

2017 Colorado Charter Schools Conference

Lincoln Academy Board of Directors Update

Board Member: Nina Sloan

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Advocacy: Telling Your Charter School Story

Summary: One of the first steps toward effective charter school Development communication and advocacy is being able to tell your story in a clear and compelling fashion. Each charter school has a story that needs to be pulled together and told. Taking the time to effectively do this allows for better communication to staff, families, communities, and on the larger scale, it allows advocacy for charter schools on a local and national level.

Takeaway: Lincoln Academy has a great story. Pulling it all together together is going to become a short-term top priority project for the Development Committee. We will begin recruiting a subcommittee to include parents, staff, administration, and community members to strategize a plan. Together, we will create written content, video content, social media content, and “talking points” for distribution. Tools created, will be used to positively promote the school, as well as the importance of school choice.

Governance: Amazing Oversight for Outstanding Academic Results

Summary: The purpose of this session was to provide a foundational understanding of the board’s role in achieving improved student performance and school success. We reviewed state accountability and student performance data, and talked about key questions board members should know how to answer. We were taught how board members can establish sound and fair practices that collaborate with the school’s administration to provide academic performance oversight and monitoring. Several schools shared their methods of tracking their progress toward goals set.

Takeaway: From our previous discussions surrounding our UIP, MAP testing, and academic growth, I wish we could have all attended this session. We discussed UIPs, PARCC, and MAP. While our discussions to date have been somewhat productive, I believe there’s a chance we are missing the mark a little in setting, and voting for, our goals for Lincoln regarding growth and that our goal of 50% growth needs to be revisited.

Advocacy: Developing an Effective Advocacy Campaign

Summary: This session reviewed the need for each school to have an established advocacy strategy. Often charter schools choose to be “Switzerland” when it comes to outwardly

communicating/promoting the tenants of school choice. This session outlined ways for schools to approach having an advocacy plan.

Takeaway: In this current political environment, I do not believe it wise for Lincoln Academy to be “Switzerland” when it comes to having an advocacy plan. We all know our Mill Levy funding is on the line. Right now, we have the benefit of those funds. I believe we need to create and actively promote a communication plan. We don’t have to be negative. We can have a strategy that promotes school choice, our families, and our school. We can have our own talking points that positively promote the truths we all know. I would like to propose that the Development Committee work with the Governance Committee to establish such a plan.

Innovation in Compensation: Rewarding Commitment and Contribution

Summary: A session presented by Peak to Peak Charter school addressing their successes with a compensation model that has a method of paying for performance. Presenters shared their research based practices that, in their school environment, improved staff performance and student achievement.

Takeaway: I presented information gathered at the most recent Finance/Compensation committee meeting. Peak to Peak seems to have a lot of ways they are the “gold standard” in practices for charter schools, and yet I was able to recognize how some of their ideas are good, but not practical for Lincoln. The ideas, however, were a good starting point for how to look at a few things differently. The Compensation Committee is moving forward with the data that is useful.

Governance: Efficient Meetings Make Effective Boards

Summary: A session dedicated to the effective practices of Board Meetings from all angles.

Takeaway: We are doing a great job. Of course, there are ways we can do better and I’d like to propose a few immediate action items to which we hold ourselves accountable:

- Looking forward to June, particularly with so many potential new board members, we should schedule our annual Board Retreat to establish strategic goals for the coming year.
- Regarding our “Board Packets”/Committee reports. In order to give all Board Members adequate time to review board reports before each meeting so they can make informed decision, we should have a better deadline as to when these reports are submitted. I know I am guilty with my reports. We need to improve in this area. Again, with new board members joining us in April, we need to give them the best opportunities to get up to speed. I propose that reports, with perhaps the exception of Cindie’s report, need to be submitted to the board no later than the Monday before the coming board meeting, and that we need to hold each other accountable to do so. It is also a best practice for these reports to be provided to meeting attendees (including the audience).

- It is a best practice to have the Board Agenda posted a week before the coming board meeting, both in paper and electronically. The agenda should be easily accessed by the greater community and they should somehow be alerted that it has been posted. This practice will encourage greater communication between the board and the community it is serving.
- With the potential of 3 additional members joining the Board, we need a more established mentoring program.

Unlocking the Strength of School Leadership

Summary: A presentation by Peak to Peak and “Indigo” a vendor that provides a tool for effective leadership management based on personality assessment.

Takeaway: It would be valuable for each LA Board member to take either a DISC or Meyers-Briggs test, to better understand our personal leadership styles and how they work together. We could do this before our Board Retreat and discuss or hire a consultant to do this for us.