

Lynden Christian School Society Members:

Thank you to all the society members that attended our recent town-hall style group society meetings. Thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts during these meetings. Thank you for your continued prayers for wisdom and discernment for all board members. We appreciated your engagement and the opportunity to hear your questions, concerns, and support as we continue to work to improve our school and support our mission statement. Please continue to lift up our school, our administrators, our teachers and our staff in prayer!

We had full transcripts created for all three meetings. You may notice a few missing words or time code gaps—these areas were unclear on the video. The board has reviewed the transcripts and responded to the direct questions; we have also responded to inaccurate statements that were made at the meetings. Board responses are all in **red text** in the transcripts. You can read the full transcript of each meeting here:

[Jan 11 Meeting](#)

[Jan 26 Meeting](#)

[Feb 1 Meeting](#)

Some have asked why we are not publishing the videos of the meetings. First, it was easier for the board to respond to every question and comment in a transcript. Second, making the video public online could lead to misuse where clips or segments could be used, clipped or shared out of context. Finally, none of the speakers gave consent to have their video shared when they spoke.

In addition to the full transcripts, the board has put together this summary and our responses to the most popular themes brought up at the meetings.

If you have questions or concerns not addressed in the transcripts or summary, please feel free to contact the board.

Sincerely,

The Lynden Christian School Board

## **Curriculum**

- **The process/who has oversight over curriculum:**

*Curriculum is managed by departments and grade levels (depending on the building). Principals oversee curriculum with teachers, and teachers are granted latitude in their selection of age-appropriate content. The Education Committee oversees any major curriculum changes. The school uses a web-based tool to understand curriculum across grade levels and buildings. Our Director of Learning (DOL) is responsible for school-side curriculum oversight and planning. The DOL reports to the Superintendent; the Superintendent reports to the board.*

*As a general rule, curriculum and curriculum structure can always be improved in education! This is a key area schools continually work to improve; LC is no different! Curriculum oversight and continually*

*improving the biblical Christian worldview framework for education (as it relates to curriculum) is one of the main focuses of our five-year plan.*

- **How parents can learn more about curriculum:**

*Parents are invited and encouraged to attend Parent Night every year in September. This is an opportunity to hear about the content, teaching philosophy and background of your student's teacher. This is the ideal time to ask questions about curriculum and build a relationship with the teacher(s). Parents can also reach out to teachers directly.*

- **Parent/family specific concerns:**

*Parents should first contact the teacher with questions or concerns. If parents do not feel the teacher has addressed the concern, parents can request a meeting with the teacher and the building administrator. If this does not lead to resolution, the parents, teacher, and administrator can meet, as a group, with the superintendent. If this does not lead to resolution, the superintendent will organize a meeting with some board members, the parents, teacher, and administrator.*

*'In loco parentis' has always been the position of the school, meaning parents delegate certain issues and decisions to the authority of the school—discipline, curriculum, facilities, interaction with governmental authorities—via the duly elected School Board by the Lynden Christian Society.*

## **Masking/Vaccines/Mandates**

- **The board's position on vaccines:**

*The State of Washington currently requires proof of vaccination for 11 diseases for children to attend school; there are standard rules in place for these vaccines (see chapter [246-105](#) of the WAC). If Covid vaccinations are added to this list, Lynden Christian will accept exemptions as we do for other vaccines. Here's the link to the exemption form: [Certificate of Exemption Personal/Religious \(wa.gov\)](#) This is a well-established process at Lynden Christian. If you have general questions on this process, you can contact our school nurse, Hannah Faber.*

*We do not believe that a strict vaccine requirement without exemptions is acceptable.*

- **General frustration over masking and board response:**

*As stated in other communication: the board does not think masks are the best way for students to learn in school. None of the board members would choose to mask in a normal environment. However, the board believes in-person, Christian education is critical.*

*We all agree that masks are not the best way to conduct school because they can limit some aspects of teaching and learning because of communication complications. They can also serve as a distraction for some. Some find masking to be inconvenient and uncomfortable. However, we still believe that our students can learn compassion, emotions, bonding with their teachers and classmates, even with a mask. We agree it is not best! But, we also believe that wearing a mask doesn't remove all the effectiveness of Christian education—our teachers are still effective at educating, relationship building and discipling, even in this environment.*

- **General questions around board plans for when a future mandate would not be tolerated**

*The board continues to pray for wisdom and discernment. At this point, the board doesn't have something as elegant as a multi-step plan--because we feel that a plan would depend on the issue at hand and would need to be developed based on the specific circumstances.*

*The board agrees that there are many things that could require our action. Requiring teaching that directly contradicts scripture, laws against teaching from the Bible or teaching from a biblical worldview, and views on gender and sexuality that contradict our statements (as a few examples) would require action.*

*As board members, we love Lynden Christian School and we love Lynden Christian families. However, we see our role as governing the school for all 750+ families, for our employees, and for all the members of the larger society (thousands of society members). We understand that every decision we make may not be acceptable to every family. As parents, you have the ultimate say where to draw your lines of conscience for your family. However, it may be that the school lines and family-specific lines are not compatible (now or at some point in the future, on any/all side of any current or future issue). Each family will have to decide, at that time, if Lynden Christian is still the best fit for their family.*

## **Suggestions for Board improvement**

- **Why not change to fewer board members:**

*The LC constitution requires at least 10 members; 12 was determined to be easiest for rotation (3 members serving a 4 year term) and a better representation of our full society.*

- **Why not have open board meetings like public schools:**

*Lynden Christian School board meetings are closed. The LC board is different than a public school board—LC board members are chosen exclusively from the LC society by a group composed exclusively of society members, they are confirmed only by society, and they are responsible only to society. Whereas any community member can run for election on a public school board and a public school board has a different responsibility and therefore a different need for meeting structure. The board is working, however, to improve communication between parents and the board and is discussing setting aside 30 minutes at the beginning of board meetings for parents to sign up (in advance) for a slot to speak with the board. We hope this will help improve communication.*

*The board and the administration are always available for discussion with society members—our contact information is available on the website. But there are limits to the control or influence of any individual, family or group of parents. Parents have a say, but the school board must balance the desires of the full society as the decisions impact the full society.*

*The annual society meeting also provides information to society, such as tuition. The budget is also voted on by society at the annual society meeting.*

- **Have opportunities (like this) for parents to speak to the board:**

*As stated above, the board is discussing a 30-minute time slot for society members to speak to the board at board meetings (members must sign up prior to the meeting). Look for more information in the late spring.*

## **Questions around enrollment & board statements**

- **Questions about admission**

*Based on a thorough review of past minutes, the initial verbiage allowing for students from unchurched families entered the policy manual in the early 1990s (1993). The stated goal was the integration of those families into active church life within a short time. By 2000, there was also a growing percentage, particularly in the high school, of non-Christian foreign exchange students, with most of the students from East Asia who lived with Christian host families. That number increased throughout the following decade, peaking at about 10% of the high school enrollment. The number of foreign exchange students has declined markedly since about 2016 for a variety of reasons external to the school.*

*Children from several local non-Christian families have also been admitted as students in the past decade. That number has been very small, less than one percent of the student population, and is accompanied by the agreement of the parents that they will support the teaching of the Christian school to their children.*

*The number of "non-churched" students (claimed commitment to Christian faith but without church affiliation), by policy not to exceed 10% of the student population, is more difficult to track from a practical standpoint inasmuch as some families may declare a church affiliation that nonetheless is not reflected in regular attendance at, participation in, and commitment to the church. While the number of students whose families have not declared a church affiliation is relatively small (less than 5%), there is a larger number of students from families declaring a church affiliation whose regular participation in the life of the church is lacking. This situation is a source of concern for the board, but does not lend itself to an easy resolution.*

*In 2019, clarification was added to state that both children from unchurched families and international students should be counted and should not exceed 10% in any building. The board stated at the same time that it was not in favor of heading toward an "open enrollment" policy.*

*Notes from many past board meetings indicate support and agreement that Lynden Christian is, at its core, a covenantal school. Many decisions have affirmed this position. The current board affirms this position.*

*The board is continuing to review the policy and has placed on-hold the enrollment of any new, unchurched families at this time.*

- **Questions about board structure and governance**

*The board understands its role as representing the full society, which includes current families as well as staff and other members of the broader society. The board does this through a Community Governance model, which is outlined below (from the policy manual).*

1. *The Board's first and primary responsibility is to hold in trust, protect and direct the mission of the school. The Board adopts a clear mission, and mission-focused goals regarding Christian education. The Board should review the Lynden Christian Mission statement, and its Amplification, routinely and set yearly goals that may reach down into the organization.*
2. *The Board's role is clear and distinct from the staff. It is critical for the Board to work through key issues such as its role, what power and authority will be delegated to the Superintendent, and how it will hold the Staff, through the Superintendent, accountable for their responsibilities.*
3. *The Board has a governance focus. The Board must be careful not to micro-manage the organization. The Board must focus on setting clear policies, maintaining financial stability, directing strategic planning, and reviewing operations. The Board gives organizational oversight rather than working in the trenches.*
4. *Board members understand their roles. The Board speaks as one voice outside the Boardroom. Further, Board members need to know which hat they are wearing at which time:*
  - *Governor—when at a Board meeting fulfilling the task as a trustee and acting on the powers given them by the Constitution.*
  - *Volunteer—when a Board member is providing volunteer service. He/she has no authority over other volunteers unless assigned by the Board.*
  - *Implementer—when a Board member is given a specific task from the Board to carry out.*
  - *Parent/Guardian—when a Board member is fulfilling their role as parent, responsibility is limited to serving the interests of their child(ren)*
5. *The Board links with the parents and Lynden Christian Society\*. The Board develops creative strategies for community linkage through newsletters, formal and informal meetings, and special events. The parents and Society become moral owners\*\* and must know where the Board and leadership are directing "their" school. Board members welcome contact points with parents and Society members. The Board also seeks to sustain the vision of Christian education for future generations.*
6. *The Superintendent is the lone agent of the Board. Having one person provides organizational clarity. He/she gives leadership toward achieving the mission-focused goals, in collaboration with other administrators and staff. The Superintendent is expected to live within the Superintendent job description and the Board Policy Handbook.*
7. *Policies are organized into a Board Policy Handbook. It is vital for smooth governance that the policy handbook is kept up to date with each change being recorded promptly. Likewise, it should be reviewed regularly. Organizations may use hard copy handbooks or online versions that may make it easier for updating and accessibility.*
8. *The Board chair "manages" the Board. While the Superintendent can be helpful in crafting the agenda and providing resources, the chairman ensures the meetings are well planned. He/she works with committee chairs, follows up with reports, and stays tuned to the needs and desires of fellow board members.*
9. *A strong committee structure is vital to board effectiveness. There will be standing committees and ad hoc committees, all of which need a clear written mandate. Committees, including the Executive,*

*do not have final decision-making ability unless it has been delegated. The Executive Committee must be careful not to claim authority for itself, thus excluding the full board. Board members chair standing committees. Committees may include non-board members who have particular skills and knowledge useful to the Board.*

*10. Both board and committee meetings must be well planned so as to conduct business efficiently. The Superintendent prepares a forthright written report for the Board. The Administrative staff will likewise prepare forthright written reports for standing committees with information regarding their area of responsibility. A committee secretary will be appointed to record minutes for Board review.*

*11. Board members are elected and well oriented. In particular, they need to understand and commit to the mission of Lynden Christian. A standing Board Development Committee will be appointed, whose task will be to submit to the Nomination Committee names of candidates who will have the commitments needed to serve well the needs of the Society. The Committee will also propose plans for Board evaluation and professional development.*

*12. The Board accepts responsibility for self-improvement. The Superintendent may help in the process, but the Board takes the lead. Often it will take new board members awhile to understand their new role. A mentoring process teaming new board members with veteran members may be used. Board members should engage in discussion, reading and retreating that would build a solid cooperative and collaborative team, passionate about Lynden Christian School and their leadership role.*

*\*The Society consists of all parents and community members who continue to support the school as stated in the Constitution.*

*\*\*The moral owners are those Society members who are deeply committed to the essence of the school, its mission and both its current and long-term sustainability (see Bartlett and Campey's **Community Governance**)*