

1.2 Founding Group and School Leadership

Background [14 Del. C. §512 (1)]

Explain the circumstances and motivations that brought the Founding Group together to propose this school.

The Founding Board of LTA decided to form a school in Delaware because many of the Board members grew up in Delaware as advocates and stakeholders of the education system in this state. Members of LTA's Founding Board were born in Delaware, are parents of children who attend schools here, employees of the state as educators and other state professional positions, proactive members in neighborhoods, churches, YMCA's, Boys and Girls Clubs, civic organizations, parent education centers and the like. LTA believes that it can fill an educational need not otherwise offered by our traditional public and private schools in this state and can direct our resources where our students need them most. Charters in general have more flexibility than conventional public schools in exchange for being held to additional standards to make sure they are meeting their student goals. LTA believes in Delaware legislators in that, they will afford them to be a part of the solution to a better education system. LTA's goals align with Delaware Charter School Law Title 14 § 501 Legislative intent. It states that, "This chapter is intended to improve student learning; encourage the use of different and innovative or proven school environments and teaching and learning methods." LTA aims to improve student and community health and wellness, prepare students for college and much needed careers in STEM to enhance the workforce in Delaware with its Whole School, Whole Community and Whole Child year round school approach. *See Appendix 1 Section 1.2 for PPT Presentation "Health is Academic" Marx, Frelick, Wooley, Northrop - CDC. See Appendix 2 Section 1.2 Governor Markell Proposes New Program to Boost Manufacturing Workforce. See Appendix 4 Section 1.1 STEMtistics in Delaware.* LTA believes that with its extensive Delaware education policies and procedures knowledge base, support of business, industry, great universities, education, financial supporters and foundation partners, they can successfully create an innovative system of positive change for students in Delaware.

The Founding Board was formed to help bring to fruition a common goal of preparing students to meet the workforce demands of STEM fields with a strong integration of health, fitness and wellness from a holistic perspective for students in New Castle County.

LTA stands for Leadership, Entrepreneurship, Achievement and Nutrition. LTA also stands for the Mrs. Pipkin-Perry's deceased sister's name, Ethel **Lean** Holmes Ward, who was instantly and horrifically killed in a car accident by a reckless 18 year old 15 years ago. Mrs. Pipkin-Perry was driving the vehicle and also almost lost her life and that of her son who was on spring break from Delaware State University. Doctors advised her to retire at age 47 due to chronic back problems and other medical complications. Mrs. Pipkin-Perry chose to keep working. She was determined

not to be stopped by her passion for motivating and empowering youth just because of her sustained injuries.

Mrs. Pipkin-Perry sought out to learn if good health was a concern amongst Delaware youths as and a demand for STEM education in our 9 – 12 grades. She recruited members of the Founding Board who were each passionate about student health and achievement. Let's Move! Active Schools research report that regular physical activity helps students succeed in school – and in life! In addition to keeping kids healthy and strong, being active for 60 minutes each day has been shown to: (1) Increase concentration and focus, (2) Improve classroom attendance and behavior and (3) Boost academic performance. Many traditional high schools in the state cannot provide the scheduling flexibly for students to complete career Archways. LTA will utilize an A/B block schedule designed to counteract this problem with built in scheduled time for students to meet with the same advisor for all four years of high school.

Let's Move! Active Schools is a comprehensive program that empowers school champions – P.E. teachers, classroom teachers, principals, administrators, and parents – to create active environments that enable all students to get moving and reach their full potential. Please see (<http://www.letsmove.gov/active-schools>). National projections show that STEM occupations will represent the greatest growth in the next decade. LTA will provide the foundational skills necessary to prepare students for the rigors of basic high school and college level coursework. Governor Jack Markell 2011 newly formed Delaware STEM Council released this report about STEM:

- In Delaware, 2011 NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) results show that 8th graders ranked 31st in the country with only 34% scoring proficient or higher in math, and 4th graders ranked 29th in the country with 39% scoring proficient or higher.
- Delaware's participation rate in STEM-related AP exams is low, with one AP exam taken for every 73 Delaware public school students, compared to the region's leader, Maryland, with one AP exam taken for every 43 Maryland public school students, a difference of 69%.
- While the overall AP STEM passage rate in Delaware is 42%, the passage rates for female students is slightly lower at 40%, and that of African American students is far lower, at 19%, representing the lowest rates in the region.
- Low AP STEM exam rates translate into high rates of attrition of STEM majors in college, including Delaware's Institutes of Higher Education.
- Delaware lacks content-trained STEM teachers, particularly in engineering and technology education. The teacher pipeline necessary to prepare and support students through a STEM focused education has not yet been fully developed.

Why School Health? The Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and Centers for Disease and Control (CDC) have done extensive research on health and academic; which indicates the health of young people is strongly linked to their academic success, and the academic success of youth is strongly linked with their health. The WHOLE SCHOOL, WHOLE COMMUNITY, WHOLE CHILD – A collaborative Approach to Learning and Health – thus, helping students stay healthy, is a fundamental part of the mission of LTA. After all, schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students and staff are not healthy. CDC reports that:

- Health-related factors, such as hunger, chronic illness, or physical and emotional abuse, can lead to poor school performance.
- Health-risk behaviors such as substance use, violence, and physical inactivity are consistently linked to academic failure and often affect students' school attendance, grades, test scores, and ability to pay attention in class. *See Appendix 1 Section 1.2 for PPT Presentation "Health is Academic" Marx, Frelick, Wooley, Northrop - CDC.*

The good news is that school health programs i.e., Coordinated School Health (CSH) is recommended by CDC as a strategy for improving students' health and learning in our nation's schools. LTA will incorporate CDC's CSH Curriculum into its health program. Its policies may be one of the most efficient means to prevent or reduce risk behaviors and prevent serious health problems among students. These school health policies and programs will be used to help close the educational achievement gap in Wilmington and New Castle County.

This group believes that if parents are better equipped to help their child in school, students will be better learners and high achievers. Our goal is to inspire students to learn, to teach students how to study, read for content, take notes, manage time and develop rigorous organization skills. This group of educators, business leaders, engineers, health professionals, science, math and technology professionals believe that LTA can change the face of Wilmington and New Castle County. Our students will learn the importance of *never missing class assignments*, our students will know that a career or a degree is a ticket to the middle class and that a ticket to the middle class is a good ticket to have.

The Founding Board cohort is also driven and motivated to foster a STEM and wellness school curriculum in an effort to close the disparity gap for women and minorities in STEM careers and also improve the health, nutrition and wellness statistics for the community at large. Data information reports that our students will not only be competing for jobs with their peers who live in their community, but also with their peers who live across the ocean. Mrs. Pipkin-Perry is mindful that the threat of childhood obesity to the health of our children in Delaware and the health of our nation has never been greater. Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates in America have tripled. Today, almost one in every three children in our nation is obese or overweight. The numbers are even higher in African American and Hispanic communities in Delaware, where nearly 40% of the children are overweight or obese. If we don't solve this problem, one third of all children born in the 21st century will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives. Many others may face chronic obesity-related health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer and asthma according to a Partnership for a Healthier America report. The threat of childhood obesity is real, and will remain until schools take greater action.

During this time some Founding Board members traveled to Chicago to participate in a three-day training workshop with Namaste Charter School to learn about their health and wellness best practices model, attended two National Charter School Alliance Conferences to learn of current trends in student assessment, strategic planning, curriculum development and networking opportunities. LTA participated in the Delaware Charter School Network Expo, sought support and made presentations, held meet and greet sessions, sponsored parent town hall meetings and community information sessions, attended STEM and health related workshops, held

teleconference meetings with business and education consultants, participated in webinars, and shared newspaper reports as follows: **Channel 28 Education Forum**, Maurice Pritchett of **Pritchett Associates**; **Delaware Black.com**, Leonard Young Jr.; **Hockessin Community News**, Ben Mace; **Newark Post**, Josh Shannon; **News-Journal**, Matthew Albright; **Public Relations & Communications --*Making Words Work for You***, Larry Nagengast; **Nemours Health and Prevention Services (NHPS)**, David Nichols; **Affinity Health Care and Vision Plus of Delaware**, Alton A. Williams; **The American Lung Association in Delaware (Kick Butts Generation)**, Sheri Towner-Gabrelcik; **Christiana Care Health System Adolescent Health (Camp Fresh)**, Christopher Moore, Program Manager; **Dupont**, David T. Sheppard, Electrical & Instrument Design; **Del Tech**, Paul Morris, Director Workforce Program; **Boys and Girls Clubs of Delaware**, Martha Carper State Board of Directors President and Anthony Boswell, Chief Executive Officer Union Street Branch; **Delaware STEM Council**, Daniel Suchenski; **Longwood Foundation and the Community Education Building of Delaware (CEBDE)**, Ricardo Stoeckicht; **First Neighborhood Planning Council 1st District in Wilmington**, Subria Ibrahim; **City of Wilmington City Council President**, Theopalis K. Gregory, Sr.; **University of DE, Biotechnology Engineering Coordinator with Project Lead The Way (PLTW)**, Jennifer Buckley; **Forum to Advance Minorities in Engineering, Inc. (FAME)**, Brittney Snider, Communications and Public Relations Coordinator; **Thomas Edison Charter School**, Principal Salome- El, School Leader; **Family Foundations Academy**, Dr. Tennell Brewington; **Kuumba Academy**, Sally Maldonado, Head of School; **Christina Cultural Arts Center**, Raye Jones Avery, Executive Director; **AstraZeneca Corporation (IM40)**, Tyrone Jones, **United Way of Delaware**, Rev. John Moore, Sr.; **Connecting Generations (Creative Mentoring)**, Richard Kapolka, Executive Director; **Brandywine School District - Achievers' Academy Mentoring and Tutoring Program District Liaison**, Pastor David Pope; **Delaware Department of Education** Mark Murphy, Delaware Secretary of Education; **Wilmington University External Affairs**, Dr. Peter Baily, VP; **Junior Achievement of Delaware**, JA-Biz Town, Shannon Hartzel, Education Manager; **Delaware Charter School Network (DCSN)** Kendall Massett, Executive Director, et. al.

LTA meets monthly with its highly effective Governing Board to discuss LTA's core values and clarity of its collective vision. LTA joins the community neighborhood councils in their monthly meetings to share LTA's goals and vision for the community. To that end, LTA has collected, analyzed and utilized data to create a continuous awareness of the work that is necessary in cultivating and strengthening the behavioral, opportunity, educational and health issues of our proposed targeted population. Good school health programs can help improve students' educational outcome. Helping students stay healthy is the fundamental part of the mission of LTA. The Gallup State-of-States polls reported staggering data in the Delaware News-Journal recently; reporting that Delaware is third in obesity due to laziness. Students at LTA will receive 60 minutes of movement each day for all four years. Delaware is the fourth least likely state in the nation to report eating at least five servings of vegetable four or more days per week, with 54.3 percent of residents reporting doing so. According to the latest releases, Delaware is at the very bottom, the worst, in the absolute cellar dweller among all 50 states when it comes to adults exercising for least 30 minutes more than three times a week. LTA proposes a wellness center for its students and a Parent Education Center (PEC) for its parents and the community. One of the primary goals of the PEC is to implant wellness education within the community.