

# LIBERTY TREE

A Traditional American Education

Board of Directors Meeting

April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023

6:30 P.M.

In person and virtual via LTA Youtube Link

## 1.0 Meeting Called to Order

The March Board meeting for the LTA Board of Directors was called to order at 6:30 P.M by Board President, Mr. Geitner. This Board meeting was held both in person at the school, specifically located in the Pikes Peak Room, as well as virtually via LTA's school YouTube link.

## 2.0 Roll Call and Establishment of a Quorum

The following Board members were present at the meeting: Mr. Tim Geitner, Mrs. Jenni Helland, Mr. Mike Peterson and Mr. Mike Johnson. The Board has also selected the newly elected member and will officially welcome her to the LTA Board effective the end of this meeting.

## 3.0 Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance

Those in attendance were welcomed and invited to join the Board in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

## 4.0 Liberty Tree Academy School Mission and Vision

Mr. Geitner opened the meeting by reading both the Liberty Tree Mission and the school's vision statements.

## 5.0 Amendments to the Agenda:

**F: Add adoption of preliminary budget 23-24**

**G: Board member appointment**

**13.b. Charter Contract resolution**

**c. Principal hiring position resolution.**

Mr. Geitner moves to add the above amendments to the agenda. So moved by Mr. Geitner, second by Mrs. Helland. Roll call vote, Mr. Johnson-aye, Mrs. Helland-aye, chair votes-aye.

Move by Mr. Geitner to approve the agenda as amended, second by Mr. Johnson. Roll call vote, Mr. Johnson-aye, Mrs. Helland-aye, chair votes-aye. Approved agenda passes.

## 6.0 Founding Father's Quote:

"A diffusion of knowledge is the only guardian of true liberty."-James Madison

## 7.0 **Board member reports:**

Mr. Johnson would like an update on how the interviews are going. Mrs. Stahnke states that postings are up on Indeed, some are not so qualified, and some are. The jobs were refreshed through indeed so they would come up towards the top of the job search. So far, Mrs. Stahnke has made two offers to applicants and hopes to hear from them soon. There remain quite a few positions to fill.

Mrs. Helland had the opportunity to attend the LTA talent show. She couldn't believe the amount of talent that LTA students have for being such a small school. Artists, musicians, drummers, and original songs were part of the show. She appreciates the work the student who was in charge put in to making sure the show was a success.

Mr. Geitner shared that the new streaming link and speaker are a new process to LTA, and he is aware that viewers online have had trouble in the past so this will be the new system. He continues to welcome feedback and hopes that this will become the normal process for those who wish to view board meetings online from now on. Much thanks go to Jordan (IT contractor) and Mrs. Walsh for making this process work. Mr. Geitner also has a meet and greet with parents on April 21<sup>st</sup> at 4:30-5:30 pm in the Pikes Peak Room for anyone who would like to attend. Public comment remains in person only. Mr. Geitner welcomes any feedback from viewers.

## 9.0 **Principal Report:**

### **A. Talent Show**

Mrs. Stahnke shared with the Board that Lily Rogers, the student who ran the talent show, played an original composition for the talent show. She had the youth symphony play along with her and it was just beautifully done. LTA is incredibly proud of her.

### **B. CMAS Completed**

CMAs is officially finished. Level of participation (95%) is something LTA is graded on. 6 or so families opted out of testing. A big thank you goes out to Mrs. Hoffman for organizing and training staff. She really did work so hard on making sure testing went off smoothly. Thank you to Mrs. Moore as well.

### **B. Chromebooks**

LTA has received 177 out of 200 laptops that were approved for NWEA testing. Jordan and Mrs. Daigrepoint have been busy setting up the laptops. They did not come in as quickly as we had hoped, and the school might have to spread out some things if they are not able to set up in time. Jordan has come in a few extra days to try and get them finished in time.

### **C. Camera Installation**

LTA is having some additional cameras installed on May 12<sup>th</sup>. We have contracted with a company to install the wiring portion for us. Classes and students will need to be juggled a bit while the installation is going on. Jordan and Mrs. Daigrepoint will be there to make sure the process goes well.

#### **D. Job Listings**

Mrs. Stahnke reports the school counselor and the Latin teacher position have been posted on Indeed as well as the LTA school website. Those can be more difficult to fill. SPED para, K-2 and Instructional coach will be up soon.

#### **E. Gym floor water damage**

This has been such a process and we wanted to make sure that the school did not have any mold concerns from the water damage. LTS mold testing came back negative for mold. Mitigation companies have looked at the floor and said that because the floor has dried out so much, the school may not need to repair any portion of the floor. The gym floor will need to be sanded and resealed. CHSSA is scheduled to come in May (Mr. Markle wasn't provided an actual date) and the best option may be to wait and re-seal during the summer. The gym will need to be completely closed for roughly two weeks including repainting the big war eagle in the center. Mr. Markle would also like to have the key painted in as well for basketball games.

#### **F. Fire Inspection**

LTA had an annual fire inspection last week and many different things were checked throughout the school. They provided a list for the school that needed to be addressed and they will return in thirty days. Nothing serious was found, the science chemical cabinet will need to be looked at and possibly changed to adhere to their rules and regulations.

#### **G. Health Department Inspection**

The health department also "randomly drew" LTA for an annual inspection as well and came to the school today. The inspector will send a report to Mrs. Stahnke in a week, some items mentioned were use disinfectant less often and sanitizer more often. They also have some recommendations on chemical storage for the school to implement in the future. The science lab chemicals were also a topic that the health department would like to maybe help improve and meet state regulations.

#### **H. Calendar**

Mrs. Stahnke made the changes that Mrs. Helland requested at the last board meeting to the calendar. The district would like the calendar to be submitted to them tomorrow April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, so a decision must be reached by tonight.

Mrs. Helland did have an additional question about the October 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, are students in school that day? Mrs. Stahnke answered that there will not be students in school, it is too hard on teachers to do conferences all day and teach. March 15<sup>th</sup> parent teacher conferences are only for students who have D's and F's. This will be an entire day for parents to have the opportunity to meet with teachers; students will not be in school that day. Mr. Geitner mentioned that there still might be two or three edits that need to

be made on the calendar. Back to school night is usually in the evenings (5:00-7:30) and is an opportunity to meet their students' teachers, upstairs students can get their lockers, etc. Clubs and activities might also have tables set up around the school for students to be able to sign up for. The kindergarten "meet and greet" is something LTA has always done in the past, so it was left on the calendar. This is in place so that incoming Kindergartners do not feel overwhelmed or too emotional coming into school for the first time. New student orientation can be scheduled the first day or two of the new school year. Also, on July 27, 28<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> is new teacher training specifically. That way they will have the opportunity to train for classroom management, LTA policies and procedures, sign up for their benefits, literacy program training, etc. Mrs. Stahnke might bring in an outside trainer to help get the staff ready for the new school year. Mrs. Moore also mentioned that in the past, it has been beneficial to stagger the start days to help ease the stress for new students. Mrs. Helland would like another set of eyes to look over the calendar to help correct grammatical errors, colors, etc.

### **I. Concurrent Enrollment**

The concurrent enrollment handbook has had a few tweaks, Kourtney Goya, PPCC Concurrent enrollment contact has made some up-to-date corrections to the original handbook. On page 3 in the middle, PPSC has a requirement of 3.0, if students take an extra placement test, they can enroll. LTA has a requirement of 3.5. Concurrent enrollment is required by state law per D49 so if LTA decides not to adopt concurrent enrollment, the school needs to have a waiver. Kourtney Goya has offered to come to the school and speak with any parents who may have questions or concerns with concurrent enrollment. So right now, LTA students are already signing up for fall classes. Another option is to hire a qualified teacher to teach those two prerequisites (Math and English) classes here at the school, so we won't have to worry about transportation for those students. Mrs. Helland and Mr. Geitner feel that this is so important for students. Mrs. Stahnke would not want to exempt any LTA student from those important and diverse opportunities that make us unique here at LTA. This would take place at the Centennial Campus on South Academy.

### **J. Vape Detectors**

There are two packets from two different companies about vape detectors. Andy Franco, from D49, did email Mrs. Stahnke back and stated that the vape detectors have been hit and miss. Sometimes they lose signal, randomly go off, etc. One company offered a trial one for us to try and it would cost \$818, and the other company offered one at \$2500. This includes installation, training, set up and iClouds' usage. Mrs. Helland asked if D49 has a company that they use or a contact? Mr. Geitner will check with some of his school contacts and try to find out what vendor they use.

### **K. LTA Advertising**

Continuing to build the waitlist, Mrs. Stahnke has been working with Effect TV, to talk about digital media, cable, ads on phones, etc. The cost to produce and make the commercial would be \$1000, and the package for running the commercial would be \$1500 a month. Channels that these would appear on would appeal to families. The upper school is needing more students to fill empty seats. Effect TV aims for certain demographics. Mrs. Stahnke has also had a lot of luck with radio advertising. She has had good traffic with those. Mr. Geitner would like to table this topic for a work session. He would like to possibly see a sample commercial or portfolio before they continue.

### **L. Student Fees**

The school did away with fees which would essentially “hold a seat.” Other Hillsdale schools are charging fees currently but those students who qualify for free or reduced lunch are exempt from the fees. Mrs. Lovato came up to speak with the board. Mrs. Lovato started a conversation with Mr. Manley over this topic. She would like transparency for families so they know what they should expect. Mrs. Lovato would like Mr. Manley to review the fees list and approve what is normal and expected fees that other school are charging. There are areas that need to be discussed such as high school parking fees. If it could be listed on the website as soon as possible, that way families are aware. Mr. Geitner would like to make this a discussion item. Ms. Lovato and Mr. Manley will work on it and submit to the board. Ascents fees are listed on their website as the following: \$120.00 new student fees, K-12 \$150.00, family cap of \$400.00.

#### **M. Valedictorian**

Mrs. Stahnke has provided the board with a packet containing confidential information regarding students weighted and non-weighted grades and the differences they have. Valedictorian must have highest GPA for seven semesters from the PowerSchool grading system, with the last 121 credits having been earned at LTA. Any disciplinary issue with disqualify any students. A two-to-three-minute speech should be given at graduation. Mrs. Stahnke wanted the board to see the different between weighted and unweighted grades. Mrs. Helland wrote a lengthy policy regarding valedictorian. Her policy would only count the years that students were at LTA. There is a chance that the school could end up with a co-valedictorian still. LTA does not have honors or AP classes currently. The board will need to vote on a policy.

#### **N. Assurance of compliance**

D49 is adopting somethings that CSI has used, they will be making modifications and deadlines to those policies. The assurance of compliance is a document that will need to be signed by August 15<sup>th</sup> stating that LTA will comply with these laws. LTA can get waivers for state laws, but they cannot get waivers for federal law or rules that are made by the state board. August 15<sup>th</sup> is the deadline to agree to these rules and laws and turn it into D49. The school leader can sign these documents. They also provided direct links to the statutes and live links to this information. This document can be submitted with signature electronically. Ms. Stahnke suggested the board order the new version of the school laws book just to have to refer to. D49 has already adopted this and will not amend any portion. Mr. Geitner asked if the school still has a “school compliance calendar.” Mrs. Stahnke stated that the district uses a platform called “C3.”

LTA needs to put together certificates, forms, and spreadsheets for the D49 board coming up in the next few weeks. New teachers that are hired will also need to submit their credentials as well which will help with additional funding. Mr. Geitner mentioned that there might be a better way to organize these deadlines and calendars. Mrs. Helland mentioned Microsoft lists. Mr. Geitner would like to move this to a work session later. Mr. Geitner would like an update on 6<sup>th</sup> grade for next year. Mrs. Gasper has sent in numbers for next year’s waitlist. 6<sup>th</sup> grade will be a discussion for the next agenda and by then the board will have a better idea of what the next step should be. Mrs. Gasper would be good to have a future board meeting, possibly May 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### **O. Financial Statements**

These go through the end of February, the first two pages will be the balance sheet for the school’s general accounts (fund 11), the next two is for the Building Corp account which is called (fund 26.) The last three pages are the preliminary budget which the board did review last month. Conversations are the D49

meeting estimates PPR would be 10,579.00. For this year the school is at 9235.00. More than 10% increase. The school has always paid end of year bonuses to teachers and Mrs. Stahnke would like some guidance on that idea. Mrs. Stahnke would like the board to approve some kind of bonuses for the end of the year, it would go on the May paychecks.

**10. Parent Engagement Team (PET) By-Laws:**

Mr. Geitner would like to hold a PET meeting on May 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM in the Pikes Peak room. There is an interest in exploring what the actual parental interest is in this team. May 10<sup>th</sup> seems to work the best to explore roles parents would fill, sample organizational chart etc. The by-laws are currently being drafted by the attorney, Dustin. Mr. Geitner and Mrs. Helland will have those by-laws to Mrs. Stahnke prior to April 27<sup>th</sup>.

**11. Board Discussions:**

- a. Graduating class temporary policy
- b. Decision on Capstone project

**Charter Renewal**

- a. April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, approval on both by D49.

**12. Public Comment:**

- a. Statement read aloud by Mr. Geitner:

“We appreciate and welcome comments on Liberty Tree Academy school operations and programs as part of our public comment. We ask that your comments be made in a respectful and orderly manner. Complaints against any individual employees and/or students with the school are prohibited. Follow up action items may be assigned to the appropriate board or staff member, depending on the nature of the comments. During public comment made in public session. In accordance with Board policy, public participation is limited to (3) minutes per person. Thank you for participating in our public comment forum.”

- a. There were no attendees on the sign-up sheet to publicly comment, Mr. Geitner asked if anyone would like to make any comments to the Board.
- b. Parent (Patricia Passanante) spoke on her views for the Capstone project and what is stated on the LTA website. She is nervous that this subject is still up for debate. She feels like this policy was not “thought out well” and she is concerned that the Board will not allow the use of the Capstone project towards the final grade. One single student is completing the Capstone project currently.
- c. Public comment closed by Mr. Geitner.

**13. Action Items:**

- a. Approve last Board meeting minutes:

- i. Edits (Page 4, action items) Strike PET President
  - ii. Remove reference to “Jeanie” in roll call and approval of last minutes (in action items).
  - iii. Move to amend. So moved by Mr. Geitner, second by Mrs. Helland. Mrs. Helland makes a motion to approve last board meeting minutes, all members-aye.
- b. Financial report:
  - i. Preliminary Budget
  - ii. Mr. Geitner moves to adopt financial report: Mrs. Helland-aye, Mr. Johnson-aye, Mr. Geitner-aye.
  - iii. Adopt financial report.
- c. Amend Calendar:
  - i. August 9<sup>th</sup> first day for 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Kindergarten, and new students
  - ii. August 10<sup>th</sup> start date for all other students.
  - iii. October 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Parent Teacher conferences, no school as well as March 15<sup>th</sup>. Add pink highlight label “no students” during Parent/Teacher conferences.
  - iv. Mrs. Helland makes a motion to approve calendar pending edits that were noted, Mr. Johnson-aye and Mr. Geitner-aye.
- d. Valedictorian Policy:
  - i. Motion to approve Valedictorian policies (2<sup>nd</sup> drafted policy)  
Mrs. Helland makes a motion to amend Valedictorian policy as “temporary” policy of LTA. Mr. Johnson-aye, Mrs. Helland-aye, and Mr. Geitner-aye.
- e. Amended and re-instated by-laws:
  - i. D49 approved charter renewal/contract on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The contract and resolution have been received but there have not been any additional changes since January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The only action taken was the D49 Board approved them.
  - ii. The resolution sent by Dustin earlier in the afternoon is approving the charter contract. Those will need to be signed by the Board.
  - iii. Adoption of amended and reinstated bylaws. Mr. Johnson-aye, Mrs. Helland-aye, and Mr. Geitner-aye
- f. Approval of preliminary budget for 2023-2024 school year:
  - i. Motion to approve preliminary budget for 2023-2024 school year, Mr. Johnson-aye, Mrs. Helland-aye, and Mr. Geitner-aye.
- g. Board member appointment effective at the end of the Board meeting:

- i. The Board received a few applications for the vacant seat on the Board.
- ii. Mrs. Revord will be the newly chosen Board member effective at the end of this meeting.
- iii. Mr. Geitner makes a motion for Board member appointment, Mrs. Helland-aye, Mr. Johnson-aye, and Mr. Geitner-aye.
- iv. Congratulations to Mrs. Revord.

14. **Begin Executive session 8:30 PM:**

- a. Mr. Geitner calls recess for a ten-minute break; executive session will begin promptly at 8:30 PM.
- b. The board returned to inform the staff and public of what was planned for the executive session so that it is on the record. Mr. Geitner read the following:
  - i. (C.R.S 24-6-402 (4) (b) conference and legal questions for the LTA attorney (Dustin Sparks) specifically relating to principal hiring.
  - ii. C.R.S 24-6-402 (4) (i) specifically interviewing candidates for the principal position, discussing any candidates the Board would like to name as finalists.
  - iii. C.R.S 24-6-402 (4) (d) Meeting with Tim Kistler to update the Board on the security plans in place for Board and LTA. The security plan must be periodically reviewed.
  - iv. Principal Position

15. **Return from Executive session**

16. **Adoption of Amended resolutions:**

- a. Contract renewed for 2023 school year:
  - i. Board president will sign the final 2023 charter contract.
  - ii. June 1<sup>st</sup> final tallies will be counted to determine interest and teachers will be placed based on that count. Minimum number of students must be met.
  - iii. Policies and handbook adopted.
- b. Hiring
  - i. Hiring process needs to happen as a team.
  - ii. Resolution 2023-04-20-B
  - iii. Hiring and firing policy.
  - v. Employees of LTA may be hired/fired by the Board, Interim
  - vi. Principal and Assistant Principals.
  - \*Publicly posted as well as internally
  - \*Adoption of resolution

17. **Actions items following Executive Session**



## Agenda

- a. Charter contract between D49 and LTA (July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018) will expire on June 30, 2023. LTA submitted a contract renewal and approved the contract for one year which may be extended and negotiated. LTA Board of Directors have been represented with the final 2023 contract at their monthly board meeting. LTA legal counsel and Board of Directors have signed this contract on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Mr. Geitner moves to approve the adoption of the charter contract, second by Mrs. Helland. Roll call vote: Mrs. Helland-aye, Mr. Johnson-aye, and Mr. Geitner-aye.

## Concurrent Enrollment

- a. Mrs. Helland makes a motion to approve the current enrollment handbook as presented in the Board packet. Deadline is May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Students must email the PPSC enrollment coordinator their interest by that date. Mrs. Stahnke would like some flexibility on that deadline date, she asked for the date to be moved to June 1<sup>st</sup>. Mrs. Helland will amend her motion from May 15<sup>th</sup> to June 1<sup>st</sup>. Roll call vote: Mr. Johnson-aye, Mrs. Helland-aye, and Mr. Geitner-aye.

## Hiring

- a. The Board understands and acknowledges that there are roughly ten positions that need to be filled but they ask that everyone involved with the hiring process work together as a team. After a lengthy discussion, the Board and the attorney for LTA have made the following standards to ensure we are following state and federal laws:

### **(Resolution 2023-04-20-b) Hiring/Firing authority:**

Employees may be hired/fired by the Board, Interim principals, Vice Principals, job reassignment as permitted by LTA's by-laws. No individual employee of LTA may make decisions unilaterally.

- i. All position openings must be publicly posted, and all employees must be notified in writing of open positions before being publicly posted.
- ii. Any paragraph and portion of this section shall not affect any part of the remaining resolution.
- iii. This resolution will be in effect full force by the end of this meeting.
- iv. Mr. Geitner makes motion to adopt this resolution, Mrs. Helland-second. Roll call vote: Mr. Johnson-aye, Mrs. Helland-aye, and Mr. Geitner-aye.

## 18. **Announcements:**

Next Board meeting will be held on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023. This will be a special Board meeting (principal hiring), notice will be posted 7 days in advance. Time will be 6:30 PM and the meeting will be virtual. This meeting will be mostly executive session. Next regular full Board meeting will be May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

## 19. **Adjournment:**

Mr. Geitner adjourns meeting, roll call, everyone-aye.

Adjournment:

Board meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM by Mr. Geitner.

Mrs. Walsh  
Executive Assistant/HR  
Liberty Tree Academy