialist job including requests for funding and compensation.

* *Page numbers correspond to those in the original Charter document written and submitted by parents to the PSD Board of Education on October 1, 1996. The on-line version of the Charter may have different pagination.*

Adopted 7-25-02

3.5 Board Notification

The Headmaster will notify the Board of Directors of any law enforcement or social services investigation which takes place on school grounds involving students, volunteers, employees, or parents. The Headmaster will inform the BOD that the investigation occurred and, unless instructed otherwise by law enforcement officials or Liberty's legal counsel, the nature of the investigation. The Headmaster will not disclose names of the individuals involved unless it is public record, or necessary to ensure safety at the school.

Adopted 5-20-04

4.0 PERSONNEL

4.1 Employee Manual

Refer to Employee Manual for additional information regarding employees.

4.2 Selection of School Staff

The Board's specific personnel service goals are as follows:

- a. Recruit, select, employ, train, and retain the best-qualified personnel available to staff the school. This staff will be committed to the Core Knowledge curriculum and share the vision of the school as described in the charter.
- b. Provide equal employment opportunities for all candidates for positions in accordance with the board's non-discrimination policy. Develop high quality human relationships conducive to high levels of staff performance and satisfaction.
- c. Interview committees may consist of members of the personnel committee, Board members, Headmaster, other staff members, and others appointed by the Board.
- d. Develop and manage staff compensation, leave, and benefit programs in ways that attract and retain qualified employees.
- e. Manage the development and updating of job descriptions by appropriate administrators.
- f. Oversee an employee evaluation program that contributes to the improvement of staff performance and professional development.
- g. Effectively administer contracts and personnel policies with the aim of safeguarding good relations between the board and its staff.

Adopted: 6-28-01

4.3 Teacher Evaluations

Information regarding teacher evaluations can be found in the employee manual.

At-will provision: Notwithstanding this policy, teachers may be terminated by the Headmaster, at their sole and absolute discretion, with or without cause. Each teacher specifically acknowledges, by signed contract, that he/she is an at-will employee and that there have been no promises of continued employment at Liberty Common School from any of its agents or representatives.

Adopted: 6-28-01

4.4 Staff Conflicts of Interest

At no time shall any employees of Liberty Common School engage in any employment that would (1) affect their usefulness as employees of the school;

(2) make time and/or energy demands upon the employees that interfere with their effectiveness in performing their contractual duties; (3) compromise or embarrass the school; (4) adversely affect their employment status or professional standing; or (5) in any way conflict with or violate professional ethics.

Teachers shall not engage in any other employment or in any private business during the hours required to fulfill assigned educational duties.

Employees shall not sell any books, supplies, musical instruments, or equipment to any student or to the parents or guardian of a student unless prior approval has been received from the Headmaster.

No administrator shall be responsible for the supervision and or evaluation of a relative.

No member of the Board of Directors shall be responsible for evaluation of a complaint against a family member.

Adopted: 6-28-01

4.5 Sexual Harassment

Refer to Employee Manual

4.6 Leave of Absence Policy

All employees are expected to work the scheduled workdays in the calendar year.

The purpose of this policy is to recognize the occasional need for an employee to be excused from a regular workday based on varying reasons and personal circumstances. Leave Day classifications as outlined below are intended to: 1) define rules or conditions and will serve as a general guideline for an employee requesting leave days from regular or daily school assignments, 2) serve as policy and procedure for administrative guidance and compliance, and 3) for BOD governance.

Short Term Leaves - Paid Days

Sick Time

(8) days annually for teaching faculty, (5) days annually for non-teaching staff members. Employees may use up to (2) sick days for personal reasons each year. Sick leave days accrued beyond (16) days will be paid out annually at \$80 each for faculty only.

Use of sick days is not allowed immediately before or after scheduled school breaks and holidays. Extreme circumstances will be evaluated on a case by case basis by the Headmaster.

Vacation Time

(10) days annually for non-teaching staff members to be taken in the summer subject to administrative approval. Summer break at the end of the academic school year is vacation time for faculty.

Paternity Leave

(5) days of paternity leave may be taken from accumulated sick leave days, not contiguous with holidays, or use of sick days for personal reasons.

Professional Time

Employee will be granted a limited number of days for professional reasons. Requests are made directly to the Headmaster who will have discretion to authorize.

Jury Duty/Witness Leave

Employee will be released for any required jury duty or witness process.

Bereavement Leave

Employee is granted 5 days in case of death of a nuclear family member (spouse, child, employee parent or spouse's parent). Employee may request to leave during a workday to attend funeral services for anyone. Requests are directed to the Headmaster for approval.

Short Term Leaves - Unpaid Days

Religious Observance

Employee may request a full leave day or partial day to participate in a religious observance. Requests are directed to the Headmaster for approval.

Long Term Leaves - Unpaid Days

Sabbatical Leave

Employee (Faculty member only) may request a sabbatical leave for 50% of a school year or for 100% of a school year. A written request will be directed to the Headmaster who will then recommend support or non-support to the BOD within a reasonable time. Return from a sabbatical is not guaranteed because the school is an "At-Will" employer. Any accrued compensation and benefits will be paid out to employee at the beginning of a sabbatical leave.

Recommended professional development as may be outlined in a performance evaluation falls outside the parameters of this leave category.

Family Extended Leave

Employee may request a family leave for the purpose of: 1) birth of his/her child or to care for his/her child following birth, 2) placement of a child with employee for adoption or foster care, and 3) serious health condition of employees' child, spouse, parent, sister or brother. The school will comply with any provisions of the federal law - The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. The website link provided here gives details of the law. http://www.dol.gov/dol/allcft/ESA/Title_29/Part_825/toc.htm

A Maternity Leave request is subject to the separate BOD policy for maternity leave.

Adopted: February 19, 2004, Revised: April 21, 2005, Revised: June 21, 2007

Maternity Leave

For full-time teachers:

1. Six work weeks paid for female maternity leave.
2. Employer contributions for Benefits will continue to be paid for three calendar months according to the following schedule: For employees that leave by the 15th of the month, benefits will be paid for that month and two subsequent months. For employees that leave after the 15th of the month, benefits will be paid for that month and three subsequent months. During the period that the benefits are covered the job will be protected should the employee desire to return.

For all other employees receiving employer contributions for their benefits:

3. Employer contributions for Benefits will continue to be paid for three calendar months according to the following schedule: For employees that leave by the 15th of the month, benefits will be paid for that month and two subsequent months. For employees that leave after the 15th of the month, benefits will be paid for that month and three subsequent months. During the period that the benefits are covered the job will be protected should the employee desire to return.

5.0 STUDENTS

5.1 Student Handbook

Yearly Student Handbook Available in Front Office

5.2 Student Accountability

All quality students are capable of learning to accept responsibility for their own education and behavior by arriving on time, turning in homework and class work on time, being prepared with class supplies, etc., and taking responsibility for their actions. The philosophy and practices this school incorporates acknowledge that young people are free to act and are therefore moral “agents”, accountable for their actions. Our policies will encourage discipline, hard work, cooperation, decision-making and acceptance of the consequences for decisions made. Such policies, and a clear understanding of academic expectations, help our students to choose their quest for intellectual and personal growth. The students’ sense of alignment between their personal educational goals and those of their school further reinforce their desire to accept responsibility for their education. Such an approach to student accountability has been termed “agency education.” (See

PHILOSOPHY) In addition, all students and their parents **MUST** read and adhere to the Student/Parent Contract (see appendix A) and the handbook.

Adopted 6-28-01

5.3 Good Sportsmanship

5.4 Discipline

Liberty Common School Discipline Code-Revised Edition, 6/28/2001 can be found in the Liberty Handbook.

5.5 Tardy Policy

Tardiness is a form of absence and interferes with student learning. Late arrivals interrupt the learning environment and the daily procedures and will be handled in a serious manner. Promptly at 8:00 a.m., the bell rings, doors to classrooms are closed and the student academic day begins. Students arriving after the bell rings will be considered tardy and must be checked in at the front desk by a parent or guardian. After three tardies in a quarter, the student will serve a lunch detention. Every tardy thereafter will also result in a detention for that quarter. If the tardies continue to occur on a frequent basis, a meeting may result between the parent/student/Dean or Headmaster. In school detentions or out of school suspensions may be a result of continual excessive tardiness.

Adopted 2-28-01

5.6 Student Privacy

It is the policy of Liberty Common School to respect and protect the privacy of Liberty Common School students and families for unwonted intrusion. Therefore written parental consent must be obtained before students participate in any survey, analysis, evaluation, or test that reveals information about the student and or the student's family concerning political affiliations, religious beliefs, income, or mental or physical condition, sexual behavior and attitudes, parenting styles, substance abuse, or any other information that could be potentially embarrassing to the student and or the student's family.

Photographs: Permission to shoot close up pictures of students and to identify those students may be granted to the media (newspapers and television stations) only with parental approval. Parental approval shall also be required before pictures of students may be used to any non-school publication or posted on the Internet.

Parents must sign a non-permission form if they do not want their students names, addresses, phone numbers, or pictures published in school related publications such as a school directory or yearbook.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1984 is broadly outlined: Parents have rights over student records until the child is 18 years of age. Parents have the right to examine their child's records. The parent has the right to have their child's records corrected if the information is "inaccurate, misleading, or is otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the student". A record must be kept with each student record showing who examined it, the date, and the purpose of the examination. School officials and personnel of this district who have a legitimate education interest, are exempted from this requirement. Any person may receive the records if the parents execute a written consent, and the parents may request a copy of any student record released to another school for transfer.

Adopted 6-28-01

5.7 Promotion Policy:

PRIMARY STUDENTS

Our primary goal at the elementary levels is solid literacy. A child cannot go on to more complex studies if he or she does not have adequate reading skills. The policy for passing to the next grade begins this year, and continues into following years.

A student may pass to the next grade if the child has adequate reading ability. For example, first graders must read at a minimum of 1.8 instructional level to pass to second grade; second graders must read at a minimum of 2.8 instructional level to pass to third grade; third graders must read at a minimum of 3.8 instructional level to pass to fourth grade; fourth graders must read at a minimum of 4.8 instructional level to pass to fifth grade. The teacher will test all students and determine grade level.

In addition, students in kindergarten must achieve mastery of the phonograms at the following levels:

- 100% of the first 40 phonograms taught.
- 50% of the next 10 phonograms taught (ew, eu, oy, oi, ch, ng, ck, oe, oa, ph).

Age is the second criteria for placement in a grade level at Liberty Common School. A student must fall within district guidelines to enter a grade:

A student must be 5 years old by September 15th to enter Kindergarten

A student must be 6 years old by September 15th to enter first grade

A student must be 7 years old by September 15th to enter second grade

INTERMEDIATE AND UPPER SCHOOL STUDENT (GRADES 5-9)

It is our goal for parents, teachers, and students to work together during the year to insure that student are developing responsible work habits and achieving at passing levels. We do not force a bell curve. Rather, our metaphor is that 70% is the bar, and all students need to “jump” that bar. For this reason a failing grade is defined as a D or an F in a subject.

Upper School students who fail Math must repeat the Math class the next year.

A student with one failing year-end grade in English, History, Science, 5th grade Math or 6th grade Math will be required to remedy his/her grades during the summer. These students must complete the summer remediation plan determined by the teacher. Students who successfully complete their summer remediation plan will receive a grade of “PASS” to replace the failing grade.

Students with a cumulative failing grade at year-end in any two core classes or three or more failing grades in all classes (including specials and electives) will fail the grade and will not be promoted to the next grade.

Special education students on IEPs with modified curriculum requirements will be considered separately from this policy.

Adopted 4-5-01

Amended 6-03-04

5.8 Interrogations and Searches

School administration will make every reasonable attempt to notify parents prior to permitting any person for outside the school, including law enforcement officials, to question or detain a student. In no circumstance will a student be questioned or detained without the presence of either a parent or school official; the school having legal custody of the student during the school day and during approved extra-curricular activities must ensure that each student’s rights are protected.

Searches: All school property is under the control of the board and its officials. A search of school property (including, but not limited to lockers,) may be made at the discretion of school administration if a reasonable suspicion arises that items considered illegal, disruptive, or a general nuisance to the educational process are being kept at the school.

School officials will detain a student if there is a reasonable suspicion that a student has drugs, narcotics, weapons, explosives, or other dangerous contraband in his possession, and if such possession constitutes a clear and imminent danger to the safety and welfare of the student, other persons, or school property.

Further, school officials will notify parents and the appropriate law enforcement agency of illegal possession of such materials.

Adopted: 6-28-01

5.9 Students Missing Class Time

It is necessary that students be in class each day to fully benefit from Liberty's rigorous academic program. It is reasonable that students will occasionally miss class due to illness, doctor appointments, or family emergencies. Such absences will be excused with a call from a parent. In these instances, students will be allowed to make-up tests and quizzes without penalty. The teacher will determine appropriate adjustments, if any, to due dates for late or missed assignments.

If parents are planning an unexcused absence (e.g., vacation, absence for special events), they must make advance arrangements with their child's teacher(s) to complete any work that will be missed. In the case of an unexcused absence, make-up test/quizzes and adjustments to assignment due dates may be allowed at the discretion of the teacher.

Recurring or routine absences from school are discouraged, however individual cases may be allowed at the discretion of the Headmaster and staff. In all instances, the student and teacher(s) must agree on a plan to ensure that the student remains current with all class requirements.

Upper School students may leave during last period to participate in sports not offered by Liberty, or to participate in Liberty "away" athletic events, only if the student is in good academic standing, and the student and teacher have agreed on a plan to ensure that the student does not fall behind in their work. Upper school students desiring to play sports are strongly encouraged to take electives or study hall for their last period class.

Adopted: 10-03-02

6.0 PARENTS

6.1 Parental Involvement and Volunteering

Liberty is a school of choice. This means that parents have the option to choose, for their child, the philosophy of this school as articulated in the Charter. Liberty believes that the school's design will result in parents wanting to play a strong role in their children's education. When parents have the opportunity to choose the kind of education they prefer, they find the necessary energy, time, and resources to devote to their children's education. Liberty anticipates that parents will be directly engaged in tutoring, coaching, classroom instruction, preparing resource materials, and providing other necessary and invaluable assistance.

The family naturally provides the most influential and effective context for basic life long learning and teaching. For this reason, and at the discretion of the classroom teacher or headmaster, parents are invited to teach or assist with learning projects in all subjects, depending on their interests and expertise. Parents are also encouraged to spend time reading aloud to children at school and/or in the home, coaching them in skill development, and otherwise contributing time and talents in a variety of ways. Parents with children in a specific grade level will have opportunity to volunteer in that grade at the teacher's discretion.

Parent Involvement, Observation, and Volunteering

Liberty Common School is a charter school. As such, there are many new ideas being implemented. The classroom itself is the context for several of these innovations. There is great emphasis on parent volunteers in this school. There is also a need to establish a learning environment that best serves the students. At Liberty Common School we have defined the general parameters for parents volunteering in Liberty School classrooms.

1. Parent volunteers are an integral part of the Liberty Common School. Parents are not only welcome, but also crucial if we are to have high quality teaching of the entire curriculum each year. Primary and Intermediate parent volunteer activities are coordinated by Liberty's Classroom Volunteer Coordinators. Volunteers in school must have a signed and current volunteer form on file with the school Classroom Volunteer Coordinator.
2. The teacher's "individual teaching style" sets the tone for the classroom. This includes everything from delivery of the educational program to classroom management. The teacher has primary responsibility for the classroom and student learning within the classroom.
3. Parents who wish to be volunteering in the classroom need to learn the teaching style of the teacher they wish to assist. If the teaching style conflicts

with the parent's volunteering style, the parent will need to either adjust their style or find a more compatible setting within Liberty to volunteer.

4. There will be a classroom volunteer coordinator (CVC) for each primary and intermediate classroom. This parent will be responsible for organizing and delegating the volunteer needs both of the teacher/classroom and the parents.
5. Any grievance or concern a parent has with a classroom or a teacher will be handled by the procedures defined in this handbook.
6. Under **NO CIRCUMSTANCE** is it ever acceptable for a parent/volunteer to confront a teacher about an issue *"in the classroom, or any other part of the school, when students are present."*

Liberty encourages every adult—parents, stepparents, grandparents, aunts and uncles—to take a special interest in the lives of Liberty's students, to act as mentors and tutors, and to instill in every student a love of learning.

Parents work in conjunction with the staff to ensure the most effective education possible for their children. To this end, parents are responsible for knowing and understanding the contents of Liberty's Charter, and are encouraged, but not required, to participate on school committees and provide other volunteer services, as they are able.

Parents are a welcome and encouraged to participate in the school, to reasonably observe and/or assist the teacher. However, any parent whose presence or actions are deemed by the teacher and headmaster to be a distraction, to exhibit hostility, or to interfere with the instruction or learning of the students, will be barred from the school.

In order to create a consistent school atmosphere for learning, parents wishing to observe a class must arrive before class begins. Each class will have two teacher-provided chairs for observers. Observing parents do not participate in classroom activities unless invited to do so by the teachers, and observers must not interrupt teachers and/or students. Observers may take a few notes, however computers, tape recording, etc. may be a distraction to students and are not permitted.

Primary and Intermediate parents wishing to be active in Liberty Common School and volunteer in various ways must go through procedures given by the Classroom Volunteer Coordinators. Parents will receive specific training in areas of interest to them so that they may be the most efficient helpers.

Adopted 6-28-01

7.0 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

7.1 Educational Priorities

The BOD desires that all students receive a classical liberal education. To do so, the appropriate skills must be developed by each student. Therefore, the BOD has determined the following educational priorities:

1. Reading/Writing
2. Math/Arithmetic's
3. Arts and Sciences

Fundamental skills-Reading/Writing/Math

- Reading is our first priority. This means the ability to read at grade level supersedes all other academic goals for students.
- All fundamental skill areas in the Core Knowledge Sequence are to be taught. When a conflict exists between the timeline of a skill program utilized at the school and the timeline of the Core Knowledge Sequence, teachers should follow the timeline on the skill program.
- Teachers are to inform the Headmaster of any inconsistencies between the Core Knowledge Sequence and a skill program.
- The BOD directs the Headmaster to ensure that all skill areas in the K-8 Core Knowledge Sequence are taught at some point in grades K-8.

Content Areas

- Content area priorities are determined first by the Core Knowledge Sequence.
- The BOD may, at its discretion, identify areas of emphasis in the Sequence. These items will be documented in the form of a directive to the Headmaster.
- The BOD may approve additions to the Core Knowledge Sequence to be taught at the school. (e.g. computer technology, foreign languages, band, economics). The BOD directs the Headmaster to maintain curriculum outlines for such additions.

Adopted: 5-27-00

7.2 Equal Educational Opportunity

It is the policy of Liberty Common School to make all educational services available without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex or disability.

Adopted: 2-24-97

7.3 Policy on Teaching Science

We are committed to providing an excellent education with an additional emphasis on science, as outlined in our Charter. The foundation of our science curriculum is contained in the Core Knowledge Sequence. We further supplement the Core Knowledge Sequence with the habits of mind from the Benchmarks for Science Literacy: Project 2061 (Oxford Press 1993). We uphold the following principles in teaching science at Liberty Common School:

Principles for Teaching Science:

- Science is a particular way of knowing about the world. In science, explanations are limited to those based on observations and experiments that can be reproduced and substantiated by other scientists. Explanations that cannot be based on empirical evidence are not a part of science. For example, science can attempt to explain and formulate theories on the processes by which the universe was originally formed (i.e. Big Bang theory). However, science cannot comment on the role that supernatural forces might play in such events because such hypotheses cannot be tested and are outside the realm of science.
- We support teaching the following habits of mind from Project 2061:
 - Scientific knowledge is subject to modifications as new information challenges prevailing theories and as a new theory leads to looking at old observations in a new way.
 - Some matters cannot be examined usefully in a scientific way. Among them are matters that by their nature cannot be tested objectively and those that are essentially matters of theology.
 - No matter how well one theory fits observations, a new theory might fit them just as well or better, or might fit a wider range of observations. In science, the testing, revising, and occasional discarding of theories, new and old, never ends. This ongoing process leads to an increasingly better understanding of how things work in the world, but not to absolute truth.
- Teachers are encouraged to include discussions of alternate scientific theories and the data that supports and contradicts existing theories. This is consistent with the Poudre School District policy IMB: “Teaching about Controversial/Sensitive Issues.”
- Students should understand the difference between science based on direct observation and/or experimentation, and historical science, which is based on the study of past events. Historical science can be found in the fields of astronomy, geology, evolutionary biology, and archeology, and has led to such theories as the “Big Bang,” tectonic plate theory, and the theory of evolution. Because it is based on past events, historical science generally depends on a higher degree of inference than science based on direct observation and experimentation.

Principles for Teaching Evolution:

- A clear and accurate description of terminology will be taught. The term “evolution” has become highly politicized and often misused to include a very broad spectrum of processes; from genetic mutation to gradual change over time to the origin of the human species. It is essential to distinguish between manifestations of evolution which can be directly observed and reproduced in the laboratory (microevolution of prokaryotic cells) and those which cannot be experimentally reproduced and involve a higher level of inference and historical science (macroevolution, origin of species etc.).
- In this context it is important to note that many biology textbooks present all aspects of evolution—from microevolution to macroevolution—as being equally supported by experimental and empirical evidence. Liberty will strive to accurately present the strengths and weaknesses of evolutionary theory and seek textbooks which present a more scientific and unbiased analysis of evolution.
- As with other topics, we will adhere to the Core Knowledge Sequence for determining when the theory of evolution is introduced to students (7th grade) and which subtopics should be covered.
- Discussions of evolutionary theory can lead to discussions of whether or not supernatural forces play a role in the mechanism of evolution or the origin of life. These topics extend beyond the scope of science and will not be taught at Liberty Common School. (See also: Colorado Model Standard for Science 3.4, which states, “This content standard does not define any student expectations related to the origin of life.”)
- This policy is not intended to restrict the teaching of evolution as outlined in the Core Knowledge Sequence or limit the scientific discussion of related topics.

Curriculum Considerations:

Science text books which support the Core Knowledge Science Sequence have been approved for use in some grades. These are:

3rd grade: Crabtree Publishing, *The Science of Living Things*

5th and 6th: Prentice Hall, *Explorer Series*

7th and 8th: Prentice Hall, *Science Series*

9th grade: Prentice Hall, *Biology* by Miller and Levine

Adopted: 9-07-00

Amended: 1-20-05

7.4 Teaching Human Sexuality

Parents own the fundamental responsibility for their children's education, which includes the areas of morality and sexuality. The school's role should be viewed as a supportive one. It is apparent that sexuality is more than biology and physiology. It also includes the emotions. Because it is a part of the whole human experience, in teaching it, it must be treated with respect and sensitivity.

Children are naturally modest concerning their body and its functions and are not ready to learn everything at once. They are naturally curious, however, and need to get answers to their questions in a way appropriate to their stage of development. In teaching this topic, we want to minimize the embarrassment associated with it for both children and parents.

We refer parents to chapters 1 and 3 of *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong*, by William Kilpatrick, as a supporting reference for our philosophy on teaching human sexuality.

What is our plan for moving forward?

We will adhere to the Core Knowledge Sequence which includes human reproduction in fifth grade science. These discussions will occur during regular school hours in gender-separated environment. Parents will be notified in advance and invited to attend class with their child. An alternative activity will be provided for students whose parents choose to excuse their child from the class.

The fifth grade material dealing with human sexuality and reproduction will be repeated in an evening class. In addition, we will provide additional evening classes on human sexuality geared toward seventh and ninth grades. The evening presentations will also be separated by gender, and parents will have the opportunity to preview the material to be covered. Parents may choose to attend any of the evening classes with or without their child.

Why does the Board of Directors want human sexuality taught at Liberty?

1. Character education is part of our program. Sexuality involves serious moral decision-making. It is important to help children build the capacity to make sound moral choices and to live them out.
2. The biology portion of the Core Knowledge Sequence for 5th grade is linked to human sexuality and leads to discussions on this topic.
3. Because we teach human reproduction per the Core Knowledge Sequence, we would like to offer a springboard to initiate and facilitate discussions between parents and children on this sensitive subject.

What are the principles the BOD wants to communicate?

- Sexuality in practice is best accompanied by marital commitment and fidelity.

- Premarital abstinence is a positive, practical, achievable lifestyle that promotes self-control, self-respect, respect for others, responsibility, maturity, and good health.
- Abstinence is the only 100% safe approach to sex physically, emotionally, and morally.
- The program will include discussion on sexually transmitted diseases (including AIDS), condoms (only with respect to their limited effectiveness in prevention of sexually transmitted diseases), and fetal development.

Adopted: Sept 2000

7.5 Field Trips:

I. PURPOSE

To establish a policy and related procedures for field trips that involves students, parents, faculty, staff and/or persons. Liberty Common School recognizes the importance of out of classroom experiences for students.

II. DEFINITION

“Field Trip” means a journey or excursion away from school grounds, involving two or more persons that is organized and/or sponsored by the school or by an authorized employee of the school, for curricular relevance.

III. GUIDELINES FOR K-6 FIELD TRIPS

- All field trips must have curricular relevance and are considered part of the school day.
- The school faculty or staff member (i.e. the “trip director”) designated to be in charge of a field trip has the responsibility to enforce compliance with school policy by all persons participating in the field trip.
- The trip director must obtain assurance, prior to the commencement of the field trip, that any personal vehicle used on the field trip will be covered by liability insurance.
- The trip director is responsible for ensuring that all students are accounted for on departure, arrival at destination(s) and on return, except those brought by their own parents.
- The parent or guardian of each student participant must sign a Field Trip Permission Slip.
- No student is allowed to leave the field trip with anyone but his or her parent or guardian without notifying the trip director prior to initial departure without director approval.
- A Poudre School District bus must be used for all out of town field trips that are approximately 10 miles beyond the city

limits of Fort Collins. A bus may also be required for a closer area at the teacher's discretion.

- When a bus is required all students must ride on the school bus or with their own parent.
- Siblings will not be allowed to ride on a Poudre School District bus. It is up to the teacher's discretion to determine the number of chaperones and siblings allowed on each field trip.
- All drivers must provide proof of current insurance and valid Colorado driver's license.

***UPPER SCHOOL POLICY**

All bullets above apply. In the case that a Poudre School District bus is not available or fewer than 20 students attend, prohibiting the cost of a bus, exceptions may be considered and approved by the Dean of Students or the Headmaster.

Adopted: 5-4-00

7.6 Student Publications

Liberty Common School encourages students to express their views in school-sponsored publications, but they must observe rules for responsible journalism. This means that libelous statements, obscenities, defamation of persons, false statements, material advocating racial or religious prejudice, hatred, violence, the breaking of laws or school regulations, or material designed to disrupt the educational process will not be permitted.

The school also encourages school-sponsored publications as an educational activity through which students can gain experience in reporting, writing, editing and an understanding of responsible journalism. The sponsors or teachers of the student publications have the responsibility to review the contents of these papers before publication and to assist students in improving their skills and modes of expression, and to recognize material that is in poor taste, misleading, false, ill-advised, prejudiced or libelous. Final responsibility for school publications lies with the Headmaster.

Review of the content of school-sponsored publications prior to publication is not censorship, but part of the educational process. A publisher (in this case, the school) enjoys freedom to determine what it will and will not publish, and the school is free to impose restrictions on school-sponsored expression that it deems necessary for pedagogical purposes.

Adopted 6-28-01

7.7 Technology Policy

VISION:

To utilize established and evolving technologies to increase the productivity of teachers and students while stimulating learning through enhanced support of the core knowledge curriculum and teaching life-long skills.

OBJECTIVE:

To use information technology (primarily PC's/printers/networking) in the following ways:

✓ **Teacher Productivity**

- Word Processing for assignments, curriculum development, communication to parents and other teachers
- Gradebook software to automate the recording of grades and timely communication of progress reports
- Email to enhance communication between the office, BOD, parents, and teachers
- Curriculum Development – through the use of MultiMedia Encyclopedias and the internet
- Database access in resource room for curriculum materials.

✓ **Technology as a Learning Tool:**

- ***Adult supervision will be required at all times in the computer lab. This will be done by either a teacher, aide, or qualified parent volunteer.***
- **MultiMedia Encyclopedias** – invaluable information to enhance the core knowledge curriculum and teach research skills. This is a very cost effective way to keep up to date when textbooks change so rapidly. With multimedia the students can experience the sound of the American Indian musical instruments that were used in the early days of our country.
- **Skill Building** – excellent software to reinforce certain skills in core areas (reading comprehension, math, spelling). Some examples are Number Munchers, Math Rabbit, Where in the USA (World/Time/etc.) is Carmen SanDiego (geography) and many more. The students are enjoying themselves while building their skills. *No skill building reading programs will be utilized in the school. Approved reading comprehension tools will be used (see testing and assessment).*
- **Testing & Assessment** – tools such as STAR Reading and STAR Math provide teachers with instant feedback on a student's level and improvement. A student's progress can be tracked year by year. Accelerated Reader is an excellent tool for testing a student's comprehension of literature (K – 12 reading levels). The software tests match very well with the Library and classroom curriculum and inventory. This program also has been proven to motivate students to read more. Tests that are chosen on quality reading material will also test the comprehension of what students are reading at home for fun.
- **Information** – With programs such as “The Way Things Work”, “Explorapedia – The World of Nature”, “The History of the World”, and “The 20th Century” available, a child can learn through sight and sound in addition to reading. These would be used to enhance and reinforce the curriculum, never to replace books.

- **The Internet** – with the proper safeguards in place, students can explore the world, have pen pals (even just within the school) to practice writing skills, go on a virtual vacation (geography & math), view museums of the world, and much more. We would follow the district’s guidelines for parental approval for email and internet access.
- **Word Processing** is essential for children in the upper grades who are learning to write term papers and other lengthy documents. It makes it easier to go from rough draft to revisions to final documents and teaches them life long skill that they will carry with them. Training in basic keyboarding skills is necessary to enhance their researching and writing experiences. Children in the younger grades enjoy seeing their words in type and can benefit from creating simple poems and short stories as well as their own research projects. Word processing will be implemented in grades 4th and beyond. This ensures a strong foundation in penmanship and writing skills in grades K-3.
- **Drawing Programs** will add to the presentation of a report.
- **Spread Sheets** are being taught in many schools as part of math curriculum and are a good skill to learn for math and scientific laboratory recordings in the upper grades.
- **Teaching Technology**
- Technology is a part of each of our everyday lives and should be a topic in its own right. It is a science in and of itself. The structure of BASIC computer programming is a simple concept that is mathematical in nature and is a logical reasoning skill that will stay with the kids in many educational areas. Learning how technology works, building control system where a PC controls a Lego robot, designing a building with various architectural styles are just a few examples of the exciting topics that encourages exploration and learning.
- **Technology Support**
- Initially the committee recommends a part-time position to support the PCs in the classroom – especially now that all computers in the school are networked. A cost effective way of filling this position is to offer an internship to a CSU education student who excels in technology in exchange for classroom credit.
- It is the recommendation of the committee that a priority be given to hiring a technology teacher to
 1. teach technology curriculum
 2. support the core knowledge curriculum with software
 3. work with the TC to continually evolve and implement the technology plan
 4. work in conjunction with the media specialist (librarian) – the committee has toured many district schools to learn about their technology and has discovered the media specialist is an integral part of the team.

Liberty Common Students must sign an Internet Acceptable Use Permission Slip.

Adopted: 2-8-99

7.8 Elective Courses

In accordance with our school's philosophy, elective courses are to be developed and offered to students with three principles in mind:

1. **Academic:** In *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them*, Dr. E.D. Hirsch states, "having received foundational knowledge and skill (in the early grades) students can follow more varied and intensive strands of academic and vocational study according to their interests and abilities." At Liberty, the elective courses are the avenue for this.
2. **Liberty's Thinking Framework:** By grades 7-9 we want to provide opportunities for students to develop the 4th order thinking skills - creativity and problem solving. This is a productive effort requiring both discipline and knowledge. It is the goal of Agency education, the journey toward self-reliance.
3. **Physical Development:** Students in their early teenage years undergo tremendous changes. Many require controlled, physical outlets for the energy associated with their hormone fluctuations.

Liberty will offer a range of academic electives that appeal to a variety of student interests (both boys and girls) and provide opportunities for creativity, problem solving, and physical activity.

The class registration process should encourage students to select a range of different electives to achieve a balanced course schedule.

The BOD will approve the elective course offering for the following school year no later than February of each school year.

Adopted: 7-18-02

7.9 Upper School Curriculum

7th Grade

English

History

Science

Pre-Algebra or Algebra I

Latin

Art (semester) / PE (semester)

Music (semester) / Computer Essentials (semester)

Elective

8th Grade

English
 History
 Science
 Algebra1 or Geometry
 Foreign Language
 Art (semester) / Music & PE (semester)
 Elective
 Elective

9th Grade

Survey of British Literature
 Economics
 Biology
 Geometry or Algebra 2
 Foreign Language
 Elective
 Elective
 Elective

Adopted: 03-04-2004

7.10 Summer Reading

Liberty's Charter states, "*Because television viewing is diametrically opposed to reading, may stifle cognitive development and imagination, trivializes information, undermines values, distorts cause and effect, and is unable to portray thought, the School will discourage excessive (greater than 10 hours per week) viewing.*" Our Charter explains that Liberty will encourage students to replace non-instructional television watching with activities that will foster the development of imagination and skills, such as reading.

According to our Charter, "*The development of literacy will be one of the primary aims and focuses of effort in the School. This will include a great deal of reading from a variety of both fiction and non-fiction primary literature. Particularly in the early grades, the School will emphasize reading and more reading.*" Finally the Board acknowledges that nationwide teachers observe a decline in student reading ability over the summer.

The administration, Board of Directors, and faculty all agree it is critical for our students to read quality literature during the summer to help prepare them for the demands of the Core Knowledge sequence for the upcoming year. In addition to

keeping our student's skills sharp, it is our hope that students will develop a desire to read for pleasure and begin to think of themselves as readers.

For all of these reasons, the school will implement a summer reading program. Books selected for summer reading should expose children to literature with a rich use of language that they might not otherwise encounter. The books should help to nudge students toward a higher level, not just in matters of syntax and vocabulary, but also in sophistication of plot, character development, conflict and resolution, etc.

The books for students entering kindergarten through 3rd grade are intended to be read to the child by the parent (or another capable adult). Students entering 4th-9th grades should be capable of reading the books themselves. The reading will provide a common foundation for class discussion as students begin the new school year. Teachers will determine what is expected from the students to demonstrate they have completed the summer reading.

The Board will appropriate funds to purchase all of the required books on the summer reading list.

Adopted: 5-15-03
Amended: 6-03-04

7.11 Mathematics Policy

Principles for Teaching Elementary Mathematics:

1. The United States has historically taught mathematics procedurally. With the *procedural* approach students are taught “cookbook steps” for solving problems. Studies show that students are able to extract simple concepts from procedural teaching in the early grades, but in later years, as concepts become more difficult, understanding is lost, and students retain less knowledge.
2. Liberty utilizes a *conceptual* approach to teaching mathematics. With the conceptual approach, it is not enough to assert something is true, instead teachers (and students) must be able to prove why something is true every step of the way, based on concepts the students already know and understand. Once students understand why something works, they can apply the concept to other situations.
3. New knowledge builds on old knowledge. To be successful, students need to thoroughly master a math concept before moving on to the next.
4. As students progress along the Thinking Framework, students should recognize multiple ways of solving a problem, be able to evaluate each approach, and determine which would be the most reasonable to use.

The Singapore National Math Curriculum is a conceptual math curriculum which supports these principles and been approved for math instruction in kindergarten through 7th grade (Pre-Algebra) at Liberty Common School.

Principles for Teaching Upper School Mathematics:

1. Many junior high schools in the United States employ an integrated approach to math that attempts to spread the material from Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 over the course of three years. The math material is sometimes diluted with social studies and science to solve “real world” problems. This curriculum is inconsistent with conceptual mathematics because in many cases the math concepts are presented in a fragmented way so that mastery is not developed and thus student understanding is reduced.
2. A fundamentally sound understanding of Algebra is critical to further studies in math and science.
3. The study of Geometry/Trigonometry develops logic and thinking skills necessary for higher level mathematics, science, mature writing composition, philosophy, and general research.
4. Through an in-depth study of Algebra and Geometry students become very familiar with multiple approaches to solving the same problem and develop the thought process (reasoning) involved in identifying the “best” option for a given problem.

The Weeks-Adkins Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 series supports these principles and has been approved for upper school mathematics courses at Liberty Common School.

Skill Development:

- Skills and understanding are heavily intertwined. Teachers must combine the approved math curriculum with proper emphasis on automation of skills
- Automaticity, the ability for students to immediately recognize math facts, takes practice. Automaticity allows students to focus their mental energies on the demands of more difficult math concepts. Teachers will establish expectations for math fact automaticity at each grade level.
- Fluency in executing basic math skills is essential for students to progress to the next level. Once concepts are taught, students should be assigned sufficient practice problems so that students develop fluency of the math operations.

Calculators:

- Calculators prevent automaticity and are not to be used for math in grades K-6.
- Calculators may be used in upper school math, science, and economics courses only after students have developed automaticity and mastery of the math concepts being used.
- Upper school teachers may develop additional policies and procedures for the use of calculators, as appropriate.

Curriculum Considerations:

- The approved curricula (Singapore Math and Weeks-Atkins) may not cover all math content in the Core Knowledge Sequence. In accordance with the school's Educational Priorities policy, teachers should follow the timeline in the approved math curriculum rather than the Core Knowledge Sequence. Teachers should verify, however, that the Core Knowledge math content for their grade level is covered at some grade level in the approved curriculum. Any gaps in the approved curriculum should be documented and provided to the Headmaster.
- Teachers must review Colorado state standards and ensure students have covered the required standards.

Supporting References:

- *Knowing and Teaching Elementary Math* by Liping Ma
- *Basic Skills Versus Conceptual Understanding*, by H. Wu, American Educator, Fall 1999
- *A Review of an Integrated High School Mathematics Program* by Diane Fogler, mathematicallycorrect.com

Adopted: 11-18-04

7.12 Science Fair

The Science Fair at Liberty Common School provides the opportunity for students to learn firsthand the foundational principles and skills involved in scientific inquiry. In addition the Science Fair satisfies the requirements of Colorado state science standard 1, as well as providing preparation for the CSAP. The primary goal of the Science Fair is to cultivate interest in science by using the “scientific method.” This includes the following steps:

1. An inquiry concerning some aspect of the natural world.
2. the collection of background information relevant to the area of inquiry
3. The formulation of a hypothesis.
4. The design of an experiment to test the proposed hypothesis.
5. Performing the experiment and data collection.
6. Data analysis to determine whether the hypothesis is supported.

In consideration of these goals, the following policies will apply to the Science Fair at Liberty Common School.

- Science fair projects will be experimentally based, including all of the elements described above; no descriptive, informational, “social science” (e.g. opinion surveys) and/or engineering projects will be allowed.
- Faculty approval will occur at defined stages to ensure that the Science Fair requirements are adequately addressed.
- In accordance with Liberty’s Technology Policy, students will learn to use Excel spreadsheet software as a part of science class. Students will demonstrate basic proficiency by using Excel for data collection and analysis of science fair projects.
- Science Fair projects will be judged to insure that all of the criteria described above are included. Originality, creativity, and scientific integrity (use of appropriate variable and controls) as applied to the particular project will be evaluated. Particular emphasis will be placed upon student understanding and “ownership” of the project.

Adopted: 1-20-05

7.13 Reading and Literacy

“The development of literacy will be one of the primary aims and focuses of effort in the School. This will include a great deal of reading from a variety of both fiction and non-fiction primary literature. Particularly in the early grades, the School will emphasize reading and more reading.” (LCS Charter)

Most American schools dedicate two or more hours each day to “literacy.” A majority of time is spent teaching children the fundamentals of reading strategies, such as making inferences, predicting, classifying, and “looking for the main idea.” The purpose of these exercises is to bolster test scores, independent of real knowledge. In contrast, Liberty strives to develop the appreciation of language, increase specific knowledge, and provide meaning to students through the achievement of Primary Literacy, Mature Literacy, and Moral Literacy.

Primary Literacy

Primary Literacy begins with phonic recognition. Our Charter states, *“In the early grades, students will receive explicit, systematic phonemic awareness and phonics instruction. Children will be provided deliberate, coherent, direct instruction in letter-sound correspondences. Practices which teach children to rely on word-memorization (the look-say method) and guessing (through illustration and/or context) will be avoided.”*

Once phonetic decoding skills are introduced, fluency must be developed. Fluency allows students to focus their mental energies on comprehension rather than decoding. Fluency

means “flowing,” and in this context it also means “fast.” **Fluency takes practice - a lot of it.** Riggs & Open Court Phonics, selected stories from Open Court, and selected books from Accelerated Reader (AR) have been approved by the BOD for the development of decoding skills and fluency at Liberty.

Teachers should use discretion and select Open Court stories and AR books which are content-based and meet the principles of this policy and the Literature Acquisition policy to the greatest extent possible. Child-centered stories and books of a trivial nature (see Mature Literacy below) should be avoided. If a teacher is uncertain as to the appropriateness of a particular book or story, he/she should consult the Headmaster and/or Academic Advisory Committee. AR books (and the corresponding tests) which do not meet the principles of this policy should not be maintained in the classroom.

Although the approved Open Court and AR materials are necessary for practicing early literacy skills, these books can quickly bore students and may not develop language appreciation. Language is at the heart of reading. The love of the sound of language will carry with a child, if it is properly developed. Children need to discover at an early age the peculiar satisfaction that comes from experiencing form in language, as in nursery rhymes and poetry. When this occurs, children will continue to prefer the sound of beautiful or interesting language as they later select books for meaning. Furthermore, we believe young children should be shown incrementally what is outside their realm of experience. Children who are exposed to complex speech patterns learn to express themselves earlier and more fluently than those spoken to in careful sentences.

In the early grades nursery rhymes, poetry, fairy tales, and captivating stories, beyond the students’ own reading abilities, will be read aloud to children. In addition to the development of language appreciation, this practice fosters the desire in children to master the difficult of skill of reading in order that the students might gain personal access to the exciting world of stories.

Mature Literacy

“Mature literacy develops as students become acquainted with a broad and rich body of knowledge and become familiar with many well-written, diverse and meaningful works of literature.” (LCS Charter)

According to E.D. Hirsch Jr., one of the reasons children lag behind in their reading ability, and are thus prevented from achieving mature literacy, is a huge vocabulary deficit. Hirsch advises, and Liberty advocates, time devoted to activities that “foster vocabulary, domain knowledge, and fluency.” Domain knowledge is the threshold level of knowledge needed to understand a topic. If one knows nothing of the game of baseball, for example, one can’t comprehend the sentence: “Jones sacrificed and knocked in a run.” The more domain knowledge acquired, the easier it becomes to read and understand a wider variety of material. Hirsch suggests, “Such knowledge could be conveyed through read-alouds, well-conceived vocabulary instruction, and a variety of cumulative activities that immerse children in word and world knowledge.”

In today’s schools, the teaching of the kind of specific knowledge needed to become a fully literate individual, is woefully inadequate. The texts and literature used in most American elementary schools are, for the most part, of a trivial nature. There is no shortage of material on topics like pets and sharing, but little on history, geography, and science. At Liberty, vocabulary and domain knowledge are developed by teaching the

rich body of content knowledge defined in the Core Knowledge Sequence. Vocabulary is further developed through Greek roots and Latin language instruction.

Finally, in order to immerse students in word knowledge and expose them to many well-written, diverse and meaningful works of literature, we have supplemented the Core Knowledge Sequence with (primarily) classic works of fiction – stories which have withstood the test of time. In accordance with Liberty’s Charter, *“The literature suggested by the Core Knowledge Sequence, as well as other literature that will be introduced, is chosen not only for its place in the core body of knowledge, its multi-cultural representation, and its rich use of language, but also because it provides access to deeper meaning of universal human problems, particularly those which preoccupy children's minds.”*

Additions to the Core Knowledge literature sequence, recommended read-aloud lists for primary grades, required reading lists for 4th-9th grades, and K-9 summer reading lists have been developed by the faculty and Academic Advisory Committee and approved by the Board. The books on these lists were selected with consideration to exposing children to literature that they might not otherwise encounter. The books are intended to nudge students toward higher levels, not just in matters of syntax and vocabulary, but also in sophistication of plot, character development, conflict and resolution, and the sustained reading of lengthy works rather than simply excerpts. Teachers should become familiar with the books on the lists for their grades so that they can assist students in selecting books according to student interest and ability.

Moral Literacy

At Liberty, character education is achieved through a coherent program of expectations, modeling, and study of historical and literary figures. Stories, poems, essays and other writings in our curriculum are intended to help children achieve moral literacy. That achievement involves recognizing the virtues (e.g. honesty, compassion, integrity, perseverance, courage, citizenship), understanding what they are in practice; and developing a desire to do what is right. How is this accomplished?

First, literacy gives children specific moral reference points. Literature and history are rich in moral literacy. Children need specific illustration of what is good and bad so that what is morally right and wrong can be known and promoted. Through the power of imagination children become vicarious participants in a story; they share in a hero’s choices and challenges and identify with his suffering and triumph. Because a child’s allegiances are based not so much on right versus wrong, but on who arouses his sympathy and who his antipathy, it is important to choose stories in which virtue wins over vice, as in fairy tales and other classic works. Frequent and strong identification with virtuous and victorious heroes allow children to rehearse and strengthen their commitment to goodness.

Second, reading and literacy promote fascination. Nothing compares with a story that begins “Once upon a time...” The imaginative process gives us hope because we want to believe that in the stories of our lives we too can make the right choices. Stories help us to make sense out of our lives. A plot. A purpose. A sense that our struggles have meaning.

Third, reading and literacy create a living link to our culture, its history and traditions.

Fourth, by teaching a domain knowledge, children will become a part of a common world, a community of moral persons. Reading affords us the opportunity to do what we can't often do in life - to become thoroughly involved in the inner lives of others. As with visiting foreign cultures, the sustained involvement with a character in a story enlarges a child's sympathies and gives them those broad, wholesome and charitable views that are the reward of both travel and reading. This involvement is not simply the sharing of adventures, but also of ideas, emotions, loyalties, and principles.

"...Shall we just carelessly allow children to hear any casual tales which may be devised by casual persons, and to receive into their minds ideas for the most part the very opposite of those which we should wish them to have when they are grown up? We cannot...Anything received into the mind at that age is likely to become indelible and unalterable; and therefore it is most important that the tales which the young first hear should be models of virtuous thoughts..." PLATO's *Republic*

Application of Liberty's Reading & Literacy Program

- In addition to regular homework assignments, each student should read or be read to every day.
- Teachers will set expectations for reading homework for grades K-3.
- Older students are required to read literature for homework as follows:
 - 4th - 6th grades - at least 20 minutes per night
 - 7th - 9th grades - at least 30 minutes per night
- If required reading is not assigned from the Core Knowledge Sequence or the approved additions to the Sequence, students shall select books from the approved reading lists for their grade(s). Required reading is limited to the approved reading lists in order to ensure that the principles of this policy are fulfilled.
- Students may submit suggestions for additions to the reading lists to their teachers or the Headmaster for consideration and possible approval.
- Students are encouraged to read additional books of their own choosing over and above the required reading. Parents are encouraged to steer their children toward selections which support this policy and the school's Literature Acquisition policy.
- All students are required to participate in the school's summer reading program. Teachers will set accountability measures to ensure students complete the summer reading.

Supporting References

- Liberty Common School Charter Application, October 1, 1996
- LCS K-3rd Grade Recommended Reading List
- LCS 4th Grade Reading List
- LCS 5th – 6th Grade Reading List
- LCS Upper School Reading List
- LCS Summer Reading List
- *The Vocabulary Deficit* by Andrew Wolfe, The New York Sun, May 2, 2003
- *The Book of Virtues*, William Bennett
- *On Learning to Read* by Bruno Bettelheim
- *The Uses of Enchantment* by Bruno Bettelheim
- *Books that Build Character* by William Kilpatrick
- *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong* by William Kilpatrick
- *Why Johnny Can't Read* by Rudolf Flesch

- *Beginning to Read* by Marilyn Jager Adams
- *Honey for a Child's Heart* by Gladys Hunt
- *Amusing Ourselves to Death* by Neil Postman
- *The Disappearance of Childhood* by Neil Postman
- *The New Read-Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease
- *The Plug-In Drug* by Marie Winn
- Core Knowledge Newsletter

Adopted: 2-17-05

7.14 Literature Acquisition

Liberty Common School will be discerning when selecting books purchased with our limited financial resources, as well as in accepting book donations, so that all materials at the school support the school's literacy goals as described in our Charter and the Reading and Literacy Policy. Books are to be selected according to criteria beyond current popularity. The quality of language, the value of a story to the human experience, the contribution to character education, and the support of the Core Knowledge Sequence will play a part in Liberty's selection of books. The majority of literature at the school should be generally acknowledged as traditional classics or children's classics. To support our character education program, we will make available books which provide examples, over and over again, of the reasons for living well.

This policy applies to any book or media available to students in the school's library or classrooms as well as books read to students by parents and teachers. To support their children's education at Liberty, parents are encouraged to understand the principles of this policy and assist their children in selecting books for outside reading which are consistent with school policy.

Literature Purchased by the School

Fiction - As described in our Charter and Reading and Literacy Policy, the focus of the school's reading program is the development of mature and moral literacy "*as students become acquainted with a broad and rich body of knowledge and become familiar with many well-written, diverse and meaningful works of literature.*" According to Neil Postman, whose ideas are frequently referenced in our Charter, "Human beings require stories to give meaning to the facts of existence... If our stories are coherent and plausible and have continuity, they will help us to understand why we are here, what we need to pay attention to, and what we may ignore." Our goal, then, is to immerse students in great stories.

How do we identify great stories, i.e. good literature? Great authors do not write stories so that students can identify the main characters or write plot summaries. Rather, they seek to portray characters struggling with the great issues of life (e.g. truth, love, war, faith, politics, even loneliness). As our Charter states, "*literature that will be introduced is chosen... because it provides access*

to deeper meaning of universal human problems.” We recognize these stories because they hold our interest, even as adults. We recognize these stories because the characters have something to learn. They develop and grow as the plot unfolds. We recognize these stories because readers desire to emulate their heroes. Good literature has withstood the filter of time, speaking to the universal struggles of humans throughout the ages.

Great stories are intended to be enlarging experiences, rather than cures prescribed for a given sociological, political or emotional problem. Genres which encourage narrow self-preoccupation, are void of meaningful character development, encourage acceptance of and identification with poor role models, or strive to give children “appropriate” attitudes about contemporary social issues (e.g. divorce, sex, war, gender) will be avoided. (See “Reading and Fiction” in the Student & Parent Handbook.)

The school will give first priority to the works of fiction required by the Core Knowledge Sequence, Board approved additions to the sequence, and books on the Board approved reading lists below:

- LCS K-3rd Grade Recommended Reading List
- LCS 4th Grade Reading List
- LCS 5th – 6th Grade Reading List
- LCS Upper School Reading List
- LCS Summer Reading List

Non-Fiction - The school will strive to provide content-based non-fiction books necessary to support the Core Knowledge Sequence, Board approved additions to the Sequence, and a student reference section. Teachers may recommend books for purchase (other than text books - which require the approval of the Board of Directors) which support their instruction of the curriculum. These suggestions should adhere to the parameters of this policy, the Charter, and the Reading and Literacy Policy.

Children’s ‘non-books,’ a prevalent trend in children’s non-fiction, are composed of tiny facts and snippets of interesting material with visually pleasing photography which have no sustained narrative, carefully developed argument, or background knowledge. They require little concentration or focused thinking, but like television, are instantly accessible. The most conspicuous example of a ‘non-book’ is the *Guinness Book of World Records*. Such books commonly are but diverting filler and fail to meet our criteria for prioritized acquisitions.

In addition to the student reference section, a teacher reference section and a parent education section will be acquired. The school will purchase copies of the Core Knowledge Sequence for each grade along with supporting books and references published by the Core Knowledge Foundation and the books referenced in the bibliography of our Charter.

Donated Literature

Classroom teachers and the school librarian will be the initial arbiters of the quality of books donated to the school. This discernment will require adherence to this policy, the Charter, and the Reading and Literacy Policy.

Media Acquisition

It is the policy of this school to expose students to subject matter through direct instruction, project, practice and literature to near exclusivity. Professional video productions should not serve as isolated exposition of subject matter. Video and film media will only be purchased and utilized to the extent that these materials supplement the pedagogy outlined herein, with the approval of the Headmaster.

Requests for Library Additions

Students, teachers and parents may request additions to the school's library and classroom collections. These requests will be considered with respect to the criteria outlined herein with the understanding that not all literature is destined to be considered "classic" and that student interest in reading should be affirmed and encouraged. These purchases will be subsequent to those necessary to satisfy the curriculum and required reading program, and must be consistent with the intent of this policy.

Questions about literature acquisition should be directed to the Academic Advisory Committee or the Headmaster. The Board of Directors is the final authority regarding any book or other media offered by the School for education or enjoyment.

Adopted: 3-24-05

7.15 Video Viewing

It is the policy of Liberty Common School to instruct the approved curriculum of the school without the use of video presentations.

This policy is supported by the attached report from the Academic Advisory Committee (November 17, 2005), which is incorporated herein by reference.

In rare instances with the written approval of the Headmaster, videos may be used to compliment the instruction of the approved curriculum. The presentation of videos is particularly discouraged for younger students who are developing reading skills. When an approved video is shown, it will be done interactively and with frequent stops in order that students make connections and inferences, are prompted for questions and are discouraged from daydreaming. When explicit visual images are not critical, audio presentations (story narration and music) are preferred. When motion is not critical (e.g. art, architecture), slides, photos, and posters are preferred.

No videos which represent literature taught at school will be shown to support the instruction of that literature. No videos will be shown for ‘entertainment’ purposes.

Teachers wanting to use video presentations in their instruction of the approved curriculum will complete the incorporated video presentation request form and submit it to the Headmaster for approval. The Headmaster may approve the following material:

- Video presentations of performances or works of art which are intended to be viewed (e.g. plays, operas, orchestras, ballets)
- Video presentations of actual events not geographically, temporally or practically accessible
 - (e.g. A rocket launch or volcano eruption)
 - Historically accurate documentaries - factual story telling which is not animated or dramatized (e.g. WWII documentary)
 - Science "dry labs" which explain and demonstrate principles not practical in a school setting
- Video presentations produced or dubbed in a foreign language where viewing is critical for comprehension.

(Adopted 032306)

7.16 Instruction of Composition

Great writing is two things: the ability to explain ideas with the appropriate level of detail for the reader and the ability to unfold those ideas in a captivating manner. Such an explication of ideas is critical to schooling because it completes the educational cycle as students solidify what they have learned by "tutoring" the anonymous reader. At Liberty we strive to give students 1) fundamental writing mechanics and 2) a depth of content knowledge while providing exposure and guidance in developing the 3) advanced thinking skills and 4) artistic aspects of writing.

How does one become proficient in writing? By reading excellent writing, talking about excellent writing, copying and modeling excellent writing frequently, and by having one's writing graded and critiqued by a good writer. This means our teachers must be good writers. Teachers must continue to develop, practice frequently, and desire to master their own writing abilities. They must have detailed knowledge of the requirements of the next grade, as well as knowledge and mastery of the skills taught in the previous grade.

CSAP is only one reference point for assisting us in realizing our composition goals. Much more is required for quality writing than proficiency on this test. The classroom teacher and parents, in concert with the rest of the staff and headmaster, will determine whether students are becoming proficient in writing. The headmaster will consider the judgment of the upper school English

and Literature teachers as the primary factor in evaluating elementary and upper school student writing ability.

1) Fundamental Writing Mechanics

Students will progressively develop good penmanship, learn the rules of spelling and grammar, and expand their vocabulary through reading good literature and direct development exercises.

- **Penmanship** practice is essential for organization of the mind and clarity of expression. Writing assignments will be handwritten. Students will not use word processors prior to completing the keyboarding course, and then only at the discretion of the teacher.

- **Spelling** is essential for clarity and is the basis for vocabulary. Liberty will incorporate a coherent and sequenced spelling pedagogy. The spelling word lists are built on three pillars: the study of Greek and Latin roots, words from the Core Knowledge Sequence and literature, and the Riggs spelling lists. These lists will be sequenced by grade to reduce redundancy and enrich vocabulary systematically. A master list of spelling words for each grade will be kept by each teacher.

- **Grammar** is an organizational tool for fluency, structure, and coherence. Traditional grammar is a beautiful and practical form of higher order thinking about language. All editing marks and grammar terminology will be consistent K-9. Student responses on homework or worksheets should be given in complete sentences when practical. Teacher feedback and corrections should also be provided in complete sentences when practical.

- **Vocabulary** is essential for reading comprehension and the conveyance of one's ideas. A well-developed vocabulary not only improves one's ability to communicate, but also one's ability to think. Latin and Greek based vocabulary, the words within our words, and vocabulary from literature will be used for direct vocabulary instruction.

2) Depth of Content Knowledge

Good writing is born in knowledge and discovery. Students must have something to say. They must write about that which they know. Students will write about what they are learning, the topics of classroom discussion, rather than new topics requiring independent student research. This does not preclude assignments requiring further research by the student on topics of classroom discussion. Students must read extensively. What they write must be based upon text. Students must show evidence of their claims in the texts which they have read.

"Creative writing" and "journaling" exercises which encourage students to put their thoughts and feelings on paper or to write on topics about which they possess little or no content knowledge do not promote writing mechanics, organizational skills, or thinking skills required for good composition. These

approaches are inconsistent with content-driven skill instruction and will not be used at Liberty.

3) Thinking Skills

Coherency and fluency are developed by mental modeling. This is accomplished through copying, reconstructing, and composing. Memorization and recitation are also critical and will be required. Renaissance schoolboys learned content through copy and exercise books. This form of practice helped produce the world's best writers and thinkers in their time. At Liberty students will practice the word-for-word copying of excellent writing enabling them to incorporate good ideas and language skills into their own writing, as they gradually acquire the "inner voice" of great writers of the past.

Myra Linden's "Improving Grammar and Other Writing Skills with Text Reconstruction," gives the proper technique for copy exercises:

1. Read as many words as you believe you can write correctly from memory (usually 5-10 words)
2. Write those words from memory, including all capitals and punctuation marks
3. Check back to the original sentence and correct any errors
4. Read the next group of words and repeat the steps.

Students in each grade will use copybooks for neatly copying word-for-word text from content rich sentences, paragraphs, poems, short essays (or pieces of other works) and speeches. Each teacher will compile a collection of content samples for this purpose. In addition, teachers will compile a progression of composition exercises by each student, which will include some copy work, most of which are graded, so that improvement over time can be tracked.

In addition to direct copying, students will practice reconstructing text through exercises (e.g. ordering sentences) and their own note taking. Students begin by learning to take notes and making key word outlines from short selections. They then narrate and re-write the passage from their notes to create a unique composition in their own words. All writing composition should include an outline with a consistent format. On major writing assignments, at least 2 to 3 rewrites should be required and turned in with the final paper.

4) Artistic Aspects

An immense amount of regular practice with continual feedback from teachers and parents will be required in order for students to internalize writing mechanics as well as to develop an appreciation for the artistic aspect of writing. The study of poetry, poetic meter, and the art of versification helps give writing life. Diction, inflection, and intonation when reading aloud or reciting also help to give life and form to language as students hear their own voice, and the voices of others speak. These elements of language must be core components of formal language study as well.

Writing guidelines may be used to encourage students to incorporate a variety of writing elements and styles into their work. However, strict adherence to checklists can cause stultified writing and should be avoided.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

Parental cooperation is needed. Parents are expected to review student assignments on a regular basis - checking for correct mechanics and accurate content, as well as fluency and coherency. Students are not allowed to edit or correct other students' written works.

The following programs have been approved to assist in the implementation of this policy. Any portions of these programs which are inconsistent with this policy, as determined by the headmaster, will not be used.

- **Getty-Dubay** is an italicized handwriting program for penmanship instruction. Books A-G will be used in grades K-6. Subsequent books (such as the adult version of the program and the calligraphy version) may be used for upper school elective courses. Teachers will hold students accountable for penmanship on handwritten assignments.
- **Riggs** Spelling lists will be used in K-4 grades.
- **Shurley Grammar** will be used for direct grammar instruction in K-3 grades.
- **Michael Clay Thompson** will be used in grades 4-9 for grammar, vocabulary, and poetics.
- *Writing with Structure and Style* by Andrew Pudewa will be used in all grades.
- *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White will be provided to each teacher for use as a fundamental reference for writing composition.

Adopted 02-15-07

8.0 Enrollment

8.1 Enrollment Policy

Per the Admissions Process defined in our charter application and contract with Poudre School District (PSD), Liberty Common School (LCS) will not make any distinction on account of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, or ancestry of any student who seeks admission. Furthermore, admission will be offered publicly to Kindergarten through 7th grade students with an effort to invite all families in the Poudre School District to carefully review the LCS Charter and enroll their children if the parents value the school's philosophy and educational offering.

Vacancies exist whenever the number of students enrolled in class is below that class' capacity. As vacancies occur, those vacancies will be filled using a lottery system (subject to the exceptions listed in section d below). Seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students will be eligible to fill a vacancy after participating in a conference between the student, parent, Headmaster and/or Dean of Students to discuss curriculum, required levels of performance, dress code, rules, and other expectations. This conference may include discussions of academic achievement in previous schools and written or verbal evaluations. Admission will be formally granted to the student at the discretion of the Headmaster.

The following lottery enrollment procedure will be implemented:

- a) Parents of potential new students must complete a *Lottery Pool Form*, at which time their child's name will be added to the appropriate grade-level Enrollment Pool. Potential students may be added to the Enrollment Pool at any time during the year.
- b) When a vacancy occurs during the school year, that vacancy may or may not be filled at the school's discretion. If LCS chooses to fill the vacancy and has more applicants in the Enrollment Pool than spaces available, the spaces will be filled by lottery among those students currently in the Enrollment Pool.
- c) To be included in the Enrollment Pool for the initial enrollment for the upcoming school year, parents must complete the *Lottery Pool Form* during the open enrollment period. Open enrollment closes on February 1 for the first lottery drawing, and this lottery to fill vacancies is held from February 2–10. This lottery determines the initial enrollment for the upcoming school year.
- d) Enrollment priority may be given to the following students:

- Students who have registered at LCS as of December 31, 1998 per the Admissions Process defined in the LCS charter application and our initial contract with PSD
- Siblings of enrolled students
- Children of LCS employees
- Students who reside within Poudre School District (as per Charter Contract, page 6, lines 203-205)

Adopted: 8-23-01

8.2 Classroom Placement Policy

The classroom placement policy is designed to promote educational excellence and fairness by optimizing the learning environment in both tracks at each grade level while meeting special needs of individual students.

Parents may provide a written request to the Headmaster for a specific teacher for their child. However, such requests are not guaranteed because they can lead to imbalances in the classroom environment. Parents are encouraged to complete a confidential Student Classroom Profile Form to assist teachers in determining classroom assignments. Sending and receiving teachers at each grade level will use the information from this form in addition to their knowledge of classroom dynamics, special needs, availability of volunteers, diversity of student achievement, etc. to determine classroom assignments in order to provide a fair and common education for all students.

Parents are required to submit a Student Classroom Profile Form

Adopted 6-28-01

9.0 FINANCES AND ACCOUNTING

9.1 LCS Fundraising Policy

LCS Board of Directors (BOD) and the Core Knowledge Charter School Foundation have chosen to support the following specific fundraising activities:

1. One annual all school fundraiser that targets a specified donation amount from each Liberty family (donation per family not per child). Funds generated are used to support the projects identified in the annual all school fundraiser letter. Generally, the projects identified are based on the greatest need and directly benefit the students and/or the school community.
2. Book fairs held one or two times per year with funds generated going for library support.
3. Discretionary funds generated from cereal box tops, Target Credit Card (1% of sales to LCS), cartridge recycle program, Toddy's

receipts and Albertson's card will support program(s) or project(s) determined on an annual basis by the Headmaster in conjunction with the Dean of Students and the Fundraising Committee Chair.

4. Eco-week fundraisers will be used to help defer the expenses to send the sixth graders to attend Eco-week. Any funds remaining in a given year will be used to support other projects that relate to the study of Ecology or will be added to help defer the costs of the next group of sixth graders attending the program.
5. School picture profits from individual and classroom pictures will support the yearbook.
6. Roller skating night profits will be used to support the athletics program.
7. Clothes closet or other clothing program funds will support the scholarship program to help children in need of assistance to purchase dress code clothing.
8. The Sock Hop held once a year with profits used to buy supplies and materials needed for the event the following year.

Additional fundraisers may be added to the list if they successfully complete the approval process outlined below.

In an effort to minimize the number of times we solicit donations from our parent community and to ensure the success of the approved fundraising efforts, the following LCS fundraising guidelines were established:

- New fundraising ideas must be approved initially by the Fundraising Committee Chairperson, who will then present the idea to the BOD for approval.
- All other committees and/or individuals interested in developing fundraising ideas must follow the same approval process.
- LCS will not support fundraisers connected with personal businesses, such as, Tupperware and Discovery Toys.
- All school fundraisers will be limited in number, will avoid door-to-door student solicitation, and will complete the approval process prior to commencing.

Adopted 3-23-00

9.2 The Financial Condition Policy

With respect to operating the School in a sound and prudent fiscal manner, the Headmaster may not jeopardize the financial condition of the School. Accordingly, the Headmaster may not:

- 1) Cause the School to incur indebtedness other than trade payables incurred in the ordinary course of doing business and short term equipment leases.

- 2) Use funds from grants to the School for any purpose other than the uses stated in the application approved by the granting entity, even on a short-term or temporary basis.
- 3) Use restricted contributions for any purpose other than that required by the contribution.
- 4) Settle payroll and debts in other than a timely manner.
- 5) Allow expenditures to deviate materially from BOD-stated priorities.
- 6) Create new job positions at the school without BOD approval, or complete a salary plan for staff that exceeds BOD guidelines for the overall annual payroll increase.

The annual audited fund balance shall include amounts sufficient to maintain any required reserves as may be necessary to comply with Colorado State Statutes. These reserves include a set aside of 3% of budgeted expenditures to satisfy the requirements of the Tabor Act. Other amounts from the Unreserved Fund Balance may be specifically designated by the Board of Directors to recognize stated objectives. \$150,000 is designated for Bond facility repair and replacement as required by the Bonding authority. The Undesignated Unreserved Fund balance shall be called *General Contingency*. The Headmaster may not allow the funds in the *General Contingency* to be less than \$500,000 without approval of the Board of Directors.

Adopted: 2-25-99

Amended: 12-16-04

9.3 Student Funds

Student activity funds must be deposited in specific accounts or investments authorized by law. Funds must be expended in accordance with Liberty Common School financial procedures for the purposes authorized by the student organizations. Student activity funds are subject to annual audit as part of the school's annual audit. The board will establish supervision of all funds raised by any student group or student organization using the school's name. The board may also provide for a continuing audit of student funds by school personnel. The Headmaster shall establish procedures for student activity funds.

Adopted 6-28-01

9.4 Cash Management System

See Cash Management in Procedure Manual

9.5 Investment Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The primary purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the Board of Directors (BOD), Financial Advisory Committee (FAC), staff and consultants in the discharging of their responsibilities over the investing of trust, endowment, annuity and other funds which have been committed to them. The policy is designed to achieve an appropriate balance between long-term appreciation and current income by investing in securities and other investments of high quality. Preservation of capital (on a current value basis) is a major goal, and hence highly speculative investments are to be avoided. Only the BOD, upon recommendation of the FAC, has the power to amend, revoke or add to this policy.
- 1.2. As a guide, this policy is subordinate to any Federal, State or local law, or the provisions of any trust or donor restrictions which may be applicable to the investment responsibilities and activities of the FAC acting on behalf of the BOD. The individuals having responsibility for carrying out the provisions of the policy are to be cognizant of laws and trust and donor's restrictions, which may be applicable to specific investment assets. This policy shall govern all school owned or controlled investment assets unless otherwise exempted by Board action.
- 1.3. It is expected that the provisions of this policy will be reviewed annually by the FAC to insure timeliness and relevance to current investment goals and environmental conditions.

2. Responsibility for Investment Policy and Administration

- 2.1. Responsibility for the development, approval, or amendment of this investment policy is that of the BOD upon recommendation of the FAC.
- 2.2. The FAC, which is appointed by the BOD, has the responsibility of carrying out the provisions of this policy. This includes, but is not limited to, such activities as evaluating and recommending specific investment opportunities and transactions. The committee may seek the guidance from any source it deems appropriate in the conduct of its duties.
- 2.3. The school's Business Manager is responsible to implement, report on and maintain adequate records of investment decisions recommended by the FAC and approved by the BOD. The Business Manager will have delegated responsibilities for entering into specific investment transactions without prior review if investment decisions are of a renewal of term of existing investments. Decisions to utilize new investment instruments must be reviewed by the FAC and approved by the Board of Directors. It

is expected that the Business Manager will provide timely and informative investment status reports to the FAC and the BOD.

- 2.4. A professional investment manager or advisor may be recommended for engagement by the FAC with final approval from the BOD. The professional manager is to be aware of and follow all the provisions of this policy unless specifically exempted by written notification from the BOD. All compensation rates and terms will be set by the FAC and approved by the BOD, at the time of engagement. Investment managers and advisors shall be subject to periodic, at least annual, performance reviews by the FAC using performance measurements mutually agreed upon.

3. Investment Goals and Objectives

- 3.1. General Philosophy. In general, funds held for investment are to support the educational objectives of Liberty Common School through the production of income and preservation of principal. Investment decisions are to be prudent, without taking undue or unnecessary risks. Highly speculative investments are to be avoided and are to be liquidated as soon as practical if received as a gift in trust or endowment. Unless specific provisions of a trust or endowment provide for otherwise, investments should be of high quality and diversified as to types of fixed income securities, cash and equivalents. Government obligations from Treasury and Federal agencies are preferred over commercial notes and mutual funds.
- 3.2. Income Distribution—"Pay-Out" Definition. The term "pay-out rates" is defined to be the income return currently paid, credited, or distributed for the benefit of trustor, annuitant or endowment beneficiary. It is to be distinguished from income return, which is retained and added to principal (reinvestment). Endowment funds' "pay-out" assumes a "total return concept," that is, income eligible for "pay-out" includes net realized and unrealized capital gains and losses in addition to traditional cash income yields. Trust fund and annuity fund "pay-out" rates and income definition are determined by the specific provisions of the applicable agreement.
- 3.3. Endowment Funds. The FAC, representing the BOD, has the delegated responsibility for investment management of all the Liberty Common School endowment funds. The FAC will specifically authorize and inform the BOD of individual endowments to be managed separately or by others. Agreements established with trust departments from financial institutions are preferred. Asset appreciation, long-term growth, maintenance of purchasing power and preservation of capital are the primary investment objectives of endowment funds.

- 3.4. Trust Funds. The FAC, representing the BOD, has the delegated responsibility for investment management of all the Liberty Common School trust funds. The FAC will specifically authorize and inform the BOD of the trusts to be managed separately or by others. Agreements established with trust departments from financial institutions are preferred. Investment objectives for trust funds are current income earnings equal to, or in excess of the required trust "pay-out" rates, and preservation of capital and maintenance of corpus (i.e., remainder interest) purchasing power. The investment strategy for any specific trust will also take into account the individual income and other needs of the trustor or other income beneficiary. (These objectives apply also to "Pooled Income Fund Agreements.")
- 3.5. Annuity Funds. The FAC, representing the BOD, has the delegated responsibility for investment management of all the Liberty Common School annuity funds. The FAC will specifically authorize and inform the BOD of any annuities to be managed separately or by others. The primary investment objective is to provide sufficient cash flow from income and principal to fund the required annual annuity payments to the donor or trustor. The investment strategy for any specific annuity trust will also take into account the individual annuitant income needs.
- 3.6. Limitations and Constraints. Investment in individual securities should be limited to those companies whose principal or subsidiary business is not in conflict with the general philosophies and specific policies of the school. Securities which are received as gifts in trust or endowment and do not meet these qualifications or the investment goals and objectives outlined in this policy will be liquidated as soon as possible, unless specifically prohibited by terms of the trust or endowment agreement.
4. Investment Composition
 - 4.1. Short-Term Investments and Liquidity. Short-term investments can be made in insured or collateralized obligations of approved (U.S.A.) banking institutions, triple "A-rated" corporate commercial paper, and obligations of the federal government. Short-term investments are fixed income investments with maturities of less than two years.
 - 4.2. Long-Term Debt Securities (Fixed Income). Investments in long-term debt securities are to be limited to government obligations of the Treasury and Federal agencies. Long-term investments are fixed income investments with maturities of less than five years.
 - 4.3. Marketability. All debt securities should be readily marketable.
5. Performance Standards

- 5.1. The measurement of investment performance is an important part of the annual review of this investment policy. Performance goals are designed to be realistic and achievable within the resources (experience, expert counsel, time, etc.) available to the FAC. Although performance will be measured annually, change in policy, managers, committee members will be done with prudence giving reasonable time for achievement of goals. Due to their fees and costs, professional investment (money) managers will be expected to achieve returns and growth superior to the goals established for the Business Manager, as may be set forth by the FAC and the BOD.
- 5.2. The minimum or "base-line" performance standard is that the provisions of this investment policy are to be complied with. Adequate records, clear and comprehensive reports and analysis are to be maintained and prepared in order to document compliance with the various and specific provisions of this investment policy.
6. Transaction Authorization and Custodial Responsibility
 - 6.1. Authorization Thresholds. Investments considered as part of the Operating Fund, Restricted Fund or Endowment Fund are managed directly by the Business Manager. Any investment transactions under consideration that may represent a departure from current investments, as previously reviewed by the FAC, must be recommended by the FAC and approved by the BOD. The Business Manager will have authority to rollover any existing securities within the Operating and Restricted Funds assuming reasonable market conditions. In these types of security transactions, no authorization thresholds apply. New money received to the school in the amount of \$100,000 or greater, which may represent a short-term or long-term investment opportunity, will require the Business Manager to seek advise from the FAC as to the most suitable investment instrument to utilize.
 - 6.2. Custody of Assets. All securities, notes and other investment assets are to be kept in safekeeping -- under the custodial control of either a reputable brokerage firm or bank. Securities delivered to the school shall be transferred to the Business Manager for safekeeping with supporting receipt and inventory records kept by the school's bookkeeper. Collateral pledged on short-term investments must be either in the possession of the school's bookkeeper or a reliable third party custodian. The Business Manager is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all investment assets are adequately secure and that proper procedures are established to control transfers and remittances.

Adopted : 11-20-03

10.0 FACILITIES

10.1 Room use Policy

See Procedure Manual for additional information

10.2 Building Use

It is the Board's policy to make the school property, building and facilities available to associated school groups and the community when not in use for school activities. Permission for use of school property does not constitute board or school endorsement of any organization, the beliefs of an organization or group, the expression of any opinion regarding the nomination, retention, election or defeat of any candidate, or expression of any opinion as to the passage or defeat of any issue.

The board reserves the right, and delegates to the administration the right, to refuse approval or to cancel any and all activities for the use of school property, building or facility when it determines that such action is necessary for the best interests of the school.

Refer to Procedure Manual for other building procedures.

Adopted: 6-28-01

10.3 Non-School Use of Facilities

The purpose of this policy is to define the expectations and procedures for the accepted use of the school facility by clubs or associations that are a part of the greater Liberty School community and by other outside groups who provide healthy activities for children. Interested parties may apply for consideration and will follow a process for qualification.

To Qualify:

- Clubs, groups or associations must be nonprofit entities formed to provide activities for youth.
- Proof of Liability Insurance is required and Liberty School must be identified as a named insured. The insurance coverage limit is negotiable and depends on the scheduled activity.
- Users of facilities will respect the property at all times.
- Reserved spaces are used for intended purposes and for appropriate activities.

- Must prepay for rental use and accept all terms of the application/agreement.

The Process:

- Request and complete the applicant portion of the Non-School Use of Facilities Rental /Application-Agreement Form and submit to the Business Office for processing. Allow two weeks for determination and approval.
- Upon approval, submit proof of insurance and prepayment.
- Business Manger will contact group representative to confirm scheduled dates and times for use.
- A designated person for the group will interview with the Business Manager in order to finalize arrangements.

Fee Structure:

- ✓ Gymnasium - \$50 Per Hour plus \$10 per hour for custodial/supervisor labor.
- ✓ Stage/Multipurpose Auditorium (same as for gymnasium)
- ✓ Classroom - \$20 Per Hour plus \$10 per hour for custodial/supervisor labor.
- ✓ Sports Fields - \$10 Per Hour plus \$10 per hour for custodial/supervisor labor.

Adopted: September, 2002

11.0 ATHLETICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

12.0 SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONS

12.1 Official Spokespersons

The Board chairman, Board vice chairman, and Headmaster will serve as the official spokespersons for Liberty Common School. The Business Manager may speak on non-academic issues.

Adopted: 9-05-02