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Liberty Common School's founders got it right.

When creating Liberty Common School, the founding parents extensively read, reviewed and researched to discover and implement an educationally effective school. Liberty's wise founders built on the educational history which had come before them to build a new and innovative school poised to effectively educate children from any socio-economic background. A strong education should develop the learner's ability to acquire knowledge, solve complex problems and utilize discernment in decision-making. This is exactly what Liberty's founders did in establishing the school. Liberty's founders were correct in realizing: the goal of education is self-reliance, learning should be managed through building a framework of knowledge, and that effective and appropriate teaching methods should be utilized.

Self-reliance and freedom are the goals of a proper education. A population's depth of knowledge and its corresponding wisdom are pivotal to the success of a democratic republic and free society. For individuals to remain free, they must be able to interact with confidence and a deep level of knowledge and understanding within their society. The founders of the United States of America understood the need for an educated electorate. In *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Thomas Jefferson stated:

In every government on earth is some trace of human weakness, some germ of corruption and degeneracy, which cunning will discover, and wickedness insensibly open, cultivate and improve. Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves therefore are its only safe depositories. And to render even them safe, their minds must be improved to a certain degree.

Significant intellectual capital is required to maintain a free society and it remains the responsibility of the citizen to educate their children in accordance to that objective.

To achieve the goal of individual self-reliance, education must be conducted in a way which effectively harnesses a person's ability to learn. In education, as in much of the rest of life, the fundamentals are paramount. In learning how to play baseball, a person would never be expected to understand the nuances of base-stealing before learning the fundamentals of hitting, catching and throwing. Likewise in education, readers are able to properly decode words only once they understand basic phonograms. Children can learn how to manage money once they can skip count by fives. Liberty's founders understood that a proper Thinking Framework must be considered when constructing a system by which students learn. Children must first be taught

basic tenants in math, reading, grammar, history and science and then are poised to build upon those fundamentals to draw connections and recognize patterns. Eventually those patterns and connections lead students to higher orders of thinking and a deeper understanding of the world. Truly innovative thinking can then be achieved. Higher order thinking can be initiated when an organized system of knowledge is created which allows children the opportunity to build on their past knowledge to acquire new and deeper understanding. As E.D. Hirsch states in *The Schools We Need*, "...it takes knowledge to make knowledge." An effective educational model provides students with basic and common knowledge necessary from which to build their eventual wisdom. The benefits of building higher order thinking skills were supported through a study by J. Brophy and T.L. Good entitled "Teacher Behavior and Student Achievement" from the *Handbook of Research on Teaching*. Brophy and Good state:

...students learn more efficiently when their teachers first structure new information for them and help them relate it to what they already know...

It is imperative that the curriculum must be delivered to students in an organized and systematic way that enables them to continue building upon their past knowledge.

Accomplishing these educational goals is made possible through reliance upon parents and teachers as the moral and educational experts. It is the responsibility of the adults in the society to provide its children with the proper education necessary to ensure their continued freedom. Teachers must deliver a contextual, intellectually-focused curriculum with confidence and expertise. Unfortunately, and to the detriment of the nation's citizens, much of American education has been overtaken by educational dogmas that are counter-productive to intellectual pursuits. Thomas Sowell states in his book *Inside American Education*:

...the school curriculum has been invaded by psychological-conditioning programs which not only take up time sorely needed for intellectual development, but also promote an emotionalized and anti-intellectual way of responding to the challenges facing every individual and every society.

To avoid the trappings of current educational paradigms, educators must focus on the intellectual development of their students. Imparting academic knowledge requires capable teachers who are experts in their fields of instruction. Teachers must be provided autonomy and authority as the experts in their classrooms. Additionally, as the ultimate authority over their children, parents should be engaged and involved with their children's classrooms and education, managing their contributions in ways that support and do not undermine the respect of the teacher in the classroom. Teachers should maintain focus on developing their students' higher orders of thinking, as, according to Hirsch in *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them*:

The best tool for higher-order thinking is intellectual capital—that is, to know a lot, not just facts but also the domain-appropriate procedures and strategies for dealing with them.

Teachers are excellent conduits of a school's educational philosophy and they must support the school's mission in their work in their classrooms.

The educational success of Liberty Common School is not an accident. Liberty's founders wisely established a school based on the educational philosophy of a desire for individual freedom, a contextually organized curriculum that leads to higher order thinking and reliance upon parental and instructor expertise and leadership. Liberty's founders deserve the highest degree of respect for developing a school based on a noble educational philosophy. It is imperative Liberty Common School's Board of Directors respect the views of the founders and commit to adhering to their original mission and vision as is spelled out in Liberty's school charter.