

LLCA: CFA Board Minutes

Special Meeting

November 30, 2015

Location: Town of Lake Lure Town Hall, 2498 Memorial Highway

Board Members present: Mike Harrington (present by phone), Carol Pritchett (present by phone), Jim Proctor, Chris Braund, Gary Kling, Linda Turner, Russ Pitts, Tim Turner II., Margery Sherrill and Clint Calhoun.

Absent: Joe Maimone

Others present: Jessica Boland

The Meeting opened at 5:30 pm.

1.) Pledge recited

2.) Amend Agenda:

Jim Proctor made a motion to approve agenda as presented. Second was made by Russ Pitts. The motion was unanimously approved.

3.) Committee Report from Policy Committee:

Mrs. Margery Sherrill presented a committee report. The report is attached.

Mrs. Sherrill made a recommendation from the committee in the form of a motion to adopt the following policy for all student clubs:

Policy for Student Clubs

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide directives for students to form and participate in clubs while preserving the educational environment of the school.

Policy

It is the policy of LLCA to promote and advance school curricular clubs that enrich the education and lives of students. LLCA also desires to allow students opportunities to organize supervised non-curricular clubs that are not related to school curriculum.

Definitions

1. Curricular clubs are directly related to the curriculum offered in the school at which the club is organized. The school may recognize a curricular school club and provide faculty attendance and assistance only if the following criteria are met:

- It is directly related to the curriculum as follows:
- The subject matter of the club is actually taught or will soon be taught in a regularly offered course, or
- The subject matter of the club concerns the body of courses as a whole.
- The school director or a designee shall appoint a school employee as advisor to the club; and
- the club is organized and directed by the school advisor(s).

2. Non-curricular Student Clubs are those organizations that are not directly related to the curriculum and which are initiated and operated by students enrolled in the school. Student Clubs are:

- open to all students in the school;
- attendance is completely voluntary;
- operated with the permission of school authorities but are not sponsored by them;
- operated under the supervision of an appointed faculty supervisor.

Division of Clubs at LLCA

Grades K-5 may have curricular and non-curricular clubs.

Grades 6-8 may have curricular and non-curricular clubs.

Grades 9-12 may have curricular and non-curricular clubs.

Parental Consent

Parental consent is required for participation in clubs for grades K-5.

Parental consent is required for participation in clubs for grades 6-8.

Parental consent is not required for participation in clubs for grades 9-12.

Formation of curricular school clubs

Each curricular school club shall follow the procedures outlined in the policy. The procedures include:

- Completing the appropriate LLCA Club Application form.
- The application form must be submitted to the school administration and approved before the club is permitted to schedule its first meeting.
- Existing clubs must renew their application and membership documentation within the first 30 days of school annually. If the club fails to renew the applicable forms, the club will be dissolved.

Clubs in existence before the adoption of these policies must complete and submit the proper application before the club may resume meetings.

Formation of non-curricular student clubs

1. Students wishing to charter non-curricular clubs must complete, and submit to the school director, the appropriate LLCA Club Application form which provides the following information about the club:

- Name, purpose, and objectives of the club.
- The types of activities in which the club members may be engaged
- When the club anticipates holding regular meetings.
- Any materials which the club plans to use to solicit membership or to inform others of the club's existence.
- A list of its members and the name of the faculty member willing to supervise the group.

2. Limitations upon group actions including at least the following:

- Action or advocacy of imminent action which violates the law or administrative rule; this prohibition shall not apply to appropriate discussions concerning the changing of laws or rules, or actions taken through appropriate channels or procedures to effectuate such changes.
- Advocacy or approval of sexual activity outside of marriage, or presentations in violation of laws or regulations governing sex education or privacy rights of families or individuals.
- Action or advocacy of imminent action involving the harassment or the denigration of persons based upon race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other status-linked characteristics.
- Action or advocacy of imminent action with the intent to cause a person to fear to freely exercise or enjoy any right secured by the constitution or laws of the United States or the state of North Carolina.

3. Meetings shall take place only during non-instructional time established by the school administration. Non-instructional time is considered as: before school hours, during lunch, and after school hours. A faculty member/advisor shall be present. The faculty member/advisor may not participate in the discussions or activities of a student initiated club except to protect the school's property and facilities and ensure that student activities are consistent with this policy and the law.

4. All meetings shall be student-initiated and open to all students in the grade levels stated and approved in the Club Application Form. Student attendance at any meeting shall be completely voluntary.

5. Non-curricular student clubs may invite non-school persons (for example, guest speakers) to attend their meetings only upon the completion and approval of an Application for Special Event. Non-school persons may not direct, conduct, control or regularly attend activities of the group. Non-school persons must follow the school's established procedure for allowing non-school persons on campus, including registration procedures. The school reserves the right to limit the attendance of non-school persons for all student groups.

6. School administration shall determine the equal access of all club communications per our club posting policy.

Club Posting Policy

1. All school clubs, that have been approved and are in good standing, may post information on a bulletin board that has been designated for clubs and is displayed appropriately in either the High School hall, Middle School hall or Elementary School hall

2. Postings are limited to an 8 1/2 X 11" format and may include the following information: the Club Name, a brief description, the club's meeting schedule, a contact person. All postings must have a "stamp of approval" before placement on the bulletin board.

3. Postings and or posters from secondary sources are not allowed on this bulletin board.

7. The school may recognize a non-curricular student club only if the following conditions are met:

- The school faculty advisor shall prohibit unlawful conduct at club meetings.
- Upon parent or guardian request for review of materials, the faculty advisor shall provide to a school administrator a printed copy of materials that were presented at a non-curricular club meeting.
- The club will not compromise, or interfere with, school authority to maintain order and discipline on school premises, to protect the well-being of students and employees, and to assure that attendance at meetings is voluntary.

8. The director shall specifically approve the name of the club to ensure that:

- The name reasonably reflects the nature, purpose, and activities of the club; and
- The club name would not result in undue disruptions of school operations, subject students to harassment or persecution, or imply inappropriate association with outside organizations or groups.

9. Students denied access may appeal the director's decision to the Grievance Committee. Students must file a written notice of appeal with the Grievance Committee within ten days of the date of denial by the director. The committee will review the evidence submitted and a written decision will be issued within thirty days of receipt of the student's written notice of appeal.

The School, its agents and employees will not:

1. Expend public funds beyond incidental costs for student-initiated costs;
2. Compel any employee to supervise meetings to which he/she objects; or
3. Impose a minimum size limit on student meetings.

School employees who supervise student club meetings must report to the school administration any violation of this policy.

Curricular school clubs or non-curricular student clubs which have been found to be in violation of this policy may be dissolved and may not be allowed to re-petition for reinstatement until the next school year.

The school office shall maintain on file all club applications.

The motion was approved by a vote of 7 in favor and 2 against. Mike Harrington and Russ Pitts were against the motion presented. Board chair did not vote.

Chris Braund made a motion for the following statement to be posted on the school website. Second was made by Jim Proctor.

From the beginning, LLCA has enjoyed the benefits of curriculum-based clubs as well as non-curricular clubs. Indeed, we consider clubs to be beneficial to our students. Being involved in a club is often a student's first opportunity to step into positions of leadership, to strengthen a particular skill set, or to increase their knowledge in a personal interest. A school club is one part of the larger school community. An individual club does not represent the entire community nor does it require everyone's participation. A school club can provide a safe place for our students to learn how to navigate the waters of future civic involvement. Our mission is to create lifelong learners, thoughtful and articulate young adults, and good citizens. These are character traits that can be strengthened and enriched by participation in school clubs. We have adopted policies governing the formation and operation of clubs and we expect that all clubs will be treated fairly under these policies, although these guidelines reflect that not all clubs are appropriate for all grade levels. To the students who are currently in the newly-formed gay-straight alliance, or any student who may wish to participate in the future, we respect you as individuals and support you as members of our school family. We support your club just as we do the chess club, Raptors for Christ and all other clubs that exist or may form under our policy guidelines. Our school is a place of inclusion, not exclusion. To the families of elementary and middle school students who are concerned about the age at which your children will be exposed to mature concepts of gender identity and sexuality, we respect your concerns and, consistent with our approach to our curriculum, are committed to operating the school in a manner that appropriately segregates the activities of the different grade levels. Our board aims to be deliberative and to always act in the best interest of the school as a whole, and rarely is that a task that improved with speed. To all of our LLCA families and extended community, we are grateful for your patience and confidence as we've worked to develop an appropriate framework for clubs to operate in the school.

The motion was unanimously approved.

4.) Public Comment: Public comments were offered by the following: Sue Null, David MacEachern, Makayla Gregory, Avery Sherrill, Frances Brown, Mary Parker, Anton Roos, Amy Correll, and Virgil Stucker.

5.) New Business:

Jim Proctor made a motion to dismiss having a December 10, 2015 board meeting with our next board meeting to occur on January 14, 2016. Second was made by Margery Sherrill. The motion was unanimously approved.

12.) Adjourn: Jim Proctor made a motion to adjourn. Second was made by Russ Pitts. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 7:04pm.

Lake Lure Classical Academy, a Challenge Foundation Academy
Policy Committee Report to the Board of Directors
November 30, 2015

On November 12, 2015 the Lake Lure Classical Academy, a Challenge Foundation Academy (LLCA) board of directors asked the policy committee to research and develop a policy for the formation, participation and conduct of school clubs at LLCA. The policy committee has taken into consideration the concerns of the board, parents, students and community at large. With the help of attorneys, the committee has also researched the legal aspects for clubs at LLCA.

The following concerns were raised at the Nov. 12 school board meeting:

Concerns expressed by parents and community

Policy committee response

School clubs are not treated fairly with consistent privileges and restrictions.

The committee's recommendations specifically assure all clubs will be subject to the same written policies on club formation, participation, activities, communications and events.

Clubs for older students may deal with topics that are unsuitable for younger children. In an environment where elementary, middle and high school students are under one roof, younger children need to be protected from exposure to more mature topics.

The committee's recommendations specifically assure that all clubs will have an appropriate age range and parental consent requirements for certain grades. Club activities and discussions will be contained within the club meeting space. Club postings will be restricted in content to club meeting logistics only, and will be displayed in age-appropriate locations (bulletin boards in elementary, middle and high school halls)

LLCA needs to be an environment where all students are safe and respected.

The committee's recommendations specifically assure that we uphold our school values of respect and zero tolerance for bullying- whether from students, staff or parents. Bullying can include being judged, disrespected or demeaned on the basis of a religious moral code. We expect that students will be held to high standards of behavior, personal conduct, rigorous work ethic and character traits outlined in our character curriculum. Students will be held accountable for their behaviors and consequences.

Concerns expressed by parents and community

Policy committee response

Discussions of gender identity and sexual preference are not appropriate in the school.

The committee recommendations are based on the premise that each student's family is responsible for establishing moral and spiritual training and guidance to help the students navigate their choices in the world. The role of the school is to ensure that students are equipped with the academic, social and interpersonal tools for success in life, which includes being able to relate to others of different cultures, beliefs and behaviors with respect and compassion.

LGBT students need to be provided an opportunity to form a support club at the school.

The committee's recommendation is that federal law supports this right and the school should comply with all laws. Further, LLCA allows students to form and participate in supervised clubs that are not related to the school curriculum and that enrich their education and that provide a safe place to learn how to navigate the waters of future civic involvement.

The following legal advice was given to our committee.

In 1984, Congress passed and President Ronald signed into law the Equal Access Act, requiring public secondary schools to provide equal access for extracurricular clubs. Rooted in principles of equal treatment and freedom of expression, the Act protects student-initiated groups of all types. By allowing students to discuss difficult issues openly and honestly, in a civil manner, it allows our schools to become forums for combating ignorance, bigotry, hatred and discrimination. The Act requires public secondary schools to treat all student-initiated groups equally, regardless of the religious, political, philosophical, or other subject matters discussed at their meetings. Its protections apply to groups that address issues relating to LGBT students and subject matter involving sexual orientation and gender identity, just as they apply to religious and other student groups.

The former U.S. Department of Education's General Counsel, Charles P. Rose, issued a set of legal guidelines affirming the principles that prevent unlawful discrimination against any student-initiated groups. It states that if a school has at least one non-curriculum club that meets outside of class time, then the school has become a "limited open forum." Such a forum must allow all such groups to form.

The formation of clubs in high school is the same for a Charter School in NC as it is for a Public School in NC and that in both cases Federal law covers this. If you allow any clubs to form, you have to allow them all. You can't discriminate.

As a public school in the state of North Carolina LLCA had three options regarding school clubs.

The first option is that we do not offer any club activities.

The second option is that we offer only curriculum related clubs.

The third option is to also offer student initiated non-curricular clubs.

From the beginning, LLCA has enjoyed the benefits of curriculum based clubs as well as non-curricular clubs.

Our curriculum based clubs have included:

- Drama Club, Musical Theater Club (grades 6-12) (drama and music)
- Jazz Club (grades 9-12), Band Club (6-12), Chorus Club (grades 6-12) (music)
- Environmental Club (science)
- National Honor Society (service)
- Lego Robotic: (grades 4-6) and FTE Robotics: (grades 7-11) (math and technology)
- Art Club (grades 1-3) (art)
- Beginning French Club: grades 1-2 (foreign language)
- Math is Awesome Club (grades 6-8)

Our non-curricular clubs have included:

- Board Games (grades K-12)
- Checkers Club (grades K-12)
- Pep Squad (grades K-4)
- Cheer Clinic (grades 8-11), Cheer and Dance Club (grades 6-12)
- Equestrian Club (grades 3-11)
- Chess Club (grades 6-11)
- Gay Straight Alliance (grades 9-12)
- Raptors for Christ (grades 6-12)
- Agriculture Club (grades 9-12)
- Socialist Coffee Club (grades 9-12)
- Jump Rope Club (grades K-2, 3-5)

Indeed, we consider clubs to be beneficial to our students. Being involved in a club is often a student's first opportunity to step into positions of leadership, to strengthen a particular skill set, or to increase his or her knowledge in a personal interest. A school club is one part of the larger school community. An individual club does not represent the entire school community nor does it require everyone's participation. Certainly, no community at large (or school, for that matter) wants to feel it will be "hijacked" by any one philosophy, theology, special interest, or grand agenda. A school club can provide a safe place for our students to learn how to navigate the waters of future civic involvement. Part of our mission is to create life-long learners, thoughtful and articulate young adults, and good citizens. These are character traits that can be strengthened and enriched by participation in school clubs.

As was stated earlier, one of the specific concerns expressed in public comment at the last school board meeting was the issue of parental consent, and this has certainly been considered at length in our policy committee discussions. Our school's history supports requiring parental consent for certain activities. From the beginning, LLCA has required parental consent for field trips, sports and athletic team involvement, and for some of our clubs as well. The issue of parental consent is NOT new to the school.

Lure Classical Academy is a Challenge Foundation Academy and part of Team CFA. Our curriculum is divided into two parts: first, the Core Knowledge K-8 curriculum sequence, and second, our High School Classical Curriculum.

As part of the Core Knowledge sequence, our K-8 students are led "through a broad range of historical, scientific, and cultural topics that build their knowledge from one year to the next and prepares them for educational success." (This is quoted from our website.)

When our students reach high school (9-12) they are expected to put into use the skills formed in the K-8 Core Knowledge sequence. Again, from our website: "During the high school years, LLCA-CFA's nature as a classical academy will come to full flower. The school's understanding of classical education is based on Dorothy Sayers' 1947 essay *The Lost Tools of Learning*. Sayers emphasizes that the trivium of grammar, dialectic (logic), and rhetoric is foundational both for further studies and post-collegiate life: indeed, the ability to write correctly, to reason soundly, and to speak persuasively serves one well in any field of study, in any profession."

The policy committee is recommending that our requirements for parental consent be divided in the same way that our curriculum is. In other words, because our elementary and middle school students are developmentally gaining an understanding of the "building blocks" of life, they will be required to gain parental consent before joining a school club. For our high school students we expect that those building blocks will "prepare them for a lifetime of critical thinking, self-motivated learning, and active citizenship" and therefore we recommend that high school students are not required to gain parental consent to join a school club.

We have had legal guidance on the issue of parental consent requirements from Mr. Christopher Brooks, Legal Director of the ACLU North Carolina. It is the understanding of the policy committee that the law would support our recommendations. With this information, the Policy Committee has developed the attached policy recommendation for club activity at Lake Lure Classical Academy.

We have also developed a Club Advisory Handbook that will help the school implement and follow the board's policy. The handbook includes:

- Parental Consent Form
- Club Application Form
- Club Membership Form
- Club Special Event Application Form

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Policy for Student Clubs

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