



Volume 15 Issue 2
August 29, 2011

*"Semper Excelsius-
The Liberty Way"*

The Liberty Common School
Common Knowledge, Common Virtues, Common Sense
A National Charter School of the Year, A Nationally Recognized Blue Ribbon
School, A Certified Core Knowledge Visitation Site School,
A John Irwin School of Excellence

What's Happening At LCS-K-6th

Aug. 31– After School Spanish Meeting for parents of students currently enrolled in Spanish. Meeting will be at 4:00 p.m. in room 148.

Sept. 1– Grandparents' Day Committee Meeting, 7-8 p.m. LCS Teacher's Lounge

Sept. 5- No school-Labor Day

Sept. 9-Chess Club begins-see flyer on page 4.

Sept. 14-16-6th graders attend Eco-Week.



Bring in your Box Tops for Education, Campbell's Soup Labels for Education and Morning Fresh Milk Lids– all benefit Liberty Common School

Liberty Common School Board of Directors 2010-2011

Amy Redstone-378-1170
Dan Provaznik- 223-0188
Mark Sutherlin-225-0432
Cassy Turner- 691-3027
Jeff Webb-545-9636
Bill Werst- 631-8379

Board of Directors Meeting:
Liberty Common School
September 15, 2011
1725 Sharp Point Dr.
Faculty Room

Headmaster Writing by Russ Spicer

The History of Liberty Common School (Part1)

I am so thankful for our school! I am grateful to the many parents that stepped up to the challenge of starting a charter school. We should never take for granted how fortunate we are to be an independent charter school - thus able to avoid many of the pitfalls associated with the "larger district, mainstream public education" approach.

The next three weeks this column will run a "history of Liberty Common School" written by Maureen Schaffer. We must never forget that our founding parents had to fight a hard and painful battle just to get our doors open. The administration and Board of Directors ongoing commitment to fulfill the original goals and mission will continue with an enthusiasm and diligence we have all come to expect.

How exciting it is to be working towards fulfilling the original desire of our founding parents by extending our educational offering to include a college preparatory high school. We look forward to adding additional chapters to the history of Liberty Common School in next few years as we have added additional tracks to our primary grades and expanded to a high school.

How Did We Get Here?

By

Dr. Maureen Schaffer

Liberty first opened its doors in September of 1997, but the story of Liberty Common School dates back much further.

In the early 1990's, true educational choice was non-existent in Poudre School District. Parents without resources for private school sent their children to neighborhood schools. Nebulous curricula were largely determined by individual classroom teachers, leading to gaps and repetition in student learning. Dissatisfied, small groups of parents began to read, research, and meet throughout PSD in search of better options.

One young couple, with a seemingly insatiable interest in education issues, emerged with a solution. After months of research, Dr. Randy Everett and his wife, Ruth Ann, identified several fundamental elements they believed most parents desired in their children's schooling:

- Parental choice in education
- A core curriculum of specific content knowledge
- Solid, content-driven skill instruction
- Teaching the values of a democratic society
- School-based management

Randy and Ruth Ann took their message on the road, placing advertisements in the local paper, and speaking in living rooms and meeting halls throughout the county. Soon, hundreds of parents had joined the cause.

In the spring of 1993, Dr. Everett submitted a proposal to the PSD Board of Education to establish an Elementary School of Choice organized around the Core Knowledge Sequence. The educational community fought the proposal with gusto. District teachers testified before the school board, pronouncing the Core Knowledge Sequence too difficult to teach or learn. In spite of this strong opposition, the school board approved the request, and the Washington Core Knowledge School opened with 125 students that fall. This progressive episode in PSD's history is documented on pages 62-63 of *The Schools We Need* by E.D. Hirsch.

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How to Reach Us

- Our office hours are **7:30-4:00 p.m.**
- Our telephone number is **(970) 482-9800**
- Our attendance line is **(970) 482-9800**, option 2, please call by 8:30 a.m.
- Please note that you may go to your student's classroom and wait for them to be dismissed only after 2:50 p.m.
- If you need to take your child to an appointment during school hours, please come to the Front Office, sign them out and we will call them out of class.
- All students who arrive after 8:00 a.m. must be signed in at the Front Office. It is important that a reason be written as this determines if the tardy is excused or not.
- Our school closes at 4:00 p.m. All students need to have left the building by 4:00 p.m. or chaperoned by a parent or guardian.

Carpool Lists

Carpool lists are now available in the Front Office. Thanks to our great parent Beth Scott, you can now save gas and time by connecting with other Liberty families. The carpool list is divided by zip codes and neighborhood schools. Thanks again Beth Scott for compiling this list.



After School Spanish Meeting for Parents– August 31st– 4:00p.m.

If you have a student in After School Spanish, there will be a parent meeting on August 31st in the Level 2 Spanish room #148 at 4:00 pm. We are also looking for a parent volunteer to monitor students on the playground during this meeting so just parents and teachers can meet. Please contact Paulina Deitrick if you can help. pdeitrick@libertycommon.org

Get Involved with Liberty

Be a part of Grandparents' Day!

Seeking volunteers to be a part of planning and carrying out Grandparents' Day. This year's event will take place on Tuesday, November 22 (or Nov. 21st. For M/W Kinders) and is a great time for grandparents (or surrogates) to spend a fun morning with students and receive a warm welcome to the Liberty family. This event also supports the character foundation stone of Respect.

Volunteers are needed to make this another successful Liberty Common event. The committee will begin meeting Sept. 1 from 7-8 pm at Liberty Common School and will meet most Thursdays from 7-8pm. If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact Amy Redstone at 378-1170 or chookela@hotmail.com.

Our Goal– Make Your Morning Smooth

- If you are dropping off your student or escorting them into the building from the front, please enter through the Front Doors located at the South Side of the building. This applies to all students and parents except for Kindergarteners.
- Please leave forgotten lunches, water bottles, jackets, instruments and homework in the Front Office and we will gladly deliver them to your student. This will reduce the number of classroom disruptions.
- If you are waiting in line to drop off or pick up in the front area please be aware of those seeking a handicap parking spot and allow the driver in line. The handicap parking spot is the last spot located near the Front Doors. Thank you.

Headmaster Writing Continued from Page 1

Washington Core Knowledge School flourished. Parents painted the run-down school building and gathered curriculum resources. Courageous teachers joined the team, and students began to outperform their peers at neighborhood schools.

In two years, enrollment had nearly doubled, and the waiting list numbered in the hundreds.

To meet this high demand, the school board allowed Washington Core to further increase enrollment and move into a portion of the old Fort Collins High School building. In a monumental construction effort led by parent volunteer Carol Christ, the high school building was converted to an elementary school over the summer of 1995. Things were going well for Washington Core, or so it seemed.

The school district notified Washington Core that its two-year pilot program had ended. Faculty would now be determined by the district, rather than the school's parent board. Sadly, the district immediately fired two teachers, replacing them with "tenured excess" teachers from within PSD.

The founding parents were dismayed. How could the school retain its integrity, if PSD brought in teachers who were not committed to the school's curriculum? Fortunately, the Colorado legislature had provided an answer – the Charter Schools Act. TO BE CONTINUED...



Thanks For Choosing LCHS By: Bob Schaffer, LCHS Principal

Nine days into the school year, we're already hitting our stride for the first semester. Our second year as a high school is off to a very good start.

The number of families on the school's lottery list is a bit greater than we had anticipated when we first projected LCHS's growth back in 2009. We wish we could accommodate them all.

"For 13 years, Liberty Common School has offered a choice to students and parents who didn't feel their needs were being met by the traditional schools in the Poudre School District. Starting next fall, Liberty Common will continue to grow its legacy as it embarks on an expansion into high school grades," wrote the *Coloradoan* newspaper about 20 months ago.

The article reinforced key themes for Liberty: Choice is a powerful guarantor of high quality. We acknowledge a parent's authority to choose the right school for their child.

Markets work. Schools that respond to a discerning academic marketplace tend to perform better. We have to in order to thrive.

A small-school setting like ours offers many great advantages for individual attention, safety, student leadership and college preparedness. Combined with Liberty's reliance on heavy parental involvement, the LCHS model is the antidote to the mediocrity commonly associated with large bureaucracies.

This statement is not meant to impugn any of our competitor institutions or anyone who would declaim the virtue of mega-campus high schools. It is, however, a positive declaration of what is different, special and unique about LCHS.

Now that we're firmly into LCHS's second year, it's time for each of us to ramp up our advocacy of the school. "Each of us" means every student, parent, teacher, administrator and alumnus of Liberty.

Promote Liberty Common High School with pride and enthusiasm. The success of LCHS is crucial to the overall wellbeing of the Liberty program.

Congratulations to everyone at Liberty, especially our erudite students and their families, for starting off the new school year in such a magnificent way; and thank you for choosing Liberty.

Liberty Chess Club



Who: For all students k-6.

What: A 12 week chess program full of lessons, chess games and tournaments!

Beginner group (K-2): Fridays 7:00am-7:50 in the Library.
Advanced(3-5): 3:15pm-4:15 in the Art room.

Why : To improve your chess, learn strategy and forward thinking and have a great time with friends.

How: It costs \$40 dollars and you can sign

Schedule

September: 9, 16, 23 and 30.

October: 7 and 14.

November: 4, and 18.

December: 2, 9, and 16.

(The second session start date will be January 13th.)

Introducing the Coach

Hi! My name is Zachary Bekkedahl, chess coach and teacher of many schools and my own chess club. I can't wait to run Liberty chess again! I want to build off of our hard work last year and continue to grow as a team! Nice work everybody in placing 2nd in the district tournament!!!

If you have questions please call me @ (970) 581-2424 or e-mail me at info@chessmatesfc.com If you would like further information about me or my club check out my website at www.Chessmatesfc.com. Thanks!

-Zachary Bekkedahl