

Lionheart Classical Academy Board of Trustees

Meeting on March 23, 2022

Draft Minutes for Approval

A special meeting of the Board of Trustees (the "Board") of Lionheart Classical Academy Chartered Public School ("LCA") took place on March 23, 2022 at 10 Sharon Road, Peterborough, New Hampshire. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Barry Tanner. Board members present were: Barry Tanner, Kim Lavalley (via Zoom), Leo Plante, Richard Merkt, and Kerry Bedard (ex officio and Executive Director). Trustee James Fricchione was excused.

The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Tanner read the School Mission of LCA.

The Chairman noted that this is a public meeting and that notice of the special meeting was duly posted at the school, in compliance with the requirements of state law. He also explained that this special meeting was called due to a short deadline on applying to the State Board of Education to amend LCA's charter to expand enrollment.

The Chairman opened the meeting for public comments. He read a letter from a Peterborough resident unable to attend, expressing support for expanding enrollment. A school parent in the audience also spoke in favor of increasing the enrollment. A parent on Zoom with a child already enrolled and one on the waiting list also urged that the enrollment be increased. Hearing no further public comments, the Chairman closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

Chairman Tanner then reviewed the history of LCA's development and lottery, with a subsequent enrollment of 157 students and a current waitlist of 71 students. The distribution of the waiting list created a possibility to fill additional sections in two grades. He outlined various concerns about possibly expanding the enrollment and noted that the idea has been the subject of significant internal discussions before being presented to the Board for consideration.

The proposed increase in enrollment would take the student body from its present 157 to 197 students.

Executive Director Kerry Bedard then provided a PowerPoint presentation to the meeting on the proposed charter amendment required to increase enrollment. She explained the original enrollment projections when LCA applied for its state charter and the current status of enrollment, waitlist, and declines for 2022-2023. The charter amendment proposal would seek approval to add two classrooms and additional sections in grades two and four for Year One.

The distribution of the waiting list makes it feasible to add two sections to provide more families and students with the opportunity for a classical education. LCA would need to add two well-qualified teachers to provide instruction to the additional students. Executive Director Bedard noted that LCA is making good progress on vetting faculty candidates and anticipates recommending in April the hiring of a number of teacher candidates.

The Executive Director commented that the additional classrooms and teachers would add about \$100,000 each to LCA's first year costs, but overall net cash flow is anticipated to improve, due to increased state adequacy payments that would come with enlarged enrollment. She also presented revised projections for future classroom needs and further enrollment growth in future years.

Among the potential benefits of expanded enrollment cited by Executive Director Bedard were: creation of a sustainable foundation for LCA's success; fulfillment of the school's mission; responding to community needs and demand for greater choice in educational options; and enhancing establishment of a collaborative faculty. She noted that parents have been attracted to LCA by its emphasis on academics, its virtues, and LCA's commitment to give students the ability to think matters through independently.

Chairman Tanner then discussed how LCA's expense structure has become better defined since its state charter was issued in November 2021: LCA has been approved by the State Department of Education to receive a grant of up to \$1.5 million to assist with start-up

expenses; LCA has received a donation of more than 1,000 pieces of school furniture from Oyster River Middle School in Durham, New Hampshire; LCA has also been offered at least 100 computers as a donation; and the school now has actual operating expense figures for utility, insurance, and employee benefit costs. These have enabled LCA to refine its expected Year One operating budget.

The school is also considering staffing adjustments to enhance its capacity to serve the needs of LCA students. Fund-raising efforts are ahead of the projected schedule. Work on funding construction (now underway) is continuing with growing clarity as to sources available for the project. Chairman Tanner summarized by stating that LCA's new budget forecast will be ahead of what was approved when the school received its charter.

Leo Plante inquired about parent responses (due by March 25, 2022). Executive Director Bedard reported that parent response thus far has been good, with complete enrollment packages being received by the school. She also explained that the ten classrooms projected will all be for academics, with music and art instruction conducted in common areas.

Mr. Plante expressed his support for increasing school enrollment but voiced concern about costs. Vice Chair Kim Lavalley and Chairman Tanner pointed out that significant costs already incurred by LCA may be reimbursable from the state start-up grant, making those funds now available for other purposes.

Mr. Merkt expressed his support for increasing LCA enrollment as a means of expanding the school's role in meeting community needs and parental demand for more educational options for their children.

Chairman Tanner then discussed the draft charter amendment letter of intent to the State Department of Education, requesting an opportunity to appear before the State Board of Education in April. Mr. Merkt complimented the letter of intent as comprehensive and well-drafted, and he moved approval of submission of the letter of intent to the Commissioner of Education. Mr. Plante seconded the motion, which was approved by the Board on a 4-0-0 vote.

Mr. Merkt asked about also submitting the revision to LCA's mission statement for State Board of Education approval. It was noted that the proposed revision was previously approved by LCA's Board and will be submitted to the State Board of Education.

Under New Business, Mr. Plante asked whether LCA currently has a policy in place to prohibit nepotism. Chairman Tanner referred the question to the Policy Committee for review and report at the next regular meeting of the Board.

The Chairman stated that there were no matters pending that require a non-public session of the Board.

Chairman Tanner noted that the next regular meeting of the Board will be at LCA on Thursday, April 7, 2022 at 6 p.m.

Leo Plante moved that the meeting adjourn, Kim Lavalley seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved, whereupon Chairman Tanner declared the special meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Merkt, Secretary