



# LIBERTY COMMON SCHOOL (K-12)

## ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

### Mission Statement

The mission of the School is to provide excellence and fairness in education for school children through a common foundation by successfully teaching a contextual body of organized knowledge, the skills of learning including the Thinking Framework, and the values of a democratic society. The School recognizes the value of inclusiveness, or providing access to a broad cross-section of the community, so that students from all backgrounds can benefit from the School's educational offering.

The School acknowledges the leadership of teachers in the classroom, and recognizes the responsibility of each student for his/her academic effort.

### MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIRMAN

A group of tenacious parents who believed in building a school where parents and teachers were partners in education founded Liberty Common School in 1997. Nearly 20 years later, we are still passionate about that partnership.

Liberty is a tuition-free, parent-led, charter school. Core Knowledge (K-8) and classical liberal college-preparatory (9-12) curricula—accentuating math, science, and engineering taught by professional content experts—is a highly successful combination. The evidence lives in not only our test scores, but in our thriving school community.

Our success has enabled our ability to expand and improve both school facilities. In 2016 we are adding a new entryway and gym storage at the elementary school and a new gym, expanded great hall, and additional parking at the high school. This cannot be accomplished without generous donations. Please give to our capital campaign [www.cheddarup.com/tabs/liberty-common-school-capital-campaign](http://www.cheddarup.com/tabs/liberty-common-school-capital-campaign).

I invite you to visit [libertycommon.org](http://libertycommon.org), where you will find a wealth of information detailing our philosophy and practices.

It is through our collective efforts that we keep our academic performance high and our school community flourishing. Thank you!

Kind Regards,

PAULETTE HANSEN  
Chairman, Board of Directors





## Liberty Common School Board of Directors

Paulette Hansen  
*Chairman*

Patrick Albright  
*Vice-Chairman*

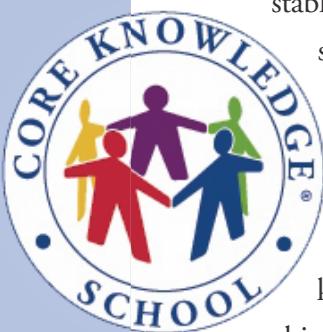
Denise Benz  
*Secretary*

Joel Goeltl  
*Treasurer*

Aislinn Kottwitz

John Rohrbaugh

Jeff Webb



## Liberty Common School Administration

Keith Churchill  
*Elementary School Principal*

Bob Schaffer  
*High School Principal*

Katrina Brossia  
*Financial Operations Manager*

Liberty Common School offers  
rigorous math and science  
curriculum.



# MANAGING OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES

## 2015–2016 YEAR IN REVIEW

**A**s we move from 2015 into 2016, the Liberty Common School's (K-12) Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) would like to provide the Liberty community with the highlights of 2015 and the key objectives going into 2016.

Key highlights of our financially stable school as evidenced by our rating with Standard and Poor confirming our continuing BBB-investment rating which demonstrates that Liberty continues to be seen as financially stable in the charter school sector. With this rating we were able to

secure bond financing with the lowest interest rate in the school's history. These bond proceeds will be used to help fund the high school and elementary expansion projects. Another highlight is we are now accepting online payments to pay for student activities fees, athletic fees, summer school classes, kindergarten tuition, and donations/contributions. Our key

objectives moving forward are maintaining current appropriation of funds in the classrooms while planning out needed capital improvements at the elementary building, which includes but is not limited to: a new roof, track resurfacing, updated bathrooms, and gymnasium floor refinishing.

As Bob Schaffer, our LCHS Principal and a founding parent, has stated before, the parents and students actually own Liberty Common School. Your financial contributions have contributed immensely to the success of our mission. With your continued help and financial support we will continue on this path.

**Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC (S&P)** is an American financial services company. It is a division of McGraw Hill Financial that publishes financial research and analysis on stocks and bonds. S&P is considered one of the Big Three credit-rating agencies. As a credit-rating agency (CRA), the company issues credit ratings for the debt of public and private companies, and other public borrowers such as governments and governmental entities. It is one of several CRAs that have been designated a nationally recognized statistical rating organization by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. The company rates borrowers on a scale from AAA to D. Investment grades are AAA to BBB-. Anything lower is considered non-investment grade or speculative grade.

# *Thank you, Donors and Volunteers!*

Thank you to everyone who contributed to Liberty Common Schools (K-12) in 2015–2016. Each year Liberty continues to advance in its mission and your commitment is instrumental.



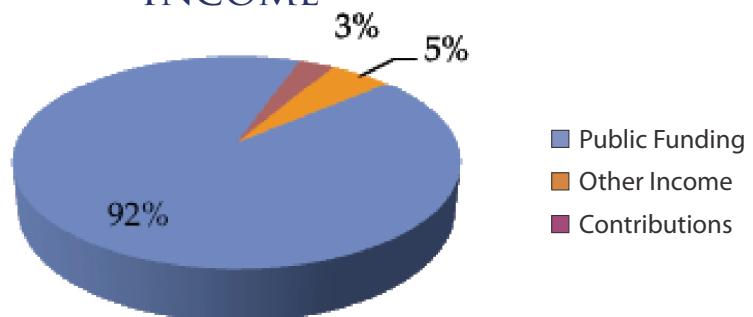
Liberty Common School offers a wide variety of student-run social and academic events.

## LIBERTY COMMON SCHOOL (K-12) FUNDING IN ACTION

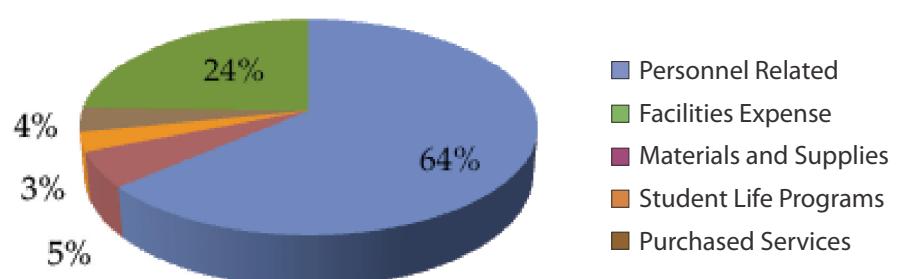
**L**iberty Common School receives 85% of the public funding provided to Poudre School District (PSD) “neighborhood” schools. The key difference in Liberty’s funding when compared to “neighborhood” schools is that neighborhood school facilities (buildings, land, and furnishings) are paid for by bond revenues financed by local property taxes. PSD does not provide charter schools access to these bond revenues. Therefore, unlike neighborhood schools, Liberty must pay the cost of its facilities (17% of annual expenses) from Per Pupil funded Rate (PPR) and the Capital Construction Grant. Liberty leases its facilities from a private, nonprofit building corporation established by Liberty’s founders.

The discrepancy in funding is mitigated through larger class sizes, careful fiscal management, and other income including activity fees and grants. Donations make up 3% of our funding and are critical to Liberty’s budget. Liberty’s primary funding source is the Per Pupil Revenue (PPR) allocated annually by the Colorado legislature to each school district in the state. In accordance with Liberty’s charter contract, PSD forwards the PPR to Liberty for each student enrolled. This public funding mechanism is essentially the same for PSD’s “neighborhood” schools. In addition to PPR, Liberty receives a small amount of public funding from some of PSD’s mill levy overrides on local property taxes.

### INCOME



### EXPENSES



# ACHIEVEMENTS AT SCHOOL

## MESSAGE FROM KEITH CHURCHILL LIBERTY COMMON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

**L**iberty Common Elementary school has proven time and again it has a formula for success. The combination of strong parental involvement and buy-in to our philosophy, fidelity of instruction using the Core Knowledge Curriculum by our staff, and the smart business sense set forth by the founders and administration has placed Liberty as a top performing school in northern Colorado. With a school population of over 600 students kindergarten to grade 6 and a lottery of over 1200 students, Liberty is clearly a choice for informed parents in the area. Liberty has received the John Irwin School of Excellence Award since the award's inception and the Core Knowledge Analysis of Curriculum and Practices by the National Core Knowledge Foundation in 2013. Both of these awards demonstrate Liberty has gone above and beyond to provide the best education possible. As a school of choice, we are honored that parents choose to place their children in our school and we are committed to continuous improvement. We are excited to prepare our students for their continued education at Liberty Common High School.

Seniors are inducted into the Legion of XVIII and given a golden key for attending LCS and LCHS for all 13 years (K–12). They, in turn, offer kindergarteners the challenge of earning their own golden key.

## MESSAGE FROM BOB SCHAFER LIBERTY COMMON HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

**L**iberty Common High School (LCHS) has been rated by US News & World Report as Colorado's #1 high school (and #49 nationally out of 21,000 American public high schools). Liberty students have consistently earned the state's highest composite ACT (college-readiness) scores. The school educates nearly 500 students in grades 7–12. Liberty's policies and curriculum provide the strongest pathway to academic success of any school I've studied. A board of Liberty parent/volunteers lead the way in school governance and performance oversight. Most instructors are parents of Liberty students, as are most administrators, including me. Our objective is for all Liberty students to receive a solid, classical, liberal-arts, college-preparatory curriculum that honors the sciences and introduces students to the rudiments of engineering. Liberty's professional instructors are the best classical educators around. The school's culture and student life are enriching. Classical virtues, healthy social interaction, a business-casual dress code, and staid moral expectations define our student body and daily school environment. The result is magnificent—well-educated, competent, courageous, virtuous, wise, and prepared, young Americans who know and embrace the true essence of Liberty.



CONNIE TROUT