LCS Board Meeting

August 13, 2025, 5:00 PM at Ledyard Charter School

Next meetings:

Committees: Wednesday Sept 10, 2025 at 5:00 pm on Zoom

Full Board: Wednesday October 8, 2025, 5:00 at Ledyard Charter School

1. Potluck & informal Gathering

2. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Amie Bettle at 5:19 PM.
A quorum was present.

Present in person: Amie Bettle, Julie McKenney, Erin Pospychala, Wendy Kozak, Carine Abbott, Kristine McAllister, Chris Smith, Melanie Perry
Present online: Ben Beisswenger
Absent: Lucretia Peneld, Katie Bullock

3. Welcome & Introductions- Amie

4. Mission & Vision - Erin

LCS Core Values
Mission Statement
It is our mission to meet, welcome, and validate our students where they are, to develop an educational pathway that will engage them, to help them heal when needed, to facilitate them redefining what is possible for their lives, and to teach them the academic, work and life skills that they will need for a future that they are inspired to live well.
Philosophy
Ledyard Charter School holds that:

- Everyone can learn.
- Everyone can want to learn.
- Everyone can make a difference.

We are committed to empowering students to forge a new path through self-advocacy, engagement, and resilience.
Academics
Ledyard focuses on personalized learning tailored to individual students using project-based curriculum and real-world experiences. We provide practical support in a warm environment and equip students with skills and self-confidence to redefine their future.

5. Approval of minutes from 7/23/25 meeting.

Moved to approve, seconded.

6. Public Input.

No public input.

7. Executive Director's Report "looking forward"- Wendy

Wendy distributed folders including "look ahead" newsletter, school year calendar, board member handbook

Enrollment-16 new students for 2025-26 school year. Total of 48 students, highest yet. More students may still apply. It might be necessary to cap the number of students. Several of the new students are from districts that have tuition agreements with LCS.

Funding- in the spring Wendy was uncertain which federal grants would come through. Good news is that $100k came through.

Most of staff and students are returning for the upcoming year.

To be hired- math tutor.

School lunch program- new program manager, Donna Penn. coming from Hanover Terrace. Friendly, excited about menus and ideas.

Academic Advisor position- Grayson Savoie. Overseeing grades, credits, internships, college courses. He has MEd in higher education.

Mental health counseling funding- counselor will be at LCS once weekly for 90 minutes, available to any students.

Additional funding allowing for Teacher Peer observation program this year.

NH law changes-

- cell phone ban from start to end of school day. Policy being developed. Wendy trying to avoid punishment approach, and focus on planning incentives instead.
- new NH laws censoring what teachers are allowed to teach. No fiction novels allowed with any sexual content. Censorship on sex, racism, diversity, inclusion, nudity.

8. Treasurer's Report- Ben

Checking: $11,000

Money market: $11,000

Line of Credit: $50,000

9. Building Report - Julie

Update on current status of the project. Wendy has spent all summer dealing with unexpected challenges with the project. She reports that there is now only one potential option to continue the project (micropiling), which would cost an additional $40k with no guarantee that it will work. The original planned cost was $200k. Inflation increased it to $300k, which the board decided to proceed with. Adding another $40k would put us in a very uncomfortable position requiring a lot of fundraising in a short period of time. Stopping the project now will add another $25k- $140k total to put everything back in order in the building.

Ben motioned to vote to stop the project. Julie seconded. Unanimously voted to stop the project

Wendy is concerned about explaining to donors and others what happened. Julie created statement for community and donors about the issues (see below). Julie will connect with Bethany about communicating this news as she has a lot of project experience. Plan to decide on agreed upon narrative before sharing the news with the community and students.

Ideas for expanding the program

- without needing additional space- add online component
- physical expansion would require purchasing another building since the current space cannot be used unless the second floor is accessible from inside the building.

Since its inception in 2007, Ledyard Charter School (LCS) has grown into a cornerstone for alternative education in the Upper Valley—actively redefining what schooling can be for students disengaged from traditional systems. Through personalized learning, a supportive environment, and community integration, LCS empowers students to construct their own meaningful pathways. In 2020 LCS engaged in a strategic vision to expand the school beyond its current offerings and capacity. That year LCS was able to buy our current building at 39 Hanover Street with the vision of one day using the building to its full capacity. In 2024 LCS embarked on a capital campaign to secure the funds to make the upstairs of the building functional space for our students to learn and grow the LCS way. Our capital campaign to make the top level accessible and compliant by installing an elevator was wildly successful, and early 2025 project planning began.

After many months of designs, permits and engaging with many partners needed to create success, we were able to break ground in July of 2025. While all of the partners we worked with all lived up to their roles, we have since encountered a situation that was beyond the control of the collective team. A soil test survey in 2020 that was done as part of the building purchase was performed on the outside of the building and was not recreated at the spot where the elevator would be anchored. These tests from 2020 were unable to detect the rubble of concrete, rocks and old building materials that lay in the ground and were found when construction activities began. Since that discovery the schools board and leadership have put hours of energy into retesting the ground to find a solution for the project to continue. To date, there has not been a viable solution found, but we are continuing to explore one more option (micropiling) before deciding to end the project.

10. Approvals & Discussion

Amend bylaws to allow for 7 board meetings & 5 committee meetings per year with board meeting every other month, and committees meeting in off months. Discussion about benefits of this change, particularly allowing more time for committee work. Julie moved to make this change to bylaws. Ben seconded.

Board Member Handbook reviewed (sent via email on 8/7/25). Includes conflict of interest, board governance, code of ethics, responsibilities and committees. Erin motions, Julie 2nds to adopt the handbook. Unanimously approved.

11. Committee Assignments- Julie

Wendy identified committee focus areas to best support the school. Julie has goals and milestones for each of the committees. Wendy will help define strategic priorities for each committee.

Each board member should be part of at least one committee. Non-board members can be part of committees.

Finance Committee- includes bookkeeper, Ben, executive director. Monitor budget performance, create reports.

The finance committee is responsible for financial oversight, budget planning and assists the Treasurer in ensuring LCS's fiscal responsibility on behalf of the board. The committee should work closely with the Treasurer and/or Executive Director and Bookkeeper. The committee will support the Treasurer in reviewing the annual budget prior to the annual board meeting ensuring its alignment with the school's strategic priorities, educational goals and legal requirements. They will make recommendations to the board regarding budget adoption. They will provide policy and procedure review or development, as needed, and make recommendations to financial policies such as procurement and purchasing, investment of funds, or fund balances and reserves. They will participate in long-range financial planning for large projects, review debt or financing proposals (bonds, loans, etc), and advise the board on financial implications of major initiatives or contracts. The committee will provide oversight of the monthly transaction of the Executive Director as well as monitor performance to the budget. They are to create annual reports and produce a monthly summary for the board to review.

Building and Grounds Committee- help decide next steps once project is stopped and building is put back together. Help manage the fall out from the ended project. Ongoing maintenance, upkeep and navigating building needs when other projects/ construction impact LCS building

This committee is to provide maintenance and oversight of construction activities at the school, they review and recommend plans for construction and development as well as maintenance and groundskeeping operations. They review existing and new proposals for capital improvement projects. They review facility needs such as safety, enrollment trends, educational adequacy during construction and long-term planning. They monitor the status of the ongoing construction project, provide support to the Executive Director, assist in making decisions, attend relevant meetings as needed and report progress to the board. The committee will contribute, revise or develop facilities-related policies for the use of the school building, possible rental related policies ensuring the safety of students. They are to communicate to the board their ideas for making the school building an excellent place for learning for the students which aligns with the LCS mission and values.

Outreach Committee- create more community awareness around LCS and mission. Connect with personal and professional networks.

This committee is to provide outreach to personal and professional networks to gain new donors, board members, parents, community partners, guest speakers and more. They are to provide promotion of LCS at any venue available to the member such as community bulletin boards and organizational newsletters. They will participate in community events, especially on evenings and weekends to avoid paying staff overtime wages.

Governance Committee- Julie. Committee to review and revise bylaws, make sure board practices are up to date. Keep track of educational law changes, and state and federal communications. Write and edit policies, bring to the board for approval.

The Governance Committee will perform a comprehensive review of the board's bylaws annually or as needed to ensure the bylaws are consistent with state laws and regulations (e.g. New Hampshire RSA for charter schools), the mission of the school, and board practices and needs. They will identify needed revisions and evaluate if any sections are outdated, unclear. This can be done by considering feedback from other board members or comparing current bylaws with those of familiar institutions. They will prepare proposed changes in clear actionable language ensuring changes improve clarity, compliance and board function. A presentation will be presented with recommendations of changes to the full board, facilitate a discussion to provide clarification and respond to concerns or suggestions from other board members.

12. Recognition, Announcements & Next Meetings

Thanks to Wendy who's doing an amazing job, keeping a great attitude and managing difficult construction situation this summer

Thanks to Ben for sharing expertise and meeting about the building project

Next meetings:

September - Committees meet

October- LCS Open House- Wed 10/8/25, 3-5pm- board members welcome

Next Board Meeting - Wed 10/8/25 5pm at LCS

November- Thanksgiving meal- Tues 11/25/25 at noon

Adjourned at 6:15 pm