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## SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

### SCHOOL PERSONNEL

To leave a voice mail message for a staff member, be sure to press “1” after the initial recording, followed by a voice mail number from below.

#### ADMINISTRATION

Headmaster .....	Russell Spicer .....	118
Dean of Students .....	Casey Churchill .....	111
Business Manager .....	Tim Ricketts .....	119
Bookkeeper/Admin. Assistant .....	Bev Hanawalt .....	112
Receptionist .....	Jill Ronen .....	110
Registrar .....	Marianne Rieb .....	114
Papaprofessional/Health Tech ..	Angie Selgren .....	113

#### INSTRUCTORS

Kindergarten .....	Tina Shockley .....	695
Kindergarten .....	Wendy Anderson .....	613
1 <sup>st</sup> .....	Amy Tamez .....	611
1 <sup>st</sup> .....	Beth Olson .....	693
2 <sup>nd</sup> .....	Steve Ronen .....	621
2 <sup>nd</sup> .....	Gretchen Meister .....	622
3 <sup>rd</sup> .....	Cheryl Von Barga .....	631
3 <sup>rd</sup> .....	Cherie Pedersen .....	632
4 <sup>th</sup> .....	Sara Nuedling .....	641
4 <sup>th</sup> .....	Jeff Siener .....	642
5 <sup>th</sup> .....	Alison Wager .....	651
5 <sup>th</sup> .....	Kambri Schupp .....	652
6 <sup>th</sup> .....	Rob Huey .....	661
6 <sup>th</sup> .....	Denise Chrisafulli .....	662
English Specialist .....	Jared Dybzinski .....	671
History Specialist .....	Duane Staton .....	674
Math Specialist .....	Torgun Lovely .....	678
Math/Science .....	Ken Vetter .....	676
Science Specialist .....	Dawn Karr .....	675
Computer Technology .....	Bill Kranz .....	687
Spanish .....	Sarah Aguilar-Francis .....	689
Art .....	Marie-Louise Borak .....	682
Art .....	Simon Jobman .....	686
Music .....	Jay Regan .....	683
Band Director .....	Dave Lunn .....	684
Physical Education .....	Jon Wilcox .....	685
Physical Education .....	Donny Reeves .....	688
Academic Support Coordinator ..	Linda Thelen .....	167
Latin/History .....	Marques Kem .....	677
Librarian .....	Connie Behr .....	673
British Literature .....	Gerard Lavin .....	672

#### SUPPORT STAFF

Teacher’s Assistant-Kinder .....	Heidi Kirkman/Connie Trout .....	610
Teacher’s Assistant-1 <sup>st</sup> .....	Kristin Heston .....	612
Teacher’s Assistant-2 <sup>nd</sup> .....	Gina Anderson .....	694
Teacher’s Assistant-3 <sup>rd</sup> .....	Jenna Allen .....	691
Teacher’s Assistant-4 <sup>th</sup> .....	Julie Russell .....	692
Teacher’s Assistant-5 <sup>th</sup> .....	Natalie van Hoesen .....	699
Teacher’s Assistant-6 <sup>th</sup> .....	Tiffany Burgess .....	696

Academic Support Team .....	Carol Paxton.....	142
Academic Support Team .....	Annalee Brooks.....	120
Academic Support Team.....	Alison Meighen.....	120
Academic Support Team .....	Connie Logsdon.....	150
Academic Support Team .....	Susan Porter.....	142
Academic Support Team .....	Brett Berg .....	142
Academic Support Team.....	Rhonda Hilpert.....	142
Academic Support Team.....	Chris Walker.....	142

Maintenance Coordinator .....	Dennis Vigil.....	121
Custodian .....	Jose Olveda	
Custodian .....	Viola Olveda	

**TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

The main office number is 482-9800. You can reach the front office by pressing 3 after the initial greeting. To report a student absence, press 2.

School Phone Number .....	482-9800
School Absence Line .....	482-9800, ext. 2
School Fax Line.....	482-8007

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Wade Darrow.....	225-1778
Terrie Fisher .....	223-0989
Kayleen Fraley.....	377-8850
Craig Horton .....	207-1454
Dave Kleen.....	377-9579
Rob Lanciotti.....	225-0110
Jeff Webb .....	282-0061
Wade Darrow.....	225-1778
Board of Directors Email .....	<a href="mailto:bod@libertycommon.org">bod@libertycommon.org</a>

**LIBERTY WEB ADDRESS**

Please visit the Liberty web site regularly: [libertycommon.org](http://libertycommon.org)

**HOT LUNCH PRICES**

Student (Includes beverage) .....	\$3.00
Adult (with beverage).....	\$3.00
Beverage only.....	\$ .35

**Lunch Program Coordinator**

Julie Whitmore.....	482-9800, ext. 164
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Low-income families may apply for the school district's free or reduced lunch program.

## **SECTION II: OVERVIEW OF LIBERTY COMMON SCHOOL**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Liberty Common School is to provide excellence and fairness in education through a common foundation. This is achieved by successfully teaching a contextual body of organized knowledge, the values of a democratic society, and the skills of learning. In short, we teach “common knowledge, common virtues, and common sense.”

Our mission statement was developed from the following set 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, calculation, and thinking—are most meaningfully learned from a combination of 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 among others: 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 or her primary role as an educator.
7. The principal determinants of individual academic success are individual ability and effort. The policies of Liberty (grading, discipline, homework, and teaching) 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 Liberty acknowledges that children can and should be held accountable for their own schoolwork and behavior, with the support of teachers and parents.

## PHILOSOPHY

Assumptions about how one learns, the purposes and goals of learning, and what constitutes effective teaching are what define an educational philosophy. Liberty's educational philosophy is known as agency education, or classical education. It forms our decisions on how knowledge, skills, and democratic values should be taught and how students, parents, and teachers should work together to accomplish the portion of education that occurs during formal schooling.

The individuals who have most clearly identified and characterized the major issues of education reform as well as put forth the best solutions are E.D. Hirsch ([The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them](#), [Cultural Literacy](#)), William Kilpatrick ([Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong](#)), Neil Postman ([The End of Education](#), [Amusing Ourselves to Death](#), [The Disappearance of Childhood](#)), Diane Ravitch, Thomas Sowell ([Conflict of Visions](#)), and Jacques Barzun ([Begin Here](#)). We ask all parents to please read [The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them](#) and [Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong](#). Copies are available in the library. We also encourage parents to read the other books from this list in order to gain a better understanding of the philosophy of this school.

The chief metaphor of classical education is *the 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 an odyssey of the mind and heart, which will steer them toward 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 Habits of Mind of different disciplines, the student is able to engage in mental modeling, which is possible only when one's broad background knowledge allows her or 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 beginning of the moral journey follows 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 rightly and act wisely becomes instinctive. As those habits become more and more internalized, the student journeys closer to self-reliance.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

Our goal is to provide a rich and balanced educational opportunity for all students. High standards are at the heart of our expectations, although we recognize every student has unique abilities, interests, and motivations. Parents encourage their child's success by monitoring progress in school and at home, and by participating as fully as possible in the Liberty community. Class work and homework are designed to challenge each student to make the most of his or her talents.

Liberty's curriculum is based on the Core Knowledge Sequence for grades K-8 (which can be purchased on the Core Knowledge website <http://www.coreknowledge.org>). Portions of it can be found in the book series *What Your 1<sup>st</sup> Grader Needs to Know*, *What Your 2<sup>nd</sup> Grader Needs to Know*, etc. It establishes the "master plan" for content to be explored at each grade level. Resources are obtained from many varied sources. Ninth grade classical honors program builds upon the Core Knowledge Sequence with rigorous academics and promotion of the thinking framework.

## **Knowledge**

Liberty has selected the Core Knowledge Foundation's Curriculum Sequence as the framework of its curriculum. The Core Knowledge is distinguished by planned progressions of specific knowledge in history, geography, mathematics, science, language arts, and fine arts. The ninth grade classical honors program includes economics; biology, ICPE; survey of British literature; geometry; and algebra II. Our students also have the option to take courses in foreign language, Latin, physical education, band, choir, computer technology, and other electives.

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, all students 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. Liberty's teachers will be able to rely on that shared background knowledge about the students, which will enable them to build sequentially on that knowledge year by year. The ninth grade classical honors curriculum continues the goals of the Core Knowledge curriculum with solid knowledge and skills that build on the previous knowledge and prepares students for further high school study.

As used above we define knowledge not in the simplistic sense of mere facts but in the broader sense of the word, as follows: Knowledge consists of the facts, the relations between them, the thinking about them, and the effort to understand and connect them. It is not out of ignorance that we discover understanding. It is exactly because of what we already know that we can know more, that we can discern organizing principles, make and test hypotheses, and act rationally.

## **Skills**

The skills of learning, namely, reading, writing, speaking, listening, calculation, problem solving, and exercising critical judgment, are best taught through the content of a body of organized knowledge. The development of literacy is one of the primary aims and focuses at Liberty. This includes a great deal of reading from a variety of both fiction and non-fiction primary literature. Particularly in the early grades, Liberty emphasizes reading and more reading. In the early grades, students receive explicit, systematic phonemic awareness; phonics instruction, and regular assessment with individual progress closely monitored. Children are 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) are 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 representation and various cultures, and its rich use of language, but also because it provides access to the deeper meaning of universal human problems, particularly those which preoccupy children's minds.

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

Liberty teaches thinking skills not as a stand-alone course, but rather as instruction integrated within the content. Additionally, we teach the more specific 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. 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. Habits of Mind or the ways of thinking specific to literature, language, art, and music are also taught.

The development of skills requires time, thought, and active engagement of the visual and verbal imagination. We encourage students to replace non-instructional television watching, which is passive and discourages creative play, with the myriad of activities that will foster the development of imagination and skills. 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. Excessive viewing (greater than 10 hours per week) is discouraged.

## **Values**

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, self-respect, and self-reliance. These values are taught from the content of the curriculum by inference and example, and also through our teaching methods.

## 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 4<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> 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 illustrations 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:**  
**4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> grades - at least 20 minutes per night**  
**7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading List
- LCS 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> 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*

LCS Policy 7.13

Adopted: 2-17-05

## **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 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are intended to be read to the child by the parent (or another capable adult). Students entering 4<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> 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.

LCS Policy 7.10 Adopted: 5-15-03

Amended: 6-03-04

## 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 that 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" below.)

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 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading List
- LCS 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> 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) that 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.

*LCS Policy 7.14*

*Adopted: 3-24-05*

## Reading and Fiction

Children who read have broader sympathies and a larger picture of life. They develop more powerful, healthy, and discerning imaginations. That is, if they read the sort of stories that present them not only with memorable pictures, but also with dramas in which they imaginatively become vicarious participants in the story, sharing the hero's and heroine's choice and challenges. They meet characters who have something to learn; otherwise they would not be interested in them. If the story grips them, they root for the hero, suffering with him and cheering him on. This imaginative process of participation and identification gives them hope because they want to believe that in the stories of their lives they too can make the right choices.

The question for the child is not "Do I want to be good?" but "Who do I want to be like?" Imagination is one of the keys to virtue. It's not enough to know what's right. It's also necessary to desire to do right. Plato said, "Children should be brought up in such a way that they will fall in love with virtue and hate vice. How does a child fall in love with virtue? The right kind of stories, said Plato. Stories, because of their hold on the imagination, can help create an emotional attachment to goodness. The dramatic nature of stories enables us to "rehearse" moral decisions, strengthening our solidarity with the good.

Reading affords us the opportunity to do what we often can't do in life, to become thoroughly involved in the inner lives of others. At one and the same time, reading carries us out to others and becomes the mirror by which we discover ourselves more fully, exactly because we have escaped self-concern. Parents should be aware that, while reading is potentially an enlarging experience, it can also have an opposite effect. The danger facing children's literature does not come from ogres and villains that haunt the pages of fairy tales and fantasy stories; the danger lies, rather, in the continued proliferation of norm-less books that cater to anxiety and self-absorption, and have nothing to teach about life except, perhaps, that whatever happens is okay. The danger is not that such books lead to a life of crime, but to a life of boredom, selfishness, and limited horizons.

Sooner or later your child will come across a genre that encourages narrow self-preoccupation. The early teen years are obviously a time of introspection and rumination, and there is an entire literature devoted to ensuring that no emotional scab remains unpicked. This is the genre known as the realistic problem novel for young adults. The intent of such books is mainly therapeutic: to help a child with a similar problem learn self-acceptance; to let him know that there are other children just like him, with problems and concerns just like his. There are some serious drawbacks to this problem approach. One is the problem of what might be called "trendy didacticism." Many writers of this genre see books as cures to be prescribed for a given sociological, political, or emotional problem. So much of this literature wants to give children "appropriate" attitudes about divorce, sex, war, and gender. A second drawback in the problem novel genre is that self-acceptance rather than moral growth is called maturity. Perhaps the main trouble with literature intended as therapy is that there is not self-forgetfulness. The willingness to let go of self-concern is requisite for both moral and mental health.

Fortunately, there is no shortage of stories of another sort: books that challenge, thrill, excite, and awaken young readers to the potential drama of life, especially to the drama of a life lived in obedience to the highest ideals. Such books have something better to offer than therapeutic reassurance. Like true friends, they encourage us to be our best selves.

## MATHEMATICS

### 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 Foerster-Alg I and Alg II and McDougal-Little Geometry 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-Adkins) 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](http://mathematicallycorrect.com)

LCS Policy 7.11 Adopted: 11-18-04

**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 (7<sup>th</sup> 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:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade:** Crabtree Publishing, *The Science of Living Things*
- 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>:** Prentice Hall, *Explorer Series*
- 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>:** Glencoe, *Introduction to Physical Science*
- 9<sup>th</sup> grade:** Prentice Hall, *Biology* by Miller and Levine

*LCS Policy 7.3 Adopted: 9-07-00 Amended: 1-20-05*

**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 lifelong 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 our classrooms.

1. Parent volunteers are an integral part of Liberty Common School. Parents are not only welcome, but they are crucial if we are to have high quality teaching of the entire curriculum each year. Parent-volunteer activities are coordinated by Liberty's Volunteer Support Team. All persons volunteering at Liberty Common School must have a current, signed volunteer application, agreement form, and volunteer oath form on file with the School. Volunteer applications are subject to background checks. All volunteers are required to complete the volunteer application on the Poudre School District website found at [www.pdschools.org](http://www.pdschools.org).
2. The teacher has primary responsibility for the classroom and student learning within the classroom.
3. The teacher's "individual teaching style" sets the tone for the classroom. This includes everything from delivery of the educational program to classroom management.
4. 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 his or her style or find a more compatible setting within Liberty to volunteer.
5. There will be a classroom volunteer coordinator (CVC) for each primary and intermediate class. The CVC is responsible for organizing and delegating the volunteer needs of the teacher, classroom, and parents.
6. Any grievance or concern a parent has with a classroom or a teacher will be handled by the procedures defined in this handbook.
7. Under **NO CIRCUMSTANCE** is it 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."*
8. Parents are responsible for their pre-school children. They must remain with you at all times.

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 welcomed 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.

## **VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Volunteers at Liberty Common School shall:**

- be on-time and reliable in fulfilling volunteer commitments.
- exercise kindness while volunteering for Liberty Common School.
- respect and abide by the confidential nature of anything they might see or hear while volunteering.
- be prompt and dependable for the times they agree to volunteer.
- conduct themselves in a businesslike and fair manner, without partiality to individual students.
- motivate children to work and help them succeed in school.
- graciously accept direction and constructive criticism from staff members for which they are volunteering.
- acknowledge the teacher as the authority in the classroom.
- NOT confront a teacher regarding disagreements or differences of opinion in the presence of children.
- be respectful of the classroom by not disrupting a teacher's instructional time or student learning.
- schedule all in-classroom volunteer hours through the Classroom's Volunteer Coordinator (CVC) or the teacher.
- Dress modestly and appropriately for a school environment (i.e. midriff covered, no short shorts/skirts, no spaghetti straps).
- wear a current volunteer nametag at all times when volunteering at the school.
- sign in and out at the front office when volunteering at the school.
- record all LCS volunteer hours, including those worked outside of school, on the log sheet in the front office.
- ensure that each child in the car has a properly functioning seatbelt when transporting students.
- provide a copy of a valid driver's license and proof of insurance to the front office, if transporting students.
- ensure that all children (e.g. younger siblings, non-students) accompanying the volunteer on school premises are supervised at all times. *(Children may only accompany volunteers in the resource room, health office, lunchroom, hallways, and at recess.)*
- arrange for a replacement in the event the volunteer cannot meet their scheduled obligations.

- call the school (482-9800) 24 hours in advance and inform appropriate staff of any volunteer replacements via voice mail. (*Voice mail numbers are listed in the Student & Parent Handbook.*)

LCS Policy 6.2      Adopted 4-22-05

## **TEACHERS AND PROFESSIONALISM**

Teachers are the center of the mind and the 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 after individual ability and effort, the organizational structure implemented at Liberty is most influential in determining academic achievement. Liberty's teachers are expected to implement Liberty's academic mission. In the classroom, the teacher is in charge. Outside of the classroom, teachers receive professional guidance with respect to specific goals and objectives from the Board of Directors 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 enables them to give the very best of themselves to the education of their students. The teacher's style sets some basic parameters for the parents as well as the children. Within those parameters, and at the teacher's and/or headmaster's discretion, parents have all the opportunity to assist the teacher. A high level of parental involvement is actively encouraged, and teachers are expected to incorporate parental volunteer efforts in the classroom as much as is reasonably possible. Parents with children in a classroom will have the priority for volunteer opportunities in that class.

The central role of teachers in the classroom deserves respect. All teachers accept responsibility for teaching the entire curriculum, both content and skills, in a way congenial to the school's philosophy toward values and the student. This will be defined as their primary role.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The primary responsibility of the Board of Directors (BOD) is to oversee and establish the educational and operational policies of the school consistent with the vision, philosophy, and mission of the school as defined by our Charter Application. Implementation of the policies and procedures, and daily operations, are the responsibility of Liberty's administrative personnel. The BOD meets once a month to discuss school operations and hear reports. It is during these meetings that they examine operations, establish new policies, and review and change existing policies as needed. Requests, concerns, and information items may be offered by parents, students, and teachers for public discussion during community comment at BOD meetings.

Regular meetings of the BOD will be held not less than once each month. All regular meetings are open to the public, and your attendance is welcome. Meeting agendas are posted 24 hours in advance at the front office door. For issues involving personnel, or other sensitive matters, the Board may vote by two-thirds majority to adjourn to Executive Session following the regularly scheduled Board Meeting agenda.

Documents regarding the governance of the school (Charter, contract, by-laws, BOD policies) are on our web site and are available in the office for perusal or purchase by parents.

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

We have received much support from individuals and businesses within our local community. Community relations will continue to be important to us, and we are all goodwill ambassadors for

Liberty. We hope to continue creating partnerships with local businesses and pursue grant opportunities. Any information or expertise you can offer in this area is greatly appreciated. Liberty may recruit individuals from the community to provide supplementary educational experiences for the students. On-site parental volunteer assistance will be encouraged and facilitated. Liberty has set a goal of community volunteer involvement equal to 50% of the entire staffing hours budgeted each year.

Liberty aspires to provide an educational system that serves the needs of the students, parents, and the community. This provides an unprecedented opportunity for parents and the community to participate in the students' educational process. Liberty has established a Community Advisory Board to obtain broad, non-parental, community-based input regarding the direction and operation of the school.

### **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 (Appendix A) presented at the time of enrollment into Liberty Common School.

## **SECTION III: SCHOOL POLICIES AND SERVICES**

### **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance is important to ensure achievement in school; thus, we discourage vacations, trips, doctor appointments, and other non-illness related absences when school is in session. When that is unavoidable, students are responsible for any make up work during their absence. Assignments that are not made up, according to the time restrictions set by the teacher and school, will be reflected in their grades. It is helpful to both student and teacher to make prior arrangements to meet that requirement. Our goal is to maintain a student attendance rate of no less than 95%. School starts promptly at 8:00 a.m. Arrival time is 7:40-7:50 a.m.

Colorado State Attendance law states, in part, that “Every elementary child who attained the age of 6 and under the age of 16 years...shall attend public school for at least 968 instructional hours during the school year, and every junior high child shall attend public school for at least 1150 instructional hours during the school year.” Liberty Common School’s calendar is longer than the Poudre School District, and expectations for minimal instructional hours exceed the state’s requirement.

The State of Colorado and Poudre School District’s goal for attendance is 95%, as is Liberty Common School’s. In order to attain this goal, a student cannot miss more than 10 days during the entire school year. Any student missing more than 10 days of school, for reasons other than illness, will require a parent conference and the student will be required to make up the missing days after school or on weekends.

An EXCUSED ABSENCE/TARDY includes but is not limited to absence due to doctor appointment, dentist appointment, medical problems, or illness, involvement in an accident, traffic problem occurring with other parents arriving late, family emergency, death, extreme weather, or when numerous carpools are affected.

An UNEXCUSED ABSENCE/TARDY includes but is not limited to time taken to attend family trips, late carpool, sleeping in late, lunch out from school, Rockies games, and Avalanche games. If a student is absent during the day, he or she may not attend Liberty social functions that same night.

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 tests/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 non-academic electives or study hall for their last period class.

### **Absences Due to Illness**

If your child is absent because of illness or an appointment for which we have not been notified previously, please call to make us aware of the situation before 8:30 a.m. It is critical to student safety that we know where they are on school days. You may call early and leave a message on the Absence Line (482-9800, then press 2). Please call each day your child is to be away from school and

place that information on the message machine. Office staff must place calls daily to parents for unaccounted absentees.

### **Extended Absences**

Extended absences should be discussed with your child's teacher in advance. Make-up work, alternative assignments, and the schedule for their completion, can then be devised to minimize negative impacts on academic learning.

### **Late Arrival (Tardy)**

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. Loss of privileges for extracurricular activities may result.

Students may NOT be taken from halls or playground without prior acknowledgement by teacher, AND official sign in or out by parent in the front office, and notification to teacher(s) concerned. On a field trip, students taken by parents (or representative) from the field trip must check out with the teacher who has oversight of field trip students.

### **After School Child Care**

Students should be dropped off no earlier than 7:40 a.m. and picked up from school no later 3:30 p.m. Liberty has an after school child care program available from 3:00-6:00 p.m. for students who need supervision after school. This service will require registration and a fee. Students who are not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be sent to the program and the full rate will be charged to the parent. Liberty Common School cannot be held responsible for students after 3:30 p.m.

### **BOOKS**

All books are on loan to students for their use during Liberty's school year. Books are to be kept clean and handled carefully. **Students will be fined for damaged or lost books.**

### **Replacement Cost for Lost or Damaged Books**

Fines for lost and/or damaged books are as follows:

NEW BOOK:	Full cost of book
1 year old:	80% of original cost
2 years old and greater than 2 years old:	50% of original cost

### **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 request a specific classroom environment for their children by writing a letter to the Headmaster by April 15. 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, balance of boys and girls, friendships, availability of

volunteers, diversity of student achievement, etc., to determine classroom assignments in order to provide a fair and common education for all students.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Communication Folders**

Communication between school staff and parent/students is crucial for overall school success. Every Monday, students in grades K-6 will receive a large envelope or folder filled with all the written communication for that week. This may include, but not be limited to, student newspapers, newsletters, permission slips, conference information, report cards, special event fliers, and homework. Parents should look for the envelope each week, read the contents, sign any documents needing to be returned, and send it back. Whenever papers are sent home, parents are expected to read them carefully. Students in grades 7-9 will use an assignment notebook. Parents may use e-mail for teacher communication. Good communication is always a two-way street!

Please be aware that any "School-to-Home Communications" are critical to the success of Liberty and the parents of Liberty students. Volunteers, teachers, and parents who help distribute these communications are not to stamp, insert, or attach any foreign matter on, into, or with copies of the communications into or with other publications, nor permit others to do so, without prior written approval by the Headmaster of Liberty Board of Directors. In addition, classroom teachers have the authority to approve items going home with their students. Any Liberty communication should include a teachers stamp or initial or an administrative initial (Dean of Students, Headmaster, or member of Liberty Board of Directors).

### **Student Assignment Books**

Organizational skills are so important to lifelong success that we have made them part of our curriculum. To help students manage their assignments, we require each 3<sup>rd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade student to use an assignment book. The 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade will have an assignment book that they must purchase from Liberty Common School. This book will include an Assignment Log and a Communication Log for parent and teacher comments. The upper school will be permitted to purchase their own assignment book from any department store. The books should be either 4" x 8" or 8 ½" x 11" and there should be enough room for 8 classes per day. The Assignment books should go home every night, and provide parents with a convenient method to monitor their child's work and work-study skills. Assignment Books are needed for each student in grades 3 through 9. In upper grades, a school assignment notebook serves double duty as a hall pass. If the upper school student does not provide his or her own assignment notebook, then the student will be required to purchase one from the Front Office.

### **Teacher Conferences**

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall. Teachers will schedule conferences via a parent sign-up sheet. Arrangements for additional conferences may be made with your child's teacher before or after school hours. A Spring conference may be held at the teacher's discretion.

### **Mid-Term Reports and Report Cards**

Mid-Term Reports are sent home halfway through each quarter to students with a "C" grade or lower in any subject. Student Report Cards are completed at the end of each quarter. They will be sent home with students or mailed. Final Report Cards for all grades will be mailed home approximately one week after school is out.

### **Advertising on School Grounds**

All materials posted or distributed on school grounds must be submitted to the office for formal approval before posting or distributing. All items approved will contain either a stamp or administrative initials. Any unapproved materials will be removed or confiscated.

## **DISCIPLINE CODE**

Liberty Common School will follow the Poudre School District's Code of Conduct with the following emphases:

### **Behavior Expectations**

Liberty Common School students are expected to be well behaved at all times, respecting themselves, others, and property. Our philosophy toward discipline is that discipline policies and procedures should provide guidance and direction of acceptable behavior with the goal of developing a child's own sense of self-discipline. This school affirms that "effective student discipline is a prerequisite for good educational proactive and productive learning." (PSD Code of Conduct and Discipline).

### **Liberty Common School Rules**

Students will:

1. Attend school consistently, be on time, and take responsibility for making up work promptly when absent. Each student will bear the responsibility for his or her own conduct. Each student will respect the educational process and learning environment of others by attending class, being prepared, and arriving on time.
2. Follow directions when they are given.
3. Follow all reasonable requests made by adults on premises with a positive attitude, and show respect for others, for self, and for property. Each student is expected to cooperate with and respect staff and peers, including administrators, teachers, secretaries, custodians, and any other people working in the school. Students are expected to communicate in an acceptable tone of voice using an acceptable choice of words (without profanity or disrespectful tone of voice or words).
4. Follow lunchroom, playground, field trip, lab, and individual classroom rules. Each student is expected to follow school rules when participating in school-related events.
5. Follow the dress code.
6. Refrain from using threats or intimidation against any other person.
7. Respect the health and safety of others, will follow all safety rules, and will refrain from using tobacco, alcohol, or other illegal substances.
8. Walk quietly in the halls and talk in a normal tone of voice in the school building.
9. Remain in seats until dismissed. The teacher, not the bell, dismisses students.
10. Not throw or kick snow or rocks on the playground.
11. Not litter or misuse school property.
12. Not leave school or playground without permission from the lunch monitor, playground monitor, or front office.
13. Not bring electronic devices (CD players, radios, games, etc.) to school. They will be confiscated until the end of the year. Palm Pilots will be allowed with approval from Headmaster or Dean of Students for school purposes only (such as recording assignments and test dates). Cell phones may be used only to contact parents after school. Cell phones are not to be used during regular school hours, and are to remain turned off in a locker or backpack and not to be visibly seen. Acceptability of other toys is at the discretion of the teachers and administration. Each student will respect the school's learning environment and will not interfere with the ability of other students to learn.
14. Obtain permission from the Headmaster or Dean to attend school activities (including but not limited to dances and sports events) when he or she has been absent from school on the day of the activity.

## **Playground/Recess Rules**

### Equipment

- Equipment must be used in the manner for which it is intended.
- Tag, pushing, shoving, chasing, wrestling, or other horseplay is not allowed on or near any playground equipment.
- Hanging on, swinging from, or climbing on the tetherball pole, soccer goals, or legs of other playground equipment is not allowed.
- Jumping from bar to bar is prohibited.
- Pulling or pushing other students off of the bars is not allowed.

### Swings

- Students should be sitting down and swinging in a back and forth motion.
- Side-to-side swinging, twisting, standing on swings, jumping from swings, double swinging, or tummy swinging is not allowed.
- Students who are not swinging should not be in the swing area.
- Crawling under, running between, or chasing around swings is not allowed.
- Saving of swings is not allowed. Swings are available on a first come, first served basis.
- No jumping off of swings.

### Slides

- Students must slide down feet-first on their bottoms.
- One person on a slide at a time.
- Standing on slides, running up, or climbing up slides is not allowed.
- Jumping from the top in order to slide down is not allowed.
- Jumping off of the slide is not allowed.
- Going down the slide backward or headfirst is not allowed.
- No rocks are to be thrown or rolled down the slides.

### Crossbars

- Students must use two hands on the bars.
- Hanging by the legs or sitting on crossbars is not allowed.
- Jumping from bar to bar is not allowed.
- Pulling or pushing other students off of the bars is not allowed.

### Bleachers

- Students are permitted to sit on the bottom row of the bleachers.
- Hanging from, jumping on/off, or playing on or under the bleachers is not allowed.

### Sports

- Observe a "Hands-Off" policy. Grabbing, holding, tackling, tagging, hitting, or wrestling is not allowed.
- Students may retrieve balls that have gone over the fence only when they have asked a playground monitor for permission.

### Toys

- Only small toys are allowed unless they cause a distraction or disturbance.

### Behavioral Expectations

- During the morning recesses, food may be eaten in the shaded gravel area of the playground.

- Students must pick up all trash and food and dispose of it properly.
- After lunch, no food is to be eaten outside.
- Throwing or kicking of rocks, gravel, sand, dirt, snow, or inappropriate objects is not allowed.
- Rude or profane language is not allowed.
- Disrespect is not allowed.
- Making giant snowballs is not allowed.
- Hiding, stealing, or playing Keep-Away with another student's clothing or other belongings is not allowed; bullying, intimidating, chasing, or pulling on another student's clothing is not allowed.
- Tumbling, summersaults, or acrobatic moves are not allowed.
- Please respect P.E. equipment and do not play with it, unless given permission.
- Tell an adult immediately if you or another student is injured.
- Students should only leave the playground area with the permission of a staff member.

### **Track Rules**

- The entire shed area is off limits.
- Sand pits are off limits during recess.
- Road-access gates are off limits to students. If a ball goes beyond the gate, notify an adult.
- Hanging on soccer goals is prohibited.

### **Bullying**

Bullying, intimidating, chasing, or pulling on another student's clothing is not allowed. When it does occur, students and staff are required to adhere to the following protocol:

1. Ask the person who is physically or verbally harassing you to stop. Don't joke around or make light of it. Look the person directly in the eye and state that you would like him or her to stop that behavior.
2. That student now has two choices. He or she can stop the behavior or continue it. If the behavior stops, that problem has been eliminated.
3. If the problem persists, the student has to have the character to do what is right. This means reporting the problem to someone in control. This usually means the classroom teacher.
4. The teacher then should address the problem with the student and the student's parents. Expectations should be clearly defined for the student doing the harassing.
5. If the harassing continues, this will then become a Dean of Students or Headmaster concern. They should be informed of the history of the situation and then establish a behavior contract with the student.
6. If the student does not adhere to the behavior contract, then he or she is subject to In School Detentions, Out of School Suspensions, or eventually an Expulsion may occur.

Always feel free to confer with the Headmaster if you have any questions or concerns!

Students possess the right of privacy as well as freedom from unreasonable search and seizure as guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. This individual right, however, is balanced by the school's responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all its students and to ensure compliance with school rules. School employees (usually administrators) may conduct searches of property or person when they have reason to suspect that the health, safety, or welfare of students or staff may be endangered.

Liberty is not responsible for loss, theft, or breakage of items brought to school.

### **Infractions**

For purposes of handling discipline, Liberty Common School will consider infractions of rules as either *major* or *minor*.

Special note about dress code violations: Students in violation of dress code will be given a scholar's robe to wear for the day, or may be required to call home for appropriate clothing. Students must be strictly in code to attend class. Students out of code may do class work in the office or in an isolated workspace until dress is in code. Continued dress code violations will require stronger consequences including suspensions and a conference with the parent.

*Examples of Minor Infractions include, but are not limited to the following:*

Yelling; slamming; kicking; throwing; running in halls; causing minor damage to personal property (without intent to injure others); losing school property\*; disobeying school and classroom rules; clowning around in class or halls; continual patterns of misbehavior in or out of class; ridiculing others or using profane language or gestures; showing disrespect to an adult through face, body, or action; three unexcused tardies per quarter; continual late arrivals to classes.

\*Fines will be levied to parents for vandalism or theft. Fines will also be levied for lost or damaged school property. Students may also be required to be involved in the maintenance or repair of damaged property.

*Examples of Major Infractions include, but are not limited to the following:*

Any minor infraction or pattern of activity that is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students or repeatedly interferes with a school's ability to provide educational opportunities to other students; hitting, shoving, biting, or physically assaulting another student; verbal intimidation or threats, physical intimidation, or sexual intimidation or harassment; possession of matches or cigarette lighter ( or other dangerous items); willful destruction or defacing of school property\*; theft\*; actions of continual willful disobedience or open persistent defiance of proper authority; cheating on a test; plagiarism; tampering with any document; providing false statements of any kind; leaving the school property without permission; truancy; or cutting class.

\*Fines will be levied to parents for vandalism or theft. Fines will also be levied for lost or damaged school property. Students may also be required to be involved in the maintenance or repair of damaged property.

## **Discipline Procedures**

Minor infractions are generally handled by a student's classroom teacher, but may also involve the Dean of Students and/or Headmaster. Anytime a student is required to see the Dean of Students or the Headmaster, a learning opportunity arises. Every student is encouraged to be responsible for this or her own actions, and students are instructed to share the incident with their parents. If and when necessary, the interaction between the student and the Dean of Students or the Headmaster will be followed up with a phone call or written communication to the parents as soon as possible after the incident. The Headmaster, Dean of Students, or faculty members may assign consequences. Depending on the nature of the offense, damages to others, and continued pattern of offenses, consequences may include detentions, service, student behavior plans, fair remuneration, relinquishing privileges, apologies, required extra work, and/or activity restrictions. Should a situation become more severe, a parent conference will be required immediately. For major infractions, suspension procedures will be followed.

All detentions for discipline will be served soon after the infraction. If the discipline situation warrants notification of the parents, an attempt will be made to notify them the day the detention is given. Students serving a detention or suspension on the same day as an after school activity will not be allowed to participate in the activity until the detention is served. Any change in the detention or suspension date(s) will be at the discretion of the Dean of Students or Headmaster.

Major infractions may require an immediate parent conference prior to suspension, during which time appropriate follow-up actions are discussed. These actions may include activity restrictions, creation of remedial student discipline plans, and requirement of parent to attend class with student for a specified time or other plans. Discipline referrals and suspensions become part of a student's permanent record.

If a student has been given an In-School Detention or an Out-Of-School Suspension two or more times during the year, or if the student has received more than 8 tardies in a quarter, the Dean of Students or Headmaster reserve the right to restrict the school events or field trips that the student may attend. All decisions concerning this matter will be made at the discretion of the Dean of Students or Headmaster.

#### Formal Discipline Proceedings

Notes: According to CRS 22-33-105 2a) and b), a student may not be suspended for time exceeding 25 school days. Opportunities will be given for a student to make up school work during suspension; however, the school will determine the amount of credit the student shall receive for this makeup work.

Suspensions at Liberty Common School can be assigned only by the Headmaster and/or the Dean of Students. Prior to suspension the student's parent will be notified, and a parent conference will be required before the student returns to class. Notice of suspension shall be given in writing. An informal hearing will be offered to a parent and student after receipt of notice of suspension lasting less than 10 days, by the Headmaster and/or Dean of Students. A parent conference involving the Headmaster and/or Dean of Students, student, and student's parent(s) or guardian(s) may be required before a student will be readmitted following a suspension. A suspension lasting more than 10 days will be given a formal hearing.

#### Levels

If the student continues to be disruptive and exhibits inappropriate behavior or actions, the student will be placed on levels. A level 1 is an indication that the student is exhibiting behavior or actions that are not acceptable. A level 2 status indicates that the student is continuing with the inappropriate actions or behavior.

A level 3 will result in expulsion from the school and the school district. Liberty Common School reserves the right to place the student at any level at any point according to the severity of the offense.

#### *Step 1, Initial suspension*

An initial suspension will occur after a major infraction or a series of minor infractions, depending on the severity of the infraction(s). Step one, initial suspension, will include a minimum of a one-day, and a maximum of a ten-day suspension. A remedial student discipline plan may be created during the conference between parent, student, and Headmaster and/or Dean of Students depending on the severity of the infraction. A parent-student-Headmaster or Dean of Students conference may be required before student readmittance to the classroom. Depending on the severity of the infraction, the student may or may not be placed on a level 1 at this point.

#### *Step 2, Secondary suspension with remedial discipline plan review and revision*

A secondary suspension is the second step of formal discipline proceedings and will occur after one or two major infractions following initial suspension, depending on severity of offense, and/or as a result of the student's violation of his or her remedial discipline plan. Step 2 suspensions will include a minimum of two days and a maximum of no more than ten days total suspension. A required parent-student-Headmaster and/or Dean of Students conference will be held before student is allowed to return to school. If a remedial student discipline plan already exists, it will be reviewed and revised. If a remedial student discipline plan has not been created as yet, one will be created for the student at this point. Depending on the severity of the infraction, the student may or may not be placed on a level 1 or 2 at this point.

#### *Step 2, Final suspension*

A final suspension from Liberty Common School is the third and final step of formal discipline proceeding. After a final suspension, and prior to movement toward a declaration of “habitual disruption” (placing the student on a Level 3) or the expulsion proceedings, a student may appeal the decision and obtain a hearing from the representative of the Board of Directors. In addition, “The board of education of each district may deny admission to, or expel for any period not extending beyond one year, any child whom the board of education, in accordance with the limitations imposed by this article, shall determine does not qualify for admission to, or continued attendance at, the public schools of the district. (CRS 22-33-105 2c).

*According to Colorado statute, a student may be declared habitually disruptive after being suspended three times in one year on the grounds set forth in CRS 11-33-106 for causing a material and substantial disruption in the class, on school grounds, on school vehicles, or at school activities or events because of behavior that was initiated, willful, and overt on the part of the student, and the suspensions were made for*

- Continual, willful disobedience or open and persistent defiance of proper authority;
- Willful destruction or defacing of school property;
- Behavior on or off school property, which is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students or of school personnel;
- Serious violations in a school building or in or out of school property;
- Repeated interference with a school’s ability to provide educational opportunities to other students;
- And other grounds found in CRS22-33-106(1)(a),(b),(c),(d), and (e).

Expulsion from Liberty Common School shall be mandatory for the following violations:

\*carrying, bringing, using, or possessing a dangerous weapon (including a firearm or firearm facsimile, any pellet, or BB gun or other device operational or not, designed to propel projectiles by spring action or compressed air, fixed blade knife with a blade that measures longer than three inches in length or a spring loaded knife with a blade longer than three and one-half inches, any object, device, instrument, material, or substance, whether animate or inanimate used or intended to be used to inflict death or serious bodily injury;

\*the sale or possession of a drug or controlled substance;

\*death threats to other students or administration;

\*or the commission of an act, which if committed by an adult would be robbery or assault other than third degree assault.

Expulsion is also mandatory if a student is declared habitually disruptive.

## **DRESS CODE**

### **Why does Liberty Common School have a dress code?**

When the parents first formed the school, it was decided that a dress code would help establish a desirable learning environment. Research indicates that a uniform dress code minimizes peer pressure, improves the appearance of the student body, and reinforces an academic atmosphere (“*Manual on School Uniforms,*” U.S. Department of Education).

**The Liberty Common School Dress Code: Please note that the final determination on the appropriateness of any item of clothing and appearance rests with the Administration.**

<b>TOPS</b>	
Items	Includes: shirts, blouses, sweaters, sweatshirts, vests, and jackets to be worn indoors. No hooded jackets or hooded sweatshirts are allowed for indoor wear.
Colors <b>SOLID COLORS ONLY</b>	Red, White, Navy, Burgundy, Hunter Green. Solid colors only, no stripes, prints, designs of any sort or size, or logos are allowed. Liberty logo patches, Liberty shirts and Liberty sweatshirts, available for purchase only through the school, are allowed.
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liberty dress code tops can be one of the following: A shirt or blouse with a button up or snap up collar; a polo shirt; a turtleneck; or a mock turtleneck.</li> <li>• Liberty dress code tops must not be sleeveless.</li> <li>• Liberty dress code tops <b>MUST</b> be tucked in at all times in the building.</li> <li>• Except for the top button or snap, all shirt and blouse buttons or snaps must be fastened.</li> <li>• Sweaters, sweatshirts, vests, and jackets, which are worn, must be worn over a Liberty dress code top and must be dress code colors.</li> <li>• Hems on sweaters and vests must be hip level.</li> <li>• Tops with zippers, laces, or without buttons or snaps are not allowed.</li> <li>• No jackets, sweatshirts, or sweaters should be tied around the waist.</li> </ul>
<b>Bottoms</b>	
Items	Includes: trousers, skorts, shorts, skirts, capris and jumpers. <b>No Gauchos</b>
Colors & Fabrics <b>SOLID COLORS ONLY</b>	Navy, Black, or Tan. Regular woven, twills, and cords are allowable—denim fabric is not. If you have a question regarding what is denim and what is not then please refrain from buying clothes the fabric type and style of which you are unsure. Denim and twill are very similar, but when denim wears the worn part shows white, where twill does not. The final call on denim belongs to Liberty Common School.
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trousers must touch the top of the shoe in front and may not drag on the ground when standing straight.</li> <li>• Bottom hem of shorts must fall somewhere between the kneecap and 5 inches above the top of the kneecap when standing straight.</li> <li>• The bottom hem of skirts and jumpers must fall between the ankle and 4 inches above the top of the kneecap when standing straight.</li> <li>• Jumpers must be full bodice—NO bib-type overalls, not more than 4 inches above the knee.</li> <li>• No baggy clothes or clothes with a sagging crotch.</li> <li>• No pockets below the usual pocket level. The most number of pockets is 5 pockets, all of them attached to, or just below, the waistband: two in the front, two in the back, and one small coin pocket.</li> <li>• Solid colored leggings and tights can be worn in any of the approved colors, but must be worn <b>UNDER</b> a</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>skirt or jumper.</li> <li>Low-rise pants are not allowed.</li> <li>Discreet logos on waistbands are allowed.</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Comments</b>	
Jewelry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All jewelry and accessories must be modest and in good taste.</li> <li>All necklaces must be of normal size, not oversized and no more than 2 necklaces worn at one time.</li> <li>Only one wristband or bracelet may be worn at a time on each arm.</li> </ul>
Undershirts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All undershirts MUST be dress code colors. No symbols, logos, or designs are allowed on undershirts. A dress code shirt must be worn over the undershirt.</li> <li>Red, White, Navy, Burgundy, and Hunter Green turtleneck or mock turtlenecks may be worn under a dress code shirt.</li> </ul>
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only upper school students may wear makeup, and it must be modest and in good taste.</li> <li>Hair color must be natural and limited to two natural colors.</li> <li>Corrective lenses must be a natural color and both eyes must match.</li> <li>No visible piercing other than the ear will be allowed.</li> <li>No visible tattoos or drawings on oneself.</li> <li>No baggy clothes.</li> <li>No exposed undergarments.</li> <li>No sweats, overalls, spandex, lace or sheet clothing.</li> <li>No nylon flight pants, Cargo pants, or pants with zippers down the sides.</li> <li>Clothing should be clean, neat, and in good repair. Black and blue colors should not be faded to gray.</li> <li>Only one belt may be worn at a time.</li> <li>Tennis shoes with non-marking soles have to be worn in gym class.</li> <li>No hats, gloves, or coats may be worn in the building.</li> <li>Clothing may not be worn inside out.</li> <li>Clothing may not be worn backwards.</li> <li>Students on a field trip will be in dress code or a modified version of the dress code at the discretion of the teacher.</li> <li>No spaghetti strap clothing or tank tops.</li> <li>No changing out of dress code after school without prior permission.</li> <li>Shirts must be tucked in everywhere in the building except for Physical Education classes.</li> <li>On Free Dress Days, clothing shall be modest with no tank tops, spaghetti straps, or sleeveless tops, belly-button shirts, short shorts, or low-rise pants or shorts.</li> <li>No clothing should be excessively tight.</li> </ul>
Upper Students Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neckties and/or bowties are allowed with white, full-front buttoning or snapping shirts (both young men and women). Ties should be in good taste.</li> <li>Make-up must be low key and natural.</li> </ul>

**IF STUDENTS ARE NOT IN CODE, THEY WILL BE ISSUED A SCHOLAR'S ROBE IN ORDER TO ATTEND CLASSES** or they may be asked to return home until they are in code. Repeated offenses will result in additional consequences including suspensions and a parent conference. Exceptions to the dress code are 1) special event days, which have been pre-scheduled, and/or 2) students participating in scouting programs who wish to wear the scouting uniforms on meeting days. Other uniforms for other groups will be allowed at the discretion of the BOD and Headmaster.

Students who are not in compliance with the dress code may not participate in field trips or leave campus for any school activity. Any questions may be directed to the office.

**The Board of Directors FULLY SUPPORTS the discretion of the Staff and Administration as they enforce the dress code in the coming year. Please check with the Headmaster or Dean of Students if you have any questions. The final determination on the appropriateness of any item of clothing or appearance rests with the Administration. This code is for the benefit of ALL our students, from ages 5 to 15. Parents, please help your older students set a good example and keep you school clothes shopping within our dress code parameters. *The school is not responsible for school clothing purchases that do not comply strictly with our code.***

### **Dress Code Scholarship Fund**

Those families who qualify for free or reduced lunch can apply for clothing/uniform assistance. Please contact the Front Office for details and an application.

### **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 9<sup>th</sup> grade students with an effort to invite all families 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 taking placement exams and participating in a conference involving the student, parent, Headmaster and/or Dean of Students to discuss curriculum, required levels of performance, dress code, rules, and other expectations. 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) 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 full-time LCS employees
  - Students who reside within Poudre School District (as per Charter Contract, page 4, lines 138-140)

Students are not officially enrolled until all paperwork is complete and turned in to the front office including a current Emergency Contact form.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Liberty Common School recognizes the importance of out-of-classroom experiences for students. Each of our classes may take field trips during the year. In this discussion, “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. Insurance can be purchased for individual field trips by contacting the front office.

### Guidelines for K-6 Field Trips\*

- All field trips must be approved by the Headmaster.
- With the exception of the end of the year Upper School field trip, 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 before the termination of the field trip without notifying the director first.
- A charter 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 charter 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 charter bus is not available or fewer than 20 students attend, making the cost of a bus prohibitive, exceptions may be considered and approved by the Dean of Students or the Headmaster.

## **GRIEVANCES**

Liberty Common School recognizes the value of the observations, perspectives, and ideas of the parents of students at the school, as well as the importance of being accountable to the parents for the educational program for their children.

An important element of the accountability process is to provide an avenue for parent suggestions and grievances that both satisfies the parents and improves the operation of the school. A procedure for soliciting and responding to the parent suggestions and grievances is outlined below.

### Avenues for Expression

The first element of the parent grievance process is to establish appropriate avenues for expression to allow the right people to respond and deal with the issues that may be raised. These avenues should also be satisfactory to those with a concern, so that they know that their concerns will be addressed. The following avenues for submitting a complaint or suggestion will be provided:

1. Teacher appointments—If the concern is regarding specifics of the classroom, the teacher or staff member may be contacted directly for an appointment. We recommend that parents work directly with the teacher to resolve issues teachers are responsible for. Parents choosing this avenue should be careful to respect the time and privacy of the teacher they need to contact: Please do not interrupt teacher lunch or grading time.
2. Headmaster and Dean of Students appointments—If the concern is regarding a specific area of the school or if the parent has been unable to address the concern by working directly with the teacher regarding classroom issues, the Headmaster or Dean may be contacted directly for an appointment. Parents choosing this avenue should be careful to respect the time and privacy of the Headmaster and Dean of Students.
3. Personal Appointments—If the concern is of a personal nature involving a particular member of the LCS staff of BOD, the individual may be contacted directly for an appointment. Parents choosing this avenue should be careful to respect the time and privacy of those they need to contact.
4. Parent Grievance/Suggestion Box—Concerns of a general nature may be written on parent grievance/suggestion forms and deposited in a box that will be provided for this purpose in the front office. A member of the Site Improvement Team will be assigned to follow up on each item placed in the box.
5. Site Improvement Team Contact—A concern may also be directed to designated individuals on the Site Improvement Team for personal contact and follow up. They will initiate the process using the parent grievance form and assign follow up on the committee.
6. If a parent has pursued other options and still has issues, the grievance can be summarized for the Board in writing. The Board will review the summary and will make one of the following determinations: The Board may decide to support the previous decision; the Board may appoint up to two Board members to address the issue; the Board may address the issue in an open Board format; or the Board may address the issue in an executive session.
7. BOD Meeting—Parent concerns and grievances may also be raised during the community comment portion of the BOD meeting. It is recommended that the concern or grievance be addressed in one of the aforementioned steps before using this option. A designated representative of the Site Improvement Team may facilitate the discussion if present (based on prior information that an issue may be addressed) and follow up using the parent grievance/suggestion form.
8. Proposed Action to BOD—The following excerpt from the Bylaws of Liberty Common School, Article 2, Section 13, outlines a specific avenue for parents to propose formal action by the BOD:

“The BOD believes that parents and staff should have a means to be heard by the BOD; to propose action to the BOD; in matters of sufficient community concern, to compel BOD action. To that end, the BOD adopts the following procedure; any parent or staff member may present a proposed action to the BOD or any BOD member in writing at any time. If it is moved and seconded at the next meeting of the BOD at which a quorum is present, the BOD will vote on it.”

#### Resolution of Grievances

All grievances involving the Site Improvement Team will be tracked using the parent grievance form. Resolution of each issue will be assigned to a member of the committee. Assignments will be made when grievances are discussed at each committee meeting. If an item is deemed to require action prior to a committee meeting, an assignment may be made without waiting for the next meeting.

#### **HEALTH SERVICES**

Limited health services are available at school. Please do not bring sick children to school. Liberty's health office is staffed from 8:00-3:00 each day by a health technician. Office staff and volunteers occasionally supervise and assist students with health care needs. Please note that it is the parent's responsibility to notify the office if a child has been injured at home and may need special

considerations at school. Keep school records up to date; especially phone numbers and emergency contact! Immunization records must be current for students to remain in school.

**Poudre School District policy requires that no medication, prescription, or over-the-counter medication (including aspirin, cough drops, vitamins, etc.), shall be given to a student by any school personnel except on written orders of the parents and the physician or dentist.**

Students may not self-medicate at the school. When medication is to be given at school, physician or dentist instructions are required to accompany the medication. All medications must be in the original pharmacy-labeled container including the student's name, name of drug, dosage, name of physician, and current date. Medical Request Forms are available at Liberty's Health Office.

Parents will be informed when a student has been injured seriously. If a parent cannot be reached, school personnel will determine what action needs to be taken. Any child with a fever of 100 or above will not be allowed to remain in the classroom. If a head injury is sustained, the parent will be contacted. In case of more serious injuries, or if the parent cannot be contacted, the school will immediately call 911 for emergency assistance.

In compliance with state law, all children in Colorado schools must have complete up-to-date immunization record on file in the Liberty office. This record includes proper shots for measles, rubella, diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus (DPT), and polio, or a parent-signed personal exemption from such immunizations for personal, religious or medical reasons. (See C.R.S. 25-4-903 (4)). Students may not continue enrollment without up-to-date immunization records.

#### **HOMEWORK AND CLASSWORK**

Homework is a fundamental part of our general academic program. It prepares students for high school and college, and for entry into the working world upon graduation. It also helps develop a strong work ethic and personal organizational skills. Homework's immediate educational purpose is:

- To reinforce skills and concepts learned in class,
- To develop study skills and habits,
- To practice skills and knowledge in ways that are not readily accomplished in the classroom, and
- To inform parents of what is being taught in the classroom.

Homework assignments should be expected Monday through Thursday of each week and on some weekends. The amount of time required to complete homework assignments is approximately 10 minutes per grade level per night, e.g. 30 minutes for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students, 60 minutes for 6<sup>th</sup> grade students, etc.

In addition to regular homework assignments discussed above, we expect each child to read, or be read to, at least three times a week and preferably every day. The amount of reading homework varies for each grade. Teachers will inform students what is expected for their grade level. As cited in *A Nation at Risk*, "the single most important factor for determining whether children will go to college is being read to as a child." Going to college is not necessarily a destination point for all, but becoming a life-long learner probably should be, if one hopes to remain competitive throughout one's lifetime. We believe becoming a competent reader is critical to being a good student, and the first step to being able to explore the world. By making sure your child is reading at home, you are directly contributing to his/her education. By reading to your child and participating in this process as a parent, you encourage your child's growth and strengthen family ties. By reading in front of your children, you model good habits and reinforce your expectations.

Liberty Common School is proud to have a challenging, rigorous curriculum. This is one of the many things that make Liberty a great school. With such a rich and rigorous curriculum, the students need time to work at home. We are aware that the student is involved with other interests and activities outside of school. The staff and administration will attempt to coordinate their schedules and calendars so the students are not inundated with work on the same day. It is understood that homework will be given and will vary depending on the work assigned on a given day, the students'

organizational skills and study habits, and the nature of the assignments. Students are expected to learn how to use their free time effectively to complete the required work at each grade level. Parents are expected to support their children in this endeavor. Advanced or honor classes may require additional homework time.

The upper right corner of all student work should contain the student's first name, last name, subject, and full date. Optional are assignment, and teacher's name or class. Failure to include this information may result in loss or reduction of credit received.

In grades 2-9, the following consequences have been established regarding homework and quality of work:

1. No name on assignments or homework, assignments will be thrown away and the student will receive a zero.
2. No name on a test will deduct 10% off the test.
3. Partial name or date, teacher will deduct 5% off the assignment or test grade.

In primary grades, completed work (quality work done with clear effort) in math, reading, or writing (skills areas) receiving a grade of 75% or lower may be redone with teacher discretion, and within a week for ½ of the point value of the grade were the work done on time.

In upper grades, students are expected to show responsibility in preparation for tests and perseverance in completing quality assignments. Upper students have more electives and opportunities to participate in leadership and independent choice, thus they also must express leadership and responsibility in completion of assigned work. Teachers may use discretion in determining reworking of one or two assignments in a quarter depending on circumstances, for partial grade. Students who do not turn their homework in on time may be allowed to use a late pass or they may turn in the assignment in for 70% credit the next time the class is held.

#### Upper School Incomplete Policy

An incomplete will be given for any student who fails to turn in all assignments for the quarter. Students will have two weeks to turn in assignments after the last day of the quarter, with the exception of 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, in which students will be given a warning two weeks prior to the end of the school year to turn in assignments one week before the last day of school.

Minor assignments: If turned in one day after the due date, the student will receive 70% credit for the assignment. If turned in later than one day after the due date, the student will receive 0% credit for the assignment, but the incomplete will be cleared and the student will receive the appropriate grade for the class.

Major assignments: If turned in one day after the due date, the student will receive 70% credit for the assignment. If turned in later than one day after the due date, it is the teacher's discretion as to how much credit the student will receive.

If the student fails to turn in missing work by the deadline, the incomplete will become an F with 59%.

#### **LOCKERS**

Liberty Common School provides lockers for students in the intermediate-upper grades. THE LOCKERS ARE SCHOOL PROPERTY and not the individual's. Students will be held responsible for any excessive damage to their lockers. Upper School students are to provide their own combination locks and give the combinations to their homeroom teachers. 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will be issued locks and lockers. Locker combinations are not to be given to anyone else. Liberty has the authority to search lockers when deemed necessary even if it requires removal of the lock. Problems with lockers should be reported to the office. Liberty Common School is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen items.

Valuables such as radios, walk-mans, compact discs, cassettes, pagers, and video games are NOT to be brought to school. Palm Pilots will be allowed for school purposes only (such as recording assignments and test dates). Cell phones may be used only to contact parents after school. Cell phones are not to be used during regular school hours.

1. Students are not allowed to decorate the inside of lockers with posters, pictures, or anything else which advertises sex, drugs, suicide, cults, alcohol, or promotes other negative or derogatory messages as determined by Liberty staff.
2. Lockers must be kept neat and orderly at all times. Locker checks will occur each semester.
3. Lockers must be kept closed when not in use to maintain the integrity of the fire corridors and avoid careless accidents. Items outside lockers, or on the floor, may be removed or disposed of.
4. It is the students' responsibility to keep their lockers secured. Liberty Common School cannot be held responsible for valuables that are taken from lockers.

### **LOST AND FOUND ITEMS**

**Lost clothing, notebooks, lunch boxes, and other items will be placed in the "Lost and Found" located in the primary hallway.** Jewelry, glasses, and items of value will be placed in the Front Office for safekeeping. Identification will be required for their return.

Any items left will be given to a local charity, the school clothes closet (if in dress code and good condition) or discarded. All items left at the end of the school year will be donated or disposed of ONE WEEK AFTER THE LAST DAY.

### **LUNCH PROGRAM**

Students may purchase a hot lunch or bring a lunch from home. The cost of a hot lunch is \$3.00. Beverage credits are available for \$0.35 per credit. Lunches **MUST** be ordered from the lunch calendar, one calendar per child, although one check per family is fine. When you know your child is going to be absent, please call the day before and cancel by 9:00 am. School lunches include a choice of beverage: chocolate milk, white milk, or orange juice.

If a student has forgotten their lunch, a school lunch will be provided if available for \$3.00 to be paid for the next school day. If not available, a sandwich, fruit and drink may be provided for \$3.00.

Low income families may apply for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program available at the front desk.

### **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 is as follows:

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 1<sup>st</sup> Grade.

A student must be 7 years old by September 15th to enter 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade.

Each teacher has determined math fact automaticity standards for his/her classroom that students must demonstrate by the end of the year. Contact your child's teacher for specifics.

The final determination for promotion will be made by the teacher and administration. The parent will be notified in advance if retention is a possibility.

### **INTERMEDIATE AND UPPER SCHOOL STUDENTS (GRADES 5-9)**

It is our goal for parents, teachers, and students to work together during the year to insure that students 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. A student with one failing year-end grade in a core course (Math, English, History, or Science) will be required to remediate his/her grades by completing a summer school packet or attending Summer School.

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.

### **SAFETY PROCEDURES**

Liberty Common School has a safety task force and emergency safety procedures. An Emergency Management Plan is available for review in the front office. **In order to ensure the safe management of your child, each family must complete an Emergency Contact Form. This form must be updated whenever there is a change in address, home or work phone numbers, or emergency contacts.** It is vital that parents keep the school office up-to-date with this information in case of personal or school emergencies.

### **SCHEDULE CHANGES**

The deadline for schedule changes for upper school students is three days after the semester begins.

### **STUDENT INFORMATION RELEASE**

Certain "directory information" including the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received, and other similar information may be released without parental consent unless the parent notifies the school in accordance with the Students Records Policy that they do not want certain designated directory information released without prior consent. Please complete the Directory Form if you **DO NOT** want your name, address, and phone number published in our school directory. Otherwise it will be assumed that you have given your approval. The Directory Form has already been mailed to each household. If you need additional copies, please see the Front Office.

In addition, classroom activities and events sponsored by schools occasionally are photographed or videotaped by representatives of the news media for publication in newspapers or broadcast on television. If for any reason you **DO NOT** wish to have your student(s) photographed or videotaped for these purposes, please complete the Non-Permission Form. If this form is not completed and returned

to the school, it will be assumed that you have given your approval. The non-permission form does not include the filming at Liberty Common School musicals, plays, or special events.

### **STUDENT FEES**

Student fees are used to provide additional educational opportunities for specific courses. In some courses, students will be required to purchase books. Actual fees and the courses that require such fees will be communicated in the newsletter. All students taking band courses or orchestra will be required to purchase music books. Certain elective classes may also require an additional fee. Fees should be paid in the Front Office during the first week of school.

Students in grades 7-9 who will be taking PE are required to purchase a PE uniform from the school. The uniform consists of a t-shirt and athletic shorts, both imprinted with the Liberty emblem and a place to put their name. The uniform will be issued upon payment to the PE teachers.

**Thank you for reading this handbook carefully and discussing it as a family.  
Welcome to Liberty Common School and have a great school year.**