



Limestone Charter Association Board Policy Manual

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Introduction

This Board Policy Manual is for the use of the Limestone Charter Association (LCA) and its staff.

The manual is secondary in authority to any applicable statutes or state regulations. Conflicts with statute or regulations should be brought to the attention of the Superintendent.

For purposes of this manual, the codified provisions of the South Carolina Code of Laws, which are cited herein, relate to the subject matter of the policy. The text of the policy statement is that which has been adopted by the Association and, therefore, should not be construed as the actual wording of the statutory provision. For the exact wording of all provisions cited herein, refer to the 1976 South Carolina Code of Laws, as amended, and its subsequent annual supplements.

THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT. THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE ANY CONTRACTUAL RIGHTS OR ENTITLEMENTS. THE ASSOCIATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVISE THE CONTENT OF THIS DOCUMENT, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, AT ANY TIME. NO PROMISES OF ASSURANCES, WHETHER WRITTEN OR ORAL, WHICH ARE CONTRARY TO OR INCONSISTENT WITH THE TERMS OF THIS PARAGRAPH CREATE ANY CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT.

Board Responsibilities

The responsibility of the Board and each of its members is to make contributions and take actions that lead the organization toward the desired performance and provide oversight that the desired outcome occurs. The Board will act as a guardian of the vision and values of the organization, both currently and in the future. The Board's specific contributions are *unique* to its oversight role and *necessary* for proper governance and management.

At a minimum, Board members should have the following:

- A commitment to the Association and its mission;
- An understanding of the programs and goals of the Association;
- The capacity to focus that understanding on decision making that benefits and advances the organization as a whole;
- The ability and eagerness to address values, vision, and the long-term future of the organization; and
- The ability to participate assertively but collaboratively in deliberation.

In discharging its oversight and guidance role, the Board will at a minimum undertake the following:

1. Guiding and directing the Association through the adoption of written governing policies; and
2. Assuring that those policies are implemented, and the Association properly directed through oversight and assurance of superintendent performance.

Leadership Approach:

The LCA Board will approach its task in a manner which emphasizes strategic leadership and not administrative management. The Board will maintain and be mindful of a clear distinction between the roles of the Board and LCA staff. The Board will focus on the future and function proactively rather than reactively.

The Board will govern through the adoption and implementation of written policies with an emphasis on long-term objectives and goals.

It is in this spirit that the Board will:

1. Confine its major involvement to the intended long-term impact of LCA which should directly impact the daily operational administrative efforts of the Association.
2. Guide and inspire the Association through careful deliberation and establishment of policies.
3. Enforce upon itself whatever discipline is needed to govern with excellence and integrity. Discipline will apply to attendance, policy-making principles, and respect of clarified roles.
4. Be accountable to the general public for competent, conscientious, and effective

accomplishment of its obligations as a body. Allow no officer, individual, or committee of the board to usurp this role or deter this discipline.

5. As an initiator of policy, be responsible for its own performance.

Required conditions that must be met for this governance model to operate effectively are:

1. A Board with strong leadership and forward-thinking abilities.
2. A competent and capable Superintendent who is charged with leading schools and directing Association staff.
3. Frequent and measurable accountability assessments from the Superintendent to the Board as outlined in Board policy.
4. Clearly defined, printed corrective measures for under- and low-performing schools and noncompliant schools. The freedom of public charter schools to be wholly responsible to the LCA Board and accountable with clearly defined timetables of accountability measures for the academic achievement of their students and the financial viability of their charter public schools.

This governance model offers broad parameters in which charter schools can

- self-govern with accountability to the LCA Board for student achievement;
- engage in self-management through prudent financial management and practices;
- mandate academic excellence through data driven, proven educational innovation; and
- maintain accountability to the Limestone Charter Association for academic progress through measures defined in Board policy.

Board Meeting Minutes

Minutes of meetings of the LCA Board shall comply with the requirements of S.C. Code § 30-4-90.

The Secretary, or designee of the Secretary, shall keep the Minutes of the Board. The Minutes of a meeting of the Board shall be sent to each Board member and shall be approved at the succeeding meeting. The Minutes shall not be considered official until approved by the Board. The approved Minutes shall be kept in the office of the Superintendent, archived in the Association's internal repository, and shall be posted on the LCA website once approved by the Board.

Public Participation at Association Board Meetings

Record in the Minutes. If a public speaker appears at a board meeting, the minutes will reflect it.

Rules of Participation. The official meeting of the board is by law a public meeting and citizen input is valued; however, in order to protect the integrity of the adopted agenda, public dialogue

will be restricted to the “Public Comments” section of the agenda or as directed by the Board Chair.

- Each speaker has two minutes.
- Speakers may not ask questions of Board Members.
- Board Members may not engage speakers in discussion.
- Disruptive behavior is not permitted.
- Personal attacks aimed at staff, a Board Member, or anyone else are not permitted.
- Scurrilous, obscene, or recklessly defamatory language aimed at staff, a Board Member, or anyone else is not permitted.

Executive Sessions

Executive sessions of the LCA Board shall comply with the requirements of S.C. Code § 30-4-70.

Commitment to Special Education

It shall be the policy of the Limestone Charter Association (LCA) to ensure appropriate special education programs, services, and support for all eligible children. This program is fully described in federal and state regulations cited below. It is the goal of the LCA that students with disabilities are to receive free and appropriate public education and should be educated in the least restrictive environment.

More specifically, the board delegates to the Superintendent the monitoring of special education programs of the Association’s member charter schools. If action needs to be taken in order to bring member charter schools into compliance, the superintendent or his/her representative is delegated the authority to work directly with the member charter school. The Board may get involved at the discretion of the Superintendent.

Board Governance of Member Charter Schools

Certification of Professional Personnel:

The Association will accept as certified any teacher who is certified through the National Board Certification process or is deemed certified by the American Board for Teacher Certification. The Board may request the State Board of Education affirm, for the purpose of revocation, any teacher, or administrator who is found in violation of the laws of this state or the policies of the State Charter Public School Association.

The State Board of Education is charged with issuing, and when appropriate, revoking or suspending a teaching credential. A School’s Charter Board does not have the authority to suspend or revoke the State credential (certification) of any licensed educational professional; however, the educational professional can be recommended by a school’s charter board to the State Department of Education for the revocation or suspension of their certification. It is the intent of the State Board that individuals credentialed in this state manifest conduct demonstrating a fitness for teaching and mentoring students. Therefore, the Association

Superintendent, at the direction of a School's Charter Board of Trustees, shall report to the Chair of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Education the name and certificate number of any certified educator who is dismissed, resigns, or otherwise separates from a school's employment for conduct which is reasonably believed to constitute evidence that the individual's conduct is unfit for teaching. (See S.C. Code § 59-25-430 and State Board of Education Regulations 43-58 and 43-58.1.)

A School's Charter Board shall make available to the Board the reasons for separation and, when requested, any available written supporting evidence to be used by the State Board of Education in their deliberations. Findings of the State Board of Education regarding the discipline of and credentialed employee shall be published on the State Department of Education web site for employee reference.

Extracurricular Activities:

The sponsor Association has no obligation to provide extracurricular activities or access to facilities of the school Association for students enrolled in a charter school.

Association Policies for Charter Schools

The following policies are necessary to fulfill the requirements of the S.C. Public Charter School Act, 2006, State Board of Education Regulations, and Federal Regulations.

A. Enrollment Expansion:

Charter schools authorized by the Limestone Charter Association may apply for an expansion in their enrollment numbers beyond the projections in the authorized application for the next school year.

B. Annual Report Policy:

To satisfy the requirements of S.C. Code §§ 59-13-120, -140 and 59-40-140(H), December 31 is established as the due date for submission of annual reports from the schools to the Limestone Charter Association.

C. Audit Policy:

An annual audit of all financial records shall be made by a licensed certified public accountant from an approved list provided annually by the State Auditor's Office. The school shall be responsible for retaining the external accountant to perform the annual audit. A copy of the audit in the format prescribed by the State Department of Education shall be filed with the LCA by November 1 following the close of the fiscal year. If this date falls on a weekend, the due date shall be the Friday immediately preceding November 1. One (1) hard copy and one (1) electronic copy (presented in PDF Format) shall be submitted.

D. Interim Auditor Reporting:

Schools will provide the Association with a Letter of Engagement with its audit firm no later

than May 30th. If this date falls on a weekend, the due date is the Friday immediately preceding May 30th. At a minimum, the Letter of Engagement will contain the audit firm name and address as well as the point of contact (POC) at the audit firm: name, telephone number and email address. The Letter of Engagement will direct the audit firm POC to provide the Annual Audit no later than the due date in its current version, final or draft. The Letter of Engagement will direct that if the audit is still in draft form, the audit firm will provide the reason(s) why the audit has not been completed to final version.

E. Financial Resources Accountability Standards:

Financial Resources are to be allocated, expended, and accounted for in accordance with accounting practices specified in the SC Department of Education Annual Audit Guide, Financial Accounting Handbook, Funding Manual and the Pupil and Staff Accountability Manual.

F. Statewide Program on District Fiscal Practices and Budgetary Conditions

S.C. Code § 59-20-95 applies to state agencies that are also an LEA as well as to any institution of higher education that registers to become a charter sponsor. The State Auditor is charged with issuing warnings of fiscal concern with these entities. Charter Schools within Limestone Charter Association must adhere to the State Department of Education's Statewide Program on District Fiscal Practices and Budgetary Conditions. The statute identifies three "escalating levels of fiscal and budgetary concern" that must be defined in the statewide program: (1) Fiscal Watch, the lowest level of concern; (2) Fiscal Caution, an intermediate level of concern; and (3) Fiscal Emergency, the most severe level of concern.

Transfer Policy

Schools may only request to transfer to LCA in accordance with the below procedures.

- The charter school board of trustees must vote on the proposed transfer request in a public meeting by August 30 of the school year preceding the anticipated transfer.
- The charter school shall have provided the current authorizer with the request, as approved by the charter school's board, pursuant to the current authorizer's policies.
- Schools must submit their requests to the LCA Board and the LCA Superintendent by October 1 of the school year preceding the anticipated transfer
- The LCA board shall act on the proposed transfer request, in a public meeting, not later than November 30th, provided the school submits the following documents with the request:
 - Documentation that the school followed the current authorizer's transfer policies and deadlines, and that the school's governing board took action to approve the request in compliance with this policy and the current authorizer's policies.
 - The LCA Board shall not act on the request unless the school has provided the above referenced documentation.
- LCA shall provide the Department of Education notice of any transfer requests presented to the Board, regardless of action that has been taken, by December 5 as information.

- The school's current authorizer shall have approved the school's transfer request pursuant to that authorizer's policy.
- Any transfer requests not approved by the LCA Board by November 30 must be resubmitted for consideration pursuant to this policy and the current authorizer's policies during the next calendar year.

Schools may only request to transfer and/or terminate their contract from LCA in accordance with the below procedures.

- The charter school board of trustees must vote on the proposed transfer/termination request in a public meeting by August 30 of the school year preceding the anticipated transfer
- The charter school shall then provide the LCA Board of Trustees and Superintendent with the request, as approved by the charter school's board, by September 1.
- The LCA board shall act on the proposed transfer/termination request, in a public meeting, not later than November 30.
- LCA shall provide the Department of Education notice of any transfer/termination requests by December 5 as information.
- The school shall submit its request to the receiving authorizer pursuant to that authorizer's policy.
- Any transfer/termination requests not approved by the LCA Board by November 30 may be resubmitted for consideration pursuant to this policy and the current authorizer's policies during the next calendar year.

Safety Plans and Drills

Limestone Charter Association is committed to providing a safe learning environment that supports academic achievement. School safety is a community issue that requires collaboration between the administration, emergency response agencies, parents, and the community.

The Association and sponsored charter schools will collaborate with state and local law enforcement, fire, and emergency management agencies.

The board directs the superintendent or his/her designee to implement plans and procedures in accordance with this policy.

Assessment

The Association will ensure monthly assessments for each building/facility is completed at each of the sponsored charter schools within the Association. The School Leader at each school is responsible for conducting the monthly assessments. Documentation will be submitted to the Association and made accessible to the fire code official during an inspection.

The monthly assessments should address the automatic fire sprinkler systems, fire detection and alarm systems, fire-rated assemblies, emergency lighting, emergency power supply system generators, portable fire extinguishers, emergency responder radio coverage, smoke and heat removal systems, and commercial kitchen requirements. The state Model Fire and Safety Program Guidelines will be followed when assessing each of these areas.

Inspections

Each individual sponsored charter school within the Association will coordinate with the local fire department or fire code official responsible for code enforcement. Each individual charter school within the Association will identify the entity that will be performing fire inspections for each facility and the frequency at which each facility will be inspected.

Evacuation Plans and Drills

Each individual sponsored charter school within the Association will implement plans and conducts drills for evacuating or locking down facilities in emergency situations. Plans will include safety measures for indoor and outdoor assemblies, events, and gatherings (e.g. recess) detailing crowd management and security. Safety drills will be conducted throughout the school year in accordance with the state Model Fire and Safety Program Guidelines. District staff will fully cooperate to carry out all drills and will train students in prompt and orderly evacuation.

Fire Drills

Schools will conduct, at a minimum, two (2) fire drills per year (one each semester). The first fire drill should occur within ten (10) days of the start of the school year.

Active shooter/intruder drills

Schools will conduct, at a minimum, two (2) active shooter/intruder drills each school year (one each semester). The district will utilize a nationally recognized training method that will be conducted in a developmentally appropriate manner for all participants. All drills will be inclusive and necessary accommodations for participants with disabilities will be provided. To the extent possible, all school personnel will participate in active shooter/intruder drills. All personnel will receive active shooter/intruder and security training, at a minimum, twice per year.

Severe weather/earthquake drills

Schools will conduct, at a minimum, two (2) severe weather/earthquake drills each school year (one each semester).

Classroom and Hallway Safety

Staff members will be informed of restrictions regarding decorations and interior finishes, electrical safety, laboratories, entryways, and storage.

Construction and Renovation

Schools will refer to the SCDE Office of School Facilities Guides, Best Practices and More documents.

Fiscal Governance Policies

Association Fiscal Year

The fiscal year is coterminous with the scholastic year, beginning on the first day of July of each year and ending on the thirtieth day of June each year.

Financial Assistance Policy

The LCA Board may at its discretion provide financial assistance for member schools. A school may initiate a request for financial assistance with a resolution from its Board of Directors.

Fiscal Limitation Policies

Budgeting and Financial Planning

Financial planning for any fiscal year or the remaining part of any fiscal year shall not deviate materially from the board's Ends Policies/Strategic Plan or place the organization at risk of fiscal jeopardy.

Accordingly, the Superintendent shall not, without notifying the Board of any deviation, allow budgeting that:

- a. Contains too little information to enable credible projection of revenues and expenses, separation of capital and operation items, cash flow, and disclosure of planning assumptions.
- b. Plans the expenditure in any fiscal year of more funds than are conservatively projected to be received in that period.
- c. Provides for less board prerogative during the year than is set forth in the Cost of Governance Policy.

Additionally, the Superintendent shall note any financial deviations from the above guidelines in the monthly financial report to the board.

Fund Balance Policy:

Section 59-20-95 applies to state agencies that are also an LEA, as well as to any institution of higher education that registers to become a charter sponsor. The statute includes the requirement to maintain a "general reserve fund of at least one month of general fund operating expenditures of the previous two completed fiscal years or has not made progress in increasing

the general reserve fund balance in accordance with department guidelines to meet at least one month of general fund operating expenditures within the previous two completed fiscal years.”

Gifts and Bequests:

The Association Superintendent shall take and hold in trust for the State any grant or devise of lands and any gift or bequest of money or other personal property made to him/her for educational purposes. (S.C. Code §59-69-40.)

Contractual Agreements:

All contractual agreements between the Board and any other agency, organization, or individual, public or private, shall be consistent with the general purpose and intent of current Board policies and state statutes and regulations. Such plans or contractual agreements shall be kept on file in the Office of the Association Superintendent and other State offices as required by law, for public inspection and review.

Association Employee Travel Policy:

Association employee travel shall comply with the requirements set forth in the State Travel Regulations. Employees shall submit travel reimbursements monthly for the Superintendent’s approval. Travel reimbursements other than mileage associated with school visits must be preapproved by the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall authorize the Finance Director only to process and pay travel reimbursements approved by the Superintendent and in compliance with State Travel Regulations. Travel reimbursed with federal funds must comply with [The Federal Uniform Grant Guidance \(2 CFR, Part 200\)](#)

Consultant Services:

Engaging the services of a consultant to support the specific responsibilities and initiatives of the Association in excess of \$20,000 may be authorized only by the Board. If the Superintendent believes retention of a consultant is appropriate, a recommendation should be submitted to the Board.

Engaging the services of a consultant to support specific responsibilities and initiatives of the Association under \$20,000.00 may be at the discretion of the Superintendent.

The Association utilizes a variety of consultants on a case-by-case basis. Consultants may submit a written request detailing their rates for specified tasks on a daily rate or fixed price for a given task.

Grievance Policy in accordance with South Carolina Code §59-40-60(A)(7)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear, fair, and accessible process for addressing

grievances raised by parents, students, employees, or community members regarding charter school operations, governance, or special education concerns.

Scope

This policy applies to all charter schools authorized by Limestone Charter Association (LCA). It outlines the steps stakeholders must follow to address concerns and the circumstances under which a grievance may be appealed to the Association.

Guiding Principles

- All grievances must begin at the **school level**.
- Grievances must follow the local school's adopted grievance policy as published in the parent/student handbook or employee manual.
- LCA serves only as an **appellate body** in matters related to school governance, authorizer compliance, or special education when local remedies have been exhausted.

Grievance Procedure

Step 1: School-Level Resolution

- Submit your grievance in writing to the school's administration or governing board, following the procedures outlined in the school's grievance policy.
- The school should respond in writing within a reasonable timeframe, typically within 10 business days.

Step 2: Appeal to Limestone Charter Association

If the grievance is not resolved at the school level, a written appeal may be submitted to LCA **only under the following conditions**:

- The grievance involves alleged non-compliance with the charter contract;
- There is a violation of state or federal education law;
- The concern pertains to special education rights under IDEA or Section 504;
- The school failed to follow its own grievance process or did not respond within a reasonable period.

Appeals Must Include:

- A copy of the original grievance submitted to the school;
- Any written response received from the school;
- A statement outlining the reason for appeal to LCA;
- Supporting documentation or evidence, if applicable.

Submit the complete appeal to:

info@limestonecharters.org

Or mail to:

Limestone Charter Association
6923 Trenholm Road
Columbia, SC 29206

Review and Response

- Upon receipt, LCA staff will review the grievance and verify whether school-level procedures were followed.
- If valid, the grievance may be escalated to the LCA Board of Directors for review.
- LCA will provide a written response or decision within **30 business days**, unless additional time is needed for investigation.

Non-Retaliation

No student, parent, employee, or stakeholder shall face retaliation for filing a grievance in good faith.

Annual Policy Review

The Board and the Superintendent shall annually, or more often if appropriate, review these policies to ensure that they are consistent with current legislative provisions.