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Board of Directors  
Liberty Common School  
1725 Sharp Point Drive  
Fort Collins, CO 80525

Dear Mr. Bob Shaffer and Liberty Board Members,

I am interested in serving on the Liberty Board of Directors. Having carefully considered the roles and responsibilities, I am confident that my competence in the field of education, voice of parental maturity, research skills, thoughtful insight, and wise judgment would be an asset to the board as it oversees and establishes educational and operational policies of the school.

Liberty Common School consistently blesses my family. This informs my passion to support and maintain the continued success of Liberty's academic and character education programs. It is both my duty and great privilege to ensure that others experience similar blessings for years to come.

Please accept my application and Statement of Philosophy as evidence of my qualifications and a sincere expression of my commitment to uphold the vision, philosophy, and mission of the school.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth K. Barber

# Statement of Philosophy

Elizabeth K. Barber

Believing that we are “fearfully and wonderfully made,” imbued with worth and dignity, I concur with the classical tradition that the purpose of education is to seek answers to what it means to be fully human. Education, in the ancient conception, cultivates wisdom and virtue primarily by means of the seven liberal arts—the verbal arts of the trivium and the mathematical arts of the quadrivium. A classical education trains students in the disciplines necessary to fully engage in the dialogue of the ages—the “Great Conversation.” It explores history’s glorious triumphs and disasters. It glorifies enduring expressions of art and literature as a means of developing good taste. It marvels at the ordered universe and reflects its beauty by harmonizing all disciplines of study. Always concerned with rightly “ordering the loves,” to borrow from Augustine, classical education aims to teach a man not merely what he can do but what he should do. Furthermore, a free society depends upon the ability of its individual citizens to rightly discern truth and act accordingly.

Education is a lifelong journey. As Winston Churchill says,

*Every day you may make progress. Every step may be fruitful. Yet there will stretch out before you an ever-lengthening, ever-ascending, ever-improving path. You know you will never get to the end of the journey. But this, so far from discouraging, only adds to the joy and glory of the climb.*

In the classical tradition, this journey is the pursuit of **Truth**—that which is in accordance with reality, **Goodness**—that which is fulfilling its purpose, and **Beauty**—that which is whole and harmonious. These transcendentals unite all men regardless of time and culture, truly allowing for a “common” curriculum.

Regarding my own journey, I am positioned to serve on the Liberty Board of Directors with a unique combination of experience and enthusiasm in the field of education. Our oldest son registered for his senior year at Liberty Common High School this month while I registered our youngest for Kindergarten at “Little Liberty”; we anticipate a glorious ending alongside a wondrous beginning! Additionally, our four other children are enrolled at Liberty next year for a total of six students gracing her hallowed halls. With over a dozen years of educating our children behind me and 13 years still ahead, I offer the board a voice of experience coupled with a joyful anticipation of many future years in the Liberty community. Our family is privileged to partner with Liberty on this leg of the journey, but one may wonder how we arrived here.

Believing deeply that it is the right and responsibility of parents to direct the education and upbringing of their children, my husband and I applied ourselves to the task of homeschooling ours over a decade ago. My experience in school left me hungering for something more, so I took great delight in learning how education might be done better. For twelve wonderful years (literally, years “full of wonder”), our children grew in knowledge and understanding as my own education began a

process of redemption. I devoured books on classical education and researched curricula and methods. Singapore Math, Michael Clay Thompson grammar, IEW, and Lost Tools of Writing became household names. Before long, my journey fostered new pursuits—a growing understanding of classical pedagogy, a surprising fondness for Latin, and a blossoming appreciation of poetic knowledge. My studies introduced me to Plato, Aristotle, and Homer, then Augustine, Aquinas, and Shakespeare (though, truth be told, we're still relatively new acquaintances). Fresh encounters with "old" writings inevitably spark the desire for a deeper relationship, and that was certainly my experience. For seven years, I taught classes in a local homeschool community and earned recognition as an inspirational educator with curriculum expertise. The notion of knowledge as a relationship with an idea and more than a mere collection of facts is a medieval truth I came to understand as I taught a 9<sup>th</sup>-grade introduction to philosophy course. The Latin maxim "Docendo discimus"—by teaching we learn—is a pedagogical reality that aptly describes my experience homeschooling.

As our children grew and matured, new needs presented themselves and the challenging yet sweet years of intimate learning alongside them came to an end. My husband and I are grateful to have found common ground with LCS in our belief and adherence to the Universal Truth of Education. Among suitable helpers in the noble task of education, Liberty stands apart. We were drawn to Liberty's philosophy and practices that honor the nature of the child as a moral agent with a salient need for guidance combined with an innate desire to discover the riches of knowledge.

The thoughtful Core Knowledge sequence "spreads the feast of ideas" as the wise educator and philosopher Charlotte Mason says. Charlotte Mason was the first to teach me, "Mind appeals to mind and thought begets thought and that is how we become educated." Her writings advocate for a "generous curriculum." E.D. Hirsch echoes this idea with his appeal to teach cultural literacy. His carefully sequenced collection of content is foundational to higher learning.

Of course, education is not merely informative but formative. Whether a student is memorizing math facts, conjugating a Latin verb, or defending the soccer goal, character is being developed; virtue is cultivated. William Kilpatrick certainly understands this and argues that character is primary to education. The Core Knowledge curriculum works beautifully in tandem with Liberty's robust character education program. The very best stories, fairy tales, and books awaken a student's moral imagination and establish models of virtue. We become what we behold. Students at Liberty are blessed to witness the consistent and wise application of truth, goodness, and beauty by their parents, teachers, administrators, and fellow students. They are not in danger of becoming what C.S. Lewis calls "men without chests"—humans whose affections for truth, goodness, and beauty are stifled.

Socrates reminds us, "Wisdom begins in wonder." May wisdom be our aim and may we continue to serve our students the very best educational content, guide them in understanding, and inspire them toward excellence.