ABOVE BOARD

News from the Addenbrooke Board of Directors

Dear Addenbrooke Families,

Addenbrooke Classical Academy's Board of Directors is committed to preserving our school's distinctive mission while ensuring that we continue to grow and improve. This month, we'd like to share two important aspects of that responsibility: the philosophy behind charter education and how we evaluate academic performance at Addenbrooke.

You've likely heard students in our school community recite from memory this line from the Declaration of Independence: "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*"

From the earliest days of our country, education was understood to be vital to a nation capable of true self-governance and liberty. Thomas Jefferson was convinced of this and formally introduced a proposal for publicly funded education in 1779.

But our government's commitment to publicly funded education doesn't imply a single model. In response to a recognized need for improved academic quality and innovation, the charter school movement emerged in the early 1990s, emphasizing three important principles:

- **Choice**: Empowering parents to identify educational priorities that align with their family values and students' needs
- **Autonomy**: Giving educators and school leaders creative authority to develop a mission and vision for their specific school communities
- **Accountability**: Requiring publicly funded charter schools to demonstrate academic performance, financial stewardship, sound governance, and fidelity to their charters

Over the last three decades, the movement has consistently received bipartisan support and grown to a community of over 8,000 schools nationwide.

There is a distinctly American quality to charter schools: a recognition that families and communities should have the liberty to help shape the priorities of education, and that with the freedom to establish a distinctive school mission comes the responsibility to govern it well.

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One way we fulfill that responsibility is through the evaluation of our academic performance and effectiveness at achieving our school's mission. A metric we use is the Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) School Performance Framework (SPF), which is the state's report card that evaluates schools based on how students perform on state assessments (CMAS) and the PSAT/SAT. At the high school, it also evaluates schools on graduation outcomes.

For the 2023–24, 2024–25, and 2025–26 academic years, Addenbrooke received the Performance rating. Schools receiving this rating are "meeting expectations on a majority of performance metrics." This is the highest school rating, and most schools receive it.

This annual evaluation provides feedback that helps identify opportunities for improvement. School leaders use this feedback, along with other data sources (such as MAP and DIBELS assessment results), to create a targeted school improvement plan each year. This plan is shared each fall both with the Board of Directors and the School Accountability Committee. Both of these committees ensure involvement from Addenbrooke parents so that parent review is incorporated into the final plan that is created.

A few priorities from this year's plan include strengthening high school students' writing skills through Grammar Fridays and an emphasis on grammar and writing conventions across all subjects. The high school is also focused on improving reading comprehension by encouraging slow reading in a world that emphasizes informational reading, supported by staff development.

In K–8, priorities include building students' persistence with complex, multi-step problems through Charlotte Mason habits such as attention, remembering, and thinking. Teachers are also working to improve mathematical modeling and reasoning through more frequent modeling of math writing techniques and professional development.

Our commitment to continuous improvement reflects both the freedom and responsibility that come with charter education. Through our shared investment in Addenbrooke's mission, we are helping the next generation recognize and honor their rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Jason Beck and Magdalene Glemkowski
Board of Directors
Addenbrooke Classical Academy