

# High Desert "Partnership in Academic Excellence" Foundation, Inc.

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## Agenda for Special Meeting of the High Desert "Partnership in Academic Excellence" Foundation, Inc. Board of Directors

Meeting at Lewis Center for Educational Research – Gym Conference Room  
17500 Mana Rd., Apple Valley, CA 92307

June 13, 2016 – 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

- 1.0 **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Bud Biggs
- 2.0 **ROLL CALL:** Chairman Bud Biggs
- 3.0 **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Members of the general public may address the Board during Public Comments or as items appearing on the agenda are considered. A time limit of three (3) minutes shall be observed. Those wishing to speak are invited to fill out a Request to Speak Card and give it to the Secretary.
- 4.0 **GROUND RULES:** Dr. Pat Caldwell, Facilitator/Consultant
- 6.0 **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**
  - .01 Progress on Issues Carried Over from March 14, 2016 Regular Meeting
  - .02 Identify Critical Issues (to be addressed in next 1-3 years)
  - .03 Turn Critical Issues into Goals
  - .04 Develop Measurable Objectives for Each Goal
  - .05 Assign Responsibilities for Developing Strategies and Action Plans for Each Objective
  - .06 Next Steps
- 7.0 **ADJOURNMENT:** Chairman Biggs

Pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to participate in this meeting is asked to advise the agency at least 48 hours before the meeting by calling (760) 946-5414 x201.

Any written materials relating to agenda items to be discussed in open session are available for public inspection prior to the meeting at 17500 Mana Rd., Apple Valley, CA.

**DRAFT**

**Lewis Center for Educational Research**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**July 1, 2016 – June 30, 201**

*The plan for our future*

**Adopted, , 2016**

**Lewis Center for Educational Research  
STRATEGIC PLAN**

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# Lewis Center for Educational Research STRATEGIC PLAN

*The plan for our future*

## Introduction

The Lewis Center for Educational Research (LCER) is in a transitional period in its life cycle. With the retirement of our charismatic, visionary founder, the Board of Directors and Executive Team determined that we are facing a challenging future. To plan for that future, and to assure that it is the future we want it to be, we decided to engage in strategic planning. Board members and senior administrators became the planning team. This team convened several times over a two month period in the spring of 2016, and spent many hours examining issues and concerns, and to share thoughts, ideas and suggestions on the future of LCER and its two charter schools. The results of those sessions are contained in this strategic plan.

## Process

In order to address immediate concerns, the planning team first held a five hour "strategic issues" session. Administrative staff presented update reports on issues identified at an earlier board retreat held in November, 2015. Staff asked for and received direction from the Board on most of these issues which are presented in Appendix A.

The strategic issues session was followed by a full day planning meeting. During the morning session, discussion continued on issues where, due to time constraints at the earlier meeting, direction was still desired by staff. The results of these discussions are presented in Appendix B.

The afternoon session was devoted to reviewing and modifying the LCER mission statement, developing a set of values, and completing a S.W.O.T. analysis. Statements to accompany the values were developed by a small volunteer task force who met a few days later. Those values and

value statements are included in the body of the plan. The S.W.O.T. analysis is presented in Appendix C.

The third session was devoted to determining any remaining critical issues and developing strategic goals and objectives. Additionally, strategies for strategic management were discussed and responsibilities for developing and implementing action plans were assigned.

### Our Plan

Our plan charts a course that is bold yet attainable. Our vision calls for the Lewis Center and its schools to be nationally recognized as successful role models for others wishing to provide relevant education and unlimited opportunity to those they serve – as we do. The plan lays out how we, an operator of two uniquely different charter schools serving two distinctly different demographics, will align our efforts over the next \_\_\_\_\_ years to achieve the goals our students, parents and communities have a right to expect and enjoy.

We recognize our responsibility and the leadership we have been entrusted to provide. We also recognize the value and impact of what becoming a model institution of our kind can mean. The stakes are high, but so is the opportunity when our vision is achieved.

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# **MISSION**

*Why we exist*

The mission of the Lewis Center for Educational Research is to ensure our schools and programs prepare students for success in a global society through data-driven, innovative and research-proven practices in a safe and inclusive culture.

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## **VISION**

*What we want to be known for*

The Lewis Center for Educational Research is nationally recognized as a leader in education for operating and supporting two unique TK-12 charter schools serving two vastly different demographic areas – the rural-suburban High Desert and the urban city of San Bernardino in San Bernardino County, California. Utilizing data-driven, innovative teaching methods while offering high quality educational programs, the schools are known for exceeding the needs of their students and communities.

The Lewis Center's focus on science and technology, starting with a unique, earlier partnership with NASA, has resulted in 95% graduation rates, high college-going rates, and high levels of success of its graduates in careers in medicine, business, military, and education. The Center's additional focus on bilingual, biliterate and multicultural education has enabled the expansion of its highly successful TK-8 dual immersion language academy to include Southern California's first dual immersion high school.

The Lewis Center's excellent reputation is in large part due to its highly qualified and enthusiastic faculty and staff who, with the support of engaged parents, community and Board members, translate an understanding of their students' abilities, interests and aspirations into pathways to success in college and/or their chosen careers. Partnerships with colleges, universities and businesses also contribute

to helping students achieve at the highest academic levels and preparing them for living and working in a global society.

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## **VALUES**

*Ethical priorities to guide our  
decision-making and how we  
treat one another*

**Integrity:** We strive to engender trust in our abilities by acting courageously and adhering to a strong moral compass.

**Excellence:** We aspire to excellence through supporting our community of learners in the practice of continuous innovation, collaboration and growth.

**Leadership:** Being forerunners, pace-setters and cultivators, we demonstrate strong leadership rooted in principles of integrity, accountability, respect and communication.

**Inclusiveness:** We will leverage our diverse and inclusive community to achieve superior result in the field of education.



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**GOALS**

*Goals to achieve our vision*

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**OBJECTIVES**

*The outcomes we expect*

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**APPENDIX A**

**Summary of Issues Discussed at February 25, 2016 Session  
(More Detail in Board Minutes)**

**Issues**

**Board's Concerns/Direction**

**Finances**

1. Policies and procedures need revision.
2. Some new policies and procedures need to be written.
3. Restructuring of debt need to be completed.
4. Tetra contract should be reviewed by legal counsel.
5. Concern that staff is not on top of these issues

**Staffing**

1. Grant writer position/person needs review.
2. Do we need a PR/Community relations position?  
Can we afford it?
3. Consulting contracts/position/expenditures need review.
4. Concern that staff is not on top of these issues

**Parity**

1. What is the cost of offering step or stipend for hard-to-fill positions such as BCLAD. Can we afford it? Stacy was given direction to cost out this option.
2. Stacy was also given direction to cost out other options such as help with repaying student loans, improving leave and benefit package, absorbing health care cost increases, adding additional years to the salary schedule. Stacy to report costs with

recommendations to Finance Committee. Finance Committee to bring recommendations to the full Board.

3. Recruiting teachers is difficult due to salary schedule. Board member suggestion: what if we offered to pay for the last year or two of college in exchange for a multi-year commitment to LCER?

Revenues opportunities

1. Board directed staff to pursue offering one TK class at each school starting fall 2016.

2. Board agreed with staff recommendation to try to fill grade levels, thus increasing ADA.

3. Staff floated several other ideas for increasing revenues. The three that the Board seemed most interested in were cell tower, selling surplus land, and fundraising.

Norton

1. Difficulty in filling upper grades because students must be bilingual and biliterate. Enrollment in upper grades will increase as students in lower grades move up.

2. Low test scores – student must answer questions by writing in English – no exceptions for English learners. No similar schools to use for comparison in California. This is a concern for charter renewal.

3. Lease – needs to be renegotiated. Who is responsible? Current lease requires LCER to provide facilities for Head Start – current requirement for a new parking lot.

4. Relocation/expansion – CSUSB not an option. Could expand on current property. Could apply for Prop 39 and/or SB 740 funds. Who's responsible?

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**APPENDIX B**

**Summary of Issues Discussed at February 29, 2016 Session  
(More Detail in Board Minutes)**

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Board's Concerns/Direction</u>
<u>Use of Thunderbird</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Board straw vote provided direction to Gordon to pursue after-school, joint program with AVUSD; keep Board informed of progress.</li><li>2. Board expressed desire to explore option of selling TBC building, but only with consideration for improvements made by LCER. Can we sell if we don't own the land? Do we need AVUSD's approval to sell? Who's responsible for doing this?</li></ol>
<u>Norton</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Board decided to have charter renewed as a TK-12 school; strengthen TK-8 program while high school being developed; explore alternative models for high school; to be implemented by next charter renewal; bring plan and timeline for implementation with cost analysis for both the high school and the planning effort to the Board; put timeline in the current charter renewal application; should someone be hired to lead the planning effort?</li><li>2. Board agreed NSAA's name needs to be changed to reflect what is actually happening.</li></ol>

The School Board committee, staff and parents should discuss and recommend name change to the full Board. Some suggested name changes included:

- Norton Language and Science Academy
- Norton Science and Language Academy
- Norton Academy
- Norton Academy for Academic Excellence

3. Should Norton have an English Only strand for 5-8? NSAA School Board committee and staff should bring recommendation to the full Board along with implementation plan and cost analysis if recommendation is "yes."

#### Organizational issues

Should LCER change its name?

Board consensus was to keep the LCER name. Some of the reasons given were:

- Too costly to rebrand
- The community knows us as LCER; to change the name would confuse the community.
- The name gives us a priority (research), and we should develop more university partnerships to do research. (Who is responsible?)
- The name reflects our desire to try new things, innovate

Should there be more emphasis on fundraising?

Board consensus was "yes," and to explore the option of pulling the Fundraising Committee from the Board and make it a separate fundraising foundation. Who will be responsible for this?

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**APPENDIX C**

**S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS**

At the second planning session, planning team members engaged in a “mini” environmental analysis by brainstorming the organization’s strengths and weaknesses (internal) and opportunities and threats (external). Their determination of strengths that might be enhanced and weaknesses that might be corrected, along with opportunities and threats presented by the external environment, helped guide them when deciding what critical issues must be addressed. Their brainstormed S.W.O.T. follows:

**Strengths**

- Highly dedicated staff
- Parent support
- Engaged students
- Motivated Board
- Outside the box thinking
- Culture
- Safe environment
- Small class sizes
- Caring staff
- Private school environment
- Less bureaucracy
- Passionate about learning

- Tight community feel
- Non-union
- Successful K-12 program
- Technology rich
- Partnerships
- Enrichment programs
- Well-balanced education
- Parents that care
- Facilities
- Locations
- Relationships with chartering agencies
- Relationships with other agencies
- Pride
- GAVRT, Bridge, Local Outreach, HiDas,
- Successful alumni
- AFROTC
- Political connections
- Media connections
- Bi-literacy
- Chinese partnerships
- Board connections

### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of planning
- GAVRT
- Lack of transparency
- Communication
- Facilities & Norton
- Lack of marketing
- Detailed budget planning
- No football team
- Weak in developing new partnerships
- Teacher turnover at NSAA



- Relationships between board & exec team
- Student attrition
- Fund development
- Low salaries
- No multi-year budget
- Lack of capital investment
- Current policies
- Lack of leadership transition planning
- Lack of stakeholder involvement
- Tracking alumni
- NSAA treated like stepchild
- Lack of proactive recruitment of teachers
- Lack of student recruitment
- Broken promises
- Weak Board
- Uninformed Board
- Lack of Board participation at Festival of Arts at AAE

### **Opportunities**

- Business partnerships
- University partnerships
- Developing real estate at AAE & NSAA
- STEM partnerships
- Fund development
- Relationship with alliance for education
- Internships
- Political relationships
- Alumni
- Low interest rates, rising economy
- Partnership with community service agencies
- 740 program & Prop 39

### **Threats**

- Other salary schedules elsewhere
- Competing dual immersion programs
- Shortage of teachers
- Uncertain revenues
- Common core vs. the unknown
- County/city involvement in our lease
- Anti-charter movement
- Unionization
- Teacher training institutions have bad impression of charter schools
- More legislation coming
- Needing more legal advice due to regulations
- Security
- LCAPS more regulated
- Charter renewals
- Desert Trails controversy

## **COMMON CATEGORIES OF STRATEGIC ISSUES**

- **Revenues/Budget** (improve budgeting process, pursue funds from alternative sources, diversify, balance, etc)
- **Communication** (internal, external, board/staff, etc.)
- **Organizational Structure** (terms, committees, etc.)
- **Organizational Effectiveness** (leadership, training, accountability, process improvement, policies, procedures, etc.)
- **Partnerships** (community, businesses, universities, colleges, high schools, non-profits, relationships with chartering agencies, etc.)
- **Fundraising** (create foundation, write bylaws, recruit new board, increase charitable gifts, etc.)
- **Volunteers** (schools, fundraising, etc.)
- **Marketing/Public Relations** (Community awareness, reputation, etc.)
- **Board Development** (engagement, training, participation, recruitment, orientation, etc.)
- **Climate and Culture** (openness, transparency, respect, living up to our values, etc.)



## Critical Issues

- ▶ Earlier discussions of concerns and the S.W.O.T. analysis will help identify critical issues.
- ▶ Examples:
  - Low number of volunteers
  - Declining revenues
  - Poor communication
  - Need to expand successful programs



## Goals

- ▶ Broad, general statements of what the organization wants to accomplish
- ▶ *Not* measurable and specific!



## Objectives

- Specific, measurable outcomes
  - Tells *specifically* what it will look like if the goal is accomplished
  
- Must include two forms of measurement
  - Time
  - Quality
  - Quantity
  - Money (Dollars)



## Sample Objectives

- By June 2016, increase number of volunteers by 20% over 2015.
  
- By December 2016, revenues from new, alternative sources will reach \$250,000.
  
- By January 2017, employees and clients will indicate that our communication is open, honest and timely.



## Action Planning

- ▶ Action plans spell out the specific steps to be taken to accomplish the objectives.
- ▶ Action plans are the “who, what, when, how, and how much” of the plan.
- ▶ **SPECIFIC!** No more “plans to plan.”



## What Follows Action Planning?

- ▶ *Strategic Management* – assuring that the right people and positions are in place to implement the plan; assignments are made
- ▶ *Implementation* – making the action steps happen
- ▶ *Evaluation* – going back to see “did we do the steps in the action plan? Were we successful in accomplishing our objective?”